

# Get academic

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Creating and maintaining good academic habits will make it easier for you to do your work and acknowledge others' work. In assessment tasks, you will often use other people's information and make conclusions about what you have read or experienced. It's important you acknowledge other people's work using our school's referencing system (Harvard Style).

## Academic integrity

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QCAA has developed an online course to help you understand the correct way to approach assessment. It includes advice on how to maintain academic integrity and produce your best work. You can access the course in the **Student Portal** at <https://myqce.qcaa.qld.edu.au/>

## Effective research habits

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One of the ways you can ensure your work is your own is to plan and complete your research effectively. Here's an approach that might work for you:

- Plan your research — understand the purpose of your research and what are you trying to find.
- Use appropriate sources — consider the source of your information before you start taking notes. Is it an appropriate source?
- Take notes and summarise — use your own words to show you understand the information and ideas you're referencing.
- Keep clear records — record where information and ideas come from so you can find this information again when needed.
- Acknowledge the information or ideas of others — use in-text referencing/citations and reference as you go.
- Check with your teacher — your subject may have a specific research process you need to follow.

## Appropriate information

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When researching, you should understand how to use knowledge and information. Consider the following:

- Who it belongs to — an author, cartoonist, musician, photographer, playwright, family or cultural group?
- Can you use it — is it okay for you to use this information and do you need permission?
- Should you use it — is it relevant and appropriate material that you should share at school?
- Acknowledge it — if it's okay to use, then it's important to acknowledge where it came from.

## Copyright

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Copyright refers to the rights held by the creator of an original work and allows them to control how their work is used. When you use other people's work in your assessment, you generally don't need to seek permission from the copyright owner if you reference appropriately.

However, you may use materials released under **Creative Commons** licensing. It's a system where creators specify how their content can be used without you needing to seek permission.

## Referencing

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Referencing is a key part of academic integrity. When you use another person's work you need to acknowledge it, even when you have summarised and paraphrased the information in your own words. Refer to our school's **Writing Bibliographies & Making Citations** information for further information about the Harvard Referencing System used at CSHS.

If you don't know how to reference properly, you may unintentionally plagiarise another person's work. Whether intentional or unintentional, plagiarism is still academic misconduct.

### When referencing is required

- direct quotes
- summarising or paraphrasing someone else's work
- an image/figure/diagram/table or audiovisual material from another person's work
- information from electronic sources
- part of someone else's design

- information from oral communication methods e.g. an interview.

#### **When referencing is not required**

- common knowledge known about a topic
- facts that are commonly known within a subject area
- facts that are known and found in many different sources
- commonsense observations
- your own experiences
- results from your own experiments

## **Collaborative Study**

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Collaboration and teamwork are key **21st century skills** that you'll develop throughout senior schooling and your life. Many students get more out of study time when they study with a group. Group study can improve your grades, because group work gives you more opportunity for comparing class notes and brainstorming potential test questions. If you are facing a big exam, you should try studying with a group. If you can't get together face-to-face, you can create an online study group, too. Use these tips to make the most of your time:

- Exchange contact information
- Find a meeting time and space that suits everyone in the group
- Everybody bring a question. Each member of the study group should write and bring a test question on a card and quiz the other group members
- Compare class notes and textbooks to find answers
- Swap cards several times so everyone can study each question. Discuss your results
- Make sure each member contributes. Nobody wants to deal with a slacker, so don't be one! You can avoid this by having a conversation and agreeing to commit on the first day. Communication is a wonderful thing!
- Try communicating via Google Docs or Facebook. There are lots of ways you can study without actually gathering together, if necessary. It's possible to quiz one another online

You might work with others during or outside of class to complete group work as part of your assessment. It's important you understand how to collaborate effectively and ensure the work you submit is your own. When completing assessment as a group, you need to understand which aspects of the task can be completed collaboratively and which must be completed individually.

Make sure that each group member has a clearly defined role. Even though you are working as a group, each student should submit an individual response or be assessed on their own performance. For example, if you are presenting a play in Drama with four other students, each student will be assessed on their performance.

Always speak to your teacher if you have questions or concerns about your role in group work.

## **Using drafting practices**

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It is important to understand the requirements of the assessment task and to seek feedback and support from your teacher where appropriate.

Being proactive in managing any issues during the assessment process makes it easier to maintain academic integrity.

#### **Managing the length of your response**

All assessments indicate the required length of your response. This information:

- indicates the depth of the response required
- encourages the conciseness of your response
- ensures equity of conditions for all students.

There are different ways you can manage the length of your response.

#### **Too long**

- Review the task/question. Which information directly relates to your topic? Have you included too much general information?
- Be direct and concise. Do you get straight to the point or do you have a lot of unnecessary information? Are you repeating or over-explaining any points?
- Consider each paragraph/section. Do they overlap? Could the information be combined? Are you using too many examples?

#### **Too short**

- Explain your message/argument in detail. Have you defined and explained your key concepts? Have you clearly shown the steps in your reasoning?

- Justify and explain. Have you explained the information and/or quotes you've used? Is it clear why certain information supports your point?
- Check your research. Have you included research from enough sources and used enough examples? Do you need to find more information?

## Drafting

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A draft is an early version of a response to an assessment.

Teachers provide feedback on your draft so you can develop your response but the feedback must not compromise the authenticity of your work. Teacher feedback may:

- indicate some textual errors and that the draft requires more careful editing, but it is not your teachers' responsibility to correct or edit all the textual errors in a draft
- provide a summary of their feedback and advice to the whole class.
- Teacher feedback won't:
- provide you with new ideas, language or research to improve the quality of your response
- edit and proofread for spelling, grammar, punctuation and calculations.

The quality of a draft may vary from a brief outline to a response that is nearing completion. Your assessment task may also include checkpoints where you discuss or show your teacher your progress. The type of draft will depend on the subject and assessment technique. For example, if your assessment requires a presentation, your draft might be a rehearsal.

Your draft can also be used as evidence to prove your work is your own but it will not be marked or graded.

## High Yield Study Techniques

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Use the following High Yield techniques to improve results, in a more time-efficient manner:

1. Using the testing technique – doing quizzes, tests and past-papers
2. Mixing it up - don't have a 'maths day' or a 'science day', do a few different subjects each day
3. Getting plenty of sleep - sleep is a key component for good memory
4. Creating your own collaborative study group - revise with people who help you work harder
5. Teaching someone else– this helps ensure you understand and can explain key concepts
6. Paraphrasing and reflecting – use Cornell Notes as an effective recall method

The University of Queensland's (UQ) Student Services Learning website has online guides to help you with all aspects of study. While these are provided for UQ students, most of them are equally useful for senior students.

<http://www.uq.edu.au/student-services/learning>