

Key study disciplines

You may have come across all three study disciplines throughout your time at school, work or previous study. Click the image below to to learn what's expected at university level.

Writing at university level

While you are studying at university you will most likely be asked to write a range of assignments. It is difficult to classify all the possible types of assignments at university level. Some common words used to classify assignments are essays and reports.

However, these words - assignment, essay and report - are often used repeatedly, but to present very different tasks. There is, therefore, no single thing that is a generic assignment or essay. Different types of tasks and questions require different types of answers. Although questions can be very different, they do however, have some things in common.

One of these things is that the person who set the question usually wants you to show evidence of critical/evaluative thinking, analysis and persuasive writing in your answer.

Reading at university level

While you are at university you will have a lot of reading to do. You can save yourself a lot of time if you can read efficiently and effectively. One of the first things you should know is that you don't have to read every word of everything you are asked to read. You can start to narrow your reading down by asking yourself 'what am I reading this for?'

- Am I reading for general background information?
- What specific information am I looking for?
- How am I going to use the information I am reading?
- Am I reading to prepare for an exam?

Take a minute to think about all the things you read in the course of a week and the media you read from. You will have come up with quite a variety of things that you read. Do you read them all the same way? The correct answer is no. The same principle applies to the reading you do for your studies.

Researching at university level

Most assignments will require you to support the main points with relevant research. Ultimately what this means is that we expect you to provide an informed opinion, not just an opinion.

Once you've identified a topic and a handful of key words, it's usual to begin the research process by identifying all the available relevant sources, from books to journal articles to reliable websites. This is followed by evaluating the content, extracting key information and building the findings into your discussion.

One of the most important things when it comes to research and assignments is giving credit where it's due. You will see this referred to as referencing and academic integrity.

SCU is subscribed to many research databases so you'll be able to find relevant academic journals to support your discussion, and all campuses have library facilities hosting a wide range of key texts, set by course coordinators. The library also offers a service to post out books to online students, free of charge.