

Note that this is the current version of Assignment 2 information and replaces that provided in the Introductory Book in your original external materials package. Note also that there are relatively minor changes to the original, with the most significant to the marking scheme.

## Assignment 2: Essay

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<b>Due date:</b>	5 May 2009
<b>Weighting:</b>	40% of total marks
<b>Format:</b>	Word-processed assignment (.doc file); 12 pt font; 1.5 line spacing; 3 cm left & right margins throughout
<b>Length (approx.):</b>	3,500-4,000 words (absolute maximum: 4,500 words) excluding tables/figures, references, title page etc
<b>Referencing:</b>	Harvard referencing system preferred; APA system also accepted; however, do not use footnotes.
<b>Submission:</b>	Online (electronic) submission via EASE on Study Desk

### Topic:

**You are required to thoroughly research a contemporary topic in environmental studies and provide a written essay on the topic.**

Attached is a list of some suitable topics. You may devise your own topic; however, you should check with your instructor (preferably by email).

The essay should contain a brief general overview and introduction to the topic, main body of information and conclusion(s). You may find that you will need to narrow your topic by using a case study or two. You can use sub-headings to help structure the material. You may also use diagrams to help illustrate the material; however, these should be used only where there is a clear link to the material presented.

#### Notes:

1. Your assignment must be word processed and submitted electronically via online submission (EASE). Follow the **Writing Guidelines for Assignments** available on the Course Website and use the word (.doc) template provided through EASE.
2. While you may use the internet to help search material, you are only permitted to cite a **maximum of 3 internet sources**. Encyclopaedic sources (such as Wikipedia) are **not** accepted at this level.
3. Copying material directly from sources is not acceptable. Plagiarism in any form is not acceptable and will be dealt with under USQ Regulations.

## Marking scheme

Criteria	Weight
<b>General:</b> overall presentation, layout (overall formatting)	5
<b>Structure:</b> arrangement, flow	8
<b>Language:</b> expression, grammar, spelling, etc	8
<b>Content:</b> depth, coverage of topic, etc/integration/understanding)	16
<b>Synthesis &amp; Integration:</b> understanding, integration & synthesis of concepts	16
<b>References:</b> use, citation, formatting, etc	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>

## Some Suggested Topics:

1. The renewed nuclear debate – risks and benefits in the 21<sup>st</sup> century
2. Global climate change – facts and implications for environment & society
3. Human population growth, environmental impacts and future requirements
4. Waste disposal – future strategies
5. Human health and the environment
6. Urban planning and the incorporation of environmental considerations
7. Acid rain – causes, effects and control
8. Land degradation and the need for rural conservation
9. Why do we need to conserve biodiversity?
10. Water pollution – significance and control
11. Air pollution – sources and solutions
12. The future use of agricultural chemicals
13. Salinity – soil and water salinity control
14. Role of environmental education in sustainable development
15. Environmental economics – uses and problems
16. Waste management and recycling
17. Green coal: is it a real alternative?
18. Pesticides and health
20. Environmental movements into the 21<sup>st</sup> century: is there still a role?
21. Environmental sustainability within the mining industry

22. Marine pollution – sources and solutions
23. Biological control of pests as an alternative to the use of chemicals
24. Fire as an ecological tool for management
25. Soil erosion
26. Role of science in environmental issues
27. The Greenhouse Effect – facts and fables
28. Organic farming: can it really feed the world?
29. World food production and human population growth – trends & predictions
30. Indigenous knowledge: environmental lessons from tribal people
31. The future of the Landcare movement in Australia
32. Global oceans – how much food can they supply?
33. Genetically modified organisms and implications for the environment
34. Any other suitable topic – to be approved by *Examiner*

## Guidelines & FAQs

### Additional Guidelines

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Refer to the marking scheme provided for this assignment and the Essay Writing Guide as these will be what the markers will be using to assess your essays.

While there are marks assigned to formatting, expression, structure etc, we are more interested in your ability to suitably research a topic and formulate a reasonably cohesive essay. Of course, you will need to cite appropriate sources for the information provided. Note the limit on the use of internet references.

Despite the wide variety of topics, in general, all students should provide a **general introduction** (possibly up to about 800 words) that provides an introduction, general overview, definitions and background (particularly at the global scale). Students should then to focus down onto one or a few aspects in **the body of the essay**, giving case studies or specific examples to illustrate the point(s). You should also provide some **concluding remarks** to finish off.

You are encouraged to use headings and sub-headings as this often helps to structure the essay. You may use tables and figures, as long as they are relevant and there is an obvious benefit to the essay and you make specific reference to them in the text.

Finally, **proof-read a printed draft of your assignment** before submitting. Sometimes printers miss pages or material becomes jumbled. Other times students submit a wrong version or their final essay has some very silly little editing errors that will attract penalties. It also helps to check whether or not your sentences make any sense.

## FAQs

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- *How can I get an extension on my assignment?*  
 In accordance with Faculty of Sciences **Academic Policy**, you must request an extension **prior** to the due date. You will need some form of documentary evidence (medical certificate, letter from employer etc) to support any claim for an extension. Claims of problems with printing, you lost your computer disk/USB device, you couldn't get on the computers in the computer room or the computer crashed, your baby spewed on your assignment ... will not be accepted as justifications for extension.  
  
 Late assignments without an approved extension will be penalised 5% for each working day late, in accordance with the course specifications and Faculty policy.
- *What happens if we go over the 4,000 word limit?*  
 We're not that pedantic that we'd bother counting all the words in your essay. We are happy if you are say 15-20% over or under the 4,000 word limit. Grossly excessive or insufficient essays will, of course, be penalised.
- *Can I submit a hand-written assignment?*  
 No.
- *Do we have to attach the marking scheme and cover sheet to the essay?*  
 Yes. This is needed to submit the assignment electronically.
- *Do we need an 'abstract'?*  
 No
- *Do we follow the 'Introduction -> Body -> Conclusion' pattern for the essay?*  
 It is always good practice to think about the logical structure and flow of your essay.
- *Do we need a specific conclusion section?*  
 Not necessarily, but you should ensure you at least include a concluding paragraph or two to provide some form of a synthesis of all the information presented earlier. This is a very important part of an essay, as it will often involve some considerable thinking.
- *Can we include diagrams and figures in the essay?*  
 Yes. Some topics will require diagrams, figures or tables to help illustrate concepts. However, you should ensure that you have appropriately acknowledged the source (referenced) of any diagram.
- *Can we use footnotes?*  
 Generally we don't like to see excessive use of footnotes; however we understand that sometimes it may be necessary, but please keep footnotes to a minimum.
- *Are Encyclopaedic references (CD-ROM or online) allowed?*  
 Encyclopaedic-type references (such as *Encarta*, *Wikipedia*, etc) are **not acceptable** at this level (in any University courses) and we would expect that you have moved well-beyond this type of reference.
- *Is the list of references a 'bibliography' in that we can list sources that we used to research the topics but didn't make reference to within the assignment?*  
 No, only include references that you actually cite in the body of the text.
- *How many references should we use?*  
 In short, as many as it takes to answer the question!

- *Can we use internet references?*

You are only allowed to cite a maximum of three internet sources within the essay, although you may check out many more as part of your researching. Internet sources are a useful and quick starting point, but we would expect the majority of your references to be primary sources (journals etc) or at least secondary sources (text books, reviews etc).

- *How should we use references in the essay?*

See the *Essay Writing Guide*. However, we do accept that some disciplines may have their own style. The important point here is that your referencing should be consistent and contain the appropriate information indicated in the guide.

- *I really don't think I will be able to get my assignment in on time, how do I apply for an extension?*

Extensions can only be granted by the course examiner and are given for *bona fide* reasons only. An email request directly to the course examiner (lebrocq@usq.edu.au) is the preferred method for applying for an extension of due date for an assignment

- *Can I apply for an extension on or after the day the assignment is due?*

No. The University policy regarding extensions stipulates that requests for extension must be made prior to the due date.