

Academic Glossary

Appendix pl. appendices)	Additional information, the detail of which is not essential to answer the question, appended (added) after the end of an assignment. The appendix may be in text, tables, graphs or any other format and is not part of any word count. Appendices are often marked A, B, C etc. or numbered.
Assignment	An 'umbrella' term used to mean any piece of work a student is required to do as part of his/her course of study. This may take the form of an essay, report, case study, experiment, presentation or any other. Assignments usually count towards the final mark of a course of study, though not always.
Bibliography	A list of all the sources of information a student has cited in the text of his/her work, together with all other sources of information used but not necessarily cited or referred to in any other way and which the student has read or part read. The bibliography appears at the end of a piece of work and is arranged in alphabetical order by surname of the author/s. See also: List of references and References.
Case study	Describes and investigates a situation (for example, a patient being treated in hospital), analyses that situation in the light of relevant theories and literature, identifies any problems, suggests possible solutions and/or makes recommendations.
Citation	A source quoted in an essay, report or dissertation.
Dissertation	An extended piece of writing, usually on a topic chosen by a student and based on that student's own research. Undergraduate students are often asked to write a dissertation (usually between 10,000 and 20,000 words) in their final year, as are postgraduate students at Masters level (usually a minimum of 20,000 words)
Empirical research	Research which is based on trial, experiment and/or experience. From the Greek en = in and peira = a trial.

Essay	A piece of continuous writing on a specific topic. Traditionally, essays do not have sub-titles, though some departments may accept these. Check if you are unsure.
Examination board	A board of examiners, comprising members of staff from the relevant awarding department, which meets at the conclusion of a module or other course of study to decide which candidates/students should be passed or failed and at what level if any. There is usually an internal board followed by an external board which has the addition of one or more external examiners.
External examiner	<p>A member of staff, usually very experienced, from a higher education institution who visits another institution for a few days to verify that the correct standards are being applied for the award of qualifications in a course or programme.</p> <p>External examiners, who may be one or more in number depending on the size of the department visited, are usually reappointed on a three- or four-year rotation system. It is an essential moderation process for the country to maintain academic standards.</p>
Formative assessment	An assessment of work which aims to evaluate and give guidance for improvement or further work. In contrast to summative assessment, therefore, its purpose is positive, supportive and pedagogic, rather than uniquely judgmental or final.
Group work	A task, presentation or project undertaken by a group of students, rather than by an individual student.
‘Harvard’ referencing system	An ‘author/date’ referencing system, recommended by many departments in this university and a system in common use today.
Independent learning	Taking responsibility for your own study and learning, instead of others telling you exactly what to do and when to do it.
Intercalation	The interruption of a course of study for a term, semester, year

	(Or exceptionally longer), by agreement with the department of the institution concerned, so as to continue study at a later date.
Journal	The original meaning of the word, 'daily' (from the French jour = day) has been altered to mean any academic publication which appears at regular intervals (weekly, monthly, quarterly, annually ...) Academic journals are always peer-reviewed in order to try and ensure quality of content. See also Periodical .
Learning outcome	What the student should know, understand or be able to do after completion of a piece of work or module.
Learning style	A unique collection of individual skills and preferences that determine how a person perceives, gathers and processes information. No learning style is necessarily better than any other, because everyone's style is different.
Lecture	A talk given by a lecturer to a large group of students. Lectures outline the main aspects of a subject and students are usually able to ask questions during or after the lecture
List of references	A list of all the sources of information a student has referred to directly or indirectly in a piece of work. The list appears at the end of the work and is arranged alphabetically by author surname or numerically, depending on the reference system used. See also: Bibliography and References.
Literature review	A systematic survey and critical assessment of what has been written in a topic area. It may include printed, electronic, published or unpublished sources of information.
Module	A distinct part or unit of a course of study.
Pedagogy	The art and principles of teaching (adj. pedagogic)

Peer review	<p>All academic journals or periodicals of any merit are peer reviewed.</p> <p>Before an article submitted by an author is accepted, the editor, if he or she thinks it could be included in a future edition, will send the manuscript to two or more known experts in the field for their comments on its quality. Upon receipt of these reports, the editor will then decide whether or not the submitted article will be published in his/her journal and report back to the author concerned. This is the process of peer review.</p>
Periodical	Any form of journal containing articles by different authors on a particular subject area and of an academic nature, which is published periodically, e.g. every month, bi-monthly, quarterly.
Plagiarism	Using the work, ideas or words of others in your own work without acknowledging their source. In other words, fraud: passing off the ideas and/or words and/or any intellectual creation of others as your own. Plagiarism can also be unintentional, and the most effective way to avoid it is to use a recognised referencing system and adopt a proper note-taking technique.
Portfolio	A collection of short pieces of work, which together make up a detailed study of a subject area or act as evidence of the development of a set of skills
Practical	A 'hands on' session where the theories that are taught within modules are applied to real situations. Practical sessions usually require some preparation.
Problem-based learning	A method of teaching and learning, sometimes in groups, using imaginary but plausible scenarios through which, with guidance from a tutor, students acquire the knowledge and skills needed to try and resolve the problem posed.
Proofreading	The detailed checking of a text for errors of punctuation, grammar and syntax. (The term 'proof' comes from the printing industry, referring to the first print from a negative or press, which is then 'proofed' before going into full print production.)

Quotation	<p>A short extract of the words or any other material from a work published in print, electronically or via any other means.</p> <p>Quotations must be clearly recognisable as such, for example, through the use of single or double quotation marks or italics.</p> <p>Always follow the guidelines provided by your department.</p>
References	<p>The details of sources of information which a student has used in a piece of work (for example, a book, website or journal article), in a set format laid down by the student's department.</p> <p>See also: List of references and Bibliography. N.B.</p> <p>Notwithstanding anything written in this glossary, you should always follow the guidance on referencing set out in your module handbook(s).</p>
Report	<p>A formal, structured piece of writing that usually presents the findings of some research or an information gathering process.</p>
Research proposal	<p>Students are usually asked to prepare a research proposal for their dissertation or project. The proposal explains what the student intends to do, how it will be done, and why it is important.</p>
Semester	<p>A period of the academic year, originating in American campuses, where summer schools are common. A semester lasts for about 10 weeks, plus two or more weeks of examinations.</p>
Seminar	<p>A discussion session on a topic with a lecturer and a small group of students (usually up to about twenty). Seminars often follow a lecture and go into more detail on the topic. Students are usually asked to prepare for a seminar, for example, by doing some reading on the topic.</p>
Summative assessment	<p>A form of assessment which summarises a student's quality of learning on the conclusion of a module or course of study or part thereof, usually in the form of an examination, and for which a mark or grade is given. See also formative assessment.</p>
Supervisor	<p>A member of staff appointed to supervise an individual student's period of study, dissertation or thesis. The supervisor will arrange</p>

	regular or occasional meetings with the student so as to give advice and guidance.
Transcript	The written record of all the marks/grades given to a student throughout his or her course of study, along with any relevant comments.
Tutorial	A meeting and teaching session between a lecturer and a small group of students (of any number from 1 to about 15).
Unfair means	Any way in which a student or candidate in an examination gains an unfair advantage over his or her peers i.e. some form of cheating. Plagiarism is one of these means.
Viva	An oral examination to verify the student's knowledge and understanding of a particular topic. Students who have recently completed a thesis are usually required to undergo a viva conducted by an external examiner before being awarded the degree or qualification.
Workshop	A practical, interactive teaching session with a lecturer and a small group of students (usually up to about twenty). The session is likely to include individual and group exercises and activities, as well as discussion.