

» WRITING CMI ASSIGNMENTS

INTRODUCTION

These tips and hints provide a brief summary of key points to consider when constructing assignment for the Chartered Management Institute qualifications.

This guide is offered as a general introduction to assignment construction only as the style of assignments is up to the Learning Provider Centre and the tutor and students should seek confirmation of the appropriate style.

In all written assignments consider the reader from the beginning. Your reader must find your report useful, and the facts presented in such a way that they can be absorbed easily and accurately. You cannot use suitable language, suitable layout or even select the material properly, unless you know to whom you are talking to and what is wanted from the assignment

KEY ACTIONS

1. Structure

It is more than useful to have a generally accepted structure or framework set of headings under which to construct the various elements of the assignment. This structure or framework should be logical and allow the author to build a persuasive case to lead the reader(s) to a well-argued and concise set of Conclusions and Recommendations (where appropriate). It is also extremely helpful in planning the timetable for assignment investigation, application and construction. The following main headings are offered below, and each will be discussed in more detail later in this document.

- › Title or cover page
- › Contents page
- › Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations (where appropriate)
- › Introduction and background
- › Task or Learning Outcome heading
- › Assessment Criteria sub heading for each Task or Learning Outcome
- › Conclusions
- › Appendices (Where appropriate)
- › Bibliography

2. Writing styles

You are writing for the reader(s), not yourself. Always consider a style appropriate for the reader.

Where a number of different readers are anticipated, such as internal and external verifiers and award moderators, it is suggested a more formal and general style is adopted as follows:

- › Do not write in the first person; the third person is less emotive and more persuasive.
 - › You should write in a narrative style and avoid bullet points as much as possible.
 - › Refer to models and theories but do not cut and paste the models and theories. It is better to refer to them and give an example of how you actually used it and describe what you learnt.
 - › Always check spelling, and do not rely solely on automatic spell-checkers.
 - › Stay clear of clichés, jargon and statements in inverted commas, unless these are quotations which are attributed. Occupationally used jargon and terminology is acceptable providing it is either explained in the main text or is shown in the Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations.

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- › Check your grammar; we all make errors, and it is advisable to ask a colleague to critically and constructively check your work before submission.
- › Number your pages consecutively in the bottom right hand corner and place your name and report title in the header section of each page. If required by your tutor, place your student number after your name on the cover or title page
- › A useful point to remember is ABC in report writing – Accuracy, Brevity and Clarity.

3. Presentation

Assignments and reports should be typed. If a print copy is required, this should be bound in a secure cover with the Title Page being immediately evident as the cover page.

Ideally, typing should be either 10 or 11-point font, with a 1.5 line spacing to allow for effortless reading – this usually results in approximately 200 words for each side of A4 paper. Do not use an exotic font style; Arial or Verdana is very readable, although you may have a requisite house style within your own organisation.

If using the earlier suggested report structure at Table 1, ensure each main task or learning outcome heading commences on a new page. Number each Appendix item consecutively as they are mentioned in the main text and, if possible, tab each individual Appendix for easy reader access. We do prefer minimum or no appendices where possible.

4. Elements of a report

Title page

This must show the title of the assignment, your name, your organisation or study centre, your CMI number, the date of compilation and the qualification for which the report is written. We also need your word count for each task or learning outcome that you have written with the allowed word count next to your actual word count.

Contents page

This lists, in a tabular format, the headings of the report against the page number on which each section begins. It should also list the Appendices titles (where used and below the table of main contents), with the relevant appendix number against each. Check that your table does correctly indicate the page and appendix numbers as they appear in the report – this is a common error. Word processing software often has an option to automatically generate a contents page.

Glossary of terms and abbreviations (Where appropriate)

Normally presented as a table and contains all those occupationally specific terms or abbreviations which the author has used in the written text. Each term or abbreviation is to be fully explained for the benefit of the reader. Do not expect the reader to understand the same terms and abbreviations that you understand - assume they know none. Once the term or abbreviation has been shown in this section, it is acceptable to use the term or abbreviation in the remainder of the document without any further reference or explanation.

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Introduction and background

Use this section to set the scene for the reader. Briefly outline your business, your role and why the assignment topic is relevant to your role. This should normally be no more than a quarter to half a page. Remember, the reader may not know you, your business and your link to the unit you are working on for the assignment. Help them understand the context for your assignment responses. The Introduction must not be included as part of the assignment word count.

Task or Learning Outcome Heading and Assessment Criteria Sub Headings

Depending on your assignment brief, you use the Task, or where instructed, the Learning Outcome as a section heading. You type the Task number and the brief from the assignment brief. You then enter and respond to each assessment criteria. These are your section sub headings. Make sure your Task sections meet the guide word count. The allowance is normally + or – 10% of the stated word count.

For example:

Section

Assignment Task 1 (Guideline word count 800 - 850 words)

Explain the cycle of inputs between coach and coachee and evaluate how reflection, self-awareness, dialogue, questioning and listening techniques can be applied, including determining the use of problem solving techniques, to facilitate organisational culture change. (Reminder: Use this as your assignment section heading)

Sub Heading

A.C. 1.1 Explain what is meant by the coaching cycle

The coaching cycle is a form of learning and development based on...

Conclusions

These must follow logically from the main body of the assignment. Conclusions are deductions made from the learning and application from working through the assignment. What did you learn, what worked well and why, what not so well and what will happen differently next time, how will you build on this? Your Conclusion must not be included as part of the assignment word count.

Appendices

This section contains the supporting material that is too complex or detailed to include in the main body of your text, but this must be referenced within your main body of text. When referring to Appendix items in your main body text, ensure you refer to the items chronologically, that is, Appendix 1 will be mentioned first, followed by Appendix 2, etc. For CMI unit assignments, there is a preference for no appendices for units. This typically would be used for larger reports. If you do need to include an appendix, make sure it is directly relevant to a point you have covered and that it is not a cut and paste theory or model.

Bibliography

This is a listing of all the material referenced during the course of the investigation. It should be formatted

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to include the title of the material, author, publisher (if appropriate) and year of publication. Some material referenced may be in-house documentation, in which case the publisher will be the name of the organisation or department. See our guides to Referencing and Avoiding Plagiarism, as well as the Additional Resources below.

5 Assessment criteria

All assessments will be made against the following marking criteria:

Clarity and Flow of Argument

It is expected that you will have understood a range of theories and concepts presented in the materials, and will have established your own position regarding the topic areas being assessed. You should demonstrate an ability to develop your argument through the assessment and provide evidence that you have fully grasped the subject matter.

Knowledge, Understanding, Application and Reflection

It is essential that you demonstrate a systematic understanding of knowledge presented in the materials and wider reading. You will be expected to indicate the depth of your understanding by applying your learning to issues raised in the assessments and reflecting on what worked and why and what didn't quite go to plan and what you will do as a result of that experience.

Use of sources, referencing and experience

You should illustrate and justify your argument with reference to the study materials, to other sources of learning and to your own experience in the work place. It is expected that you should also demonstrate independence of thought and provide a reflection on your learning as part of the development of a self-critical approach and commitment to lifelong learning.

Assessment structure and style of expression

The assessment should be appropriately presented with a clear structure. The argument should flow logically between points and reach a conclusion. The process by which opinions and conclusions have been reached should be abundantly clear.

You are required to achieve a Pass against all assessment criteria. If this is not achieved, participants will be allowed one resubmission of any failed assessment, to give them the opportunity to achieve the required Pass result. In the event of the resubmission being recorded as a fail, the Internal Verifier has the discretion to look at the participant's overall performance and, depending on the circumstances, decide the course of action to be taken. In most cases this excludes the candidate from achieving the full qualification but will receive unit certification for those of an acceptable standard.

Essentially learning, understanding, application (where possible) and reflection).

All assessments will be marked and moderated by the Chartered Management Institute. No award can be achieved without the recommendation of the Internal Verifier and the Moderator

Answer the exact wording of the assessment criteria

Each assessment criteria begins with an action verb – evaluate, analyse, compare, etc. In this hints and tips document, we have included a copy of what the key action words require you to do for that assessment criteria. If, for example, you are asked to **Evaluate** something and you have not evaluated the

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pro's and con's or the strengths and weaknesses of a theory or topic, it is likely you will receive an assessment result of 'Referred' for that assessment criteria. Again, if you are asked to **Analyse** something, you need to break the subject or situation down and analyse each part in detail, not simply explain a high level theory or topic.

Make sure you fully read the assessment criteria, especially if it has a plural included such as individuals or examples. For example:

- Individuals means more than one person
- Examples means more than one example
- Explain differing techniques, more than one technique
- Commitment of individuals means more than one person
- Establish goals and action plans, more than one of each
- Develop coaching interventions, more than one approach to coaching

To help you understand the assessment criteria and what an assessor is looking for, it is always valuable to understand the assessment criteria Indicative Content. We have already included this in your Joining Instructions as a guide to help you understand how to respond to the assessment criteria.

Read, understand and clearly respond to the action verb and the specific words in each assessment criteria.

Again, you must achieve a Pass for each assessment criteria to achieve your qualification.

6 Saving and Submitting your assignment

All work should be submitted in an electronic document, preferably in a Microsoft Word file. The document must be clearly titled with either First Submission or Resubmission together with the learner's name (Surname and first initial), company name, learner's CMI 'P' number, the qualification code and the assignment CMI assignment unit number. For example:

First Submission-Aviva-McPhedranA-P00001-5A2V1-5017V1.doc

Only one electronic document should be submitted for each assignment.

Please note that your Membership number and address, as well as the word count and date of your submission must be clearly indicated on the front page of your assignment document.

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ASSESSMENT CRITERIA 'ACTION VERBS'

Action Words in CMI Units – Ref: AB/GUD/011/Jul16/V1

Command Verb	Explanation
Analyse	Break the subject or complex situation(s) into separate parts and examine each part in detail; identify the main issues and show how the main ideas are related to practice and why they are important. Reference to current research or theory may support the analysis.
Compare	Review the subject(s) in detail – looking at similarities and differences.
Define	Show or state clearly and accurately.
Describe	Provide an extended range of detailed factual information about the topic or item in a logical way.
Discuss	Give a detailed account including a range of views or opinions, which include contrasting perspectives.
Evaluate	Consider the strengths and weaknesses, arguments for and against and/or similarities and differences. The writer should then judge the evidence from the different perspectives and make a valid conclusion or reasoned judgement. Apply current research or theories to support the evaluation when applicable.
Examine	Inspect (something) thoroughly in order to determine its nature or condition.
Explain	Make something clear to someone by describing or revealing relevant information in more detail.
Identify	Ascertain the origin, nature or definitive characteristics of something.
Justify	Provide a rationale for actions and/or decisions. Your rationale should be underpinned by research, academic theory, data analysis or experience.
Assess	Provide a reasoned judgement or rationale of the standard, quality, value or importance of something, informed by relevant facts/rationale.

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ASSIGNMENT SUBMISSION CHECKLIST

This checklist has been designed to make sure you submit your assignment in the right format first time.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The Assignment
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cover Page
<input type="checkbox"/>	- Name
<input type="checkbox"/>	- Company
<input type="checkbox"/>	- CMI Membership Number
<input type="checkbox"/>	- CMI Unit Number and Unit Title
<input type="checkbox"/>	- Date completed
<input type="checkbox"/>	- Actual word count per task
<input type="checkbox"/>	- Allowable word count per task
<input type="checkbox"/>	- Total word count (+ or – 10% and excluding Introduction and Conclusion)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Contents Page
<input type="checkbox"/>	Introduction (Not included in the word count)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Section Headings by Task Number
<input type="checkbox"/>	- Sub-headings per Task based on each assessment criteria including numbers
<input type="checkbox"/>	- Assessment criteria satisfy each command verb
<input type="checkbox"/>	- Each assessment criteria answered in line with syllabus Good Practice guidance
<input type="checkbox"/>	- Understanding of theory, application where possible, reflections
<input type="checkbox"/>	- Each assessment criteria action verb answered
<input type="checkbox"/>	- Checked for any plurals such as individuals, examples, etc
<input type="checkbox"/>	- Use of work based examples linked to theory where possible
<input type="checkbox"/>	- Word count as per task allowance
<input type="checkbox"/>	Conclusion (Not included in the word count)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Appendices (Where appropriate or allowed)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bibliography
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Additional Checks
<input type="checkbox"/>	- Assignment saved as a word .doc using the approved saving format
<input type="checkbox"/>	- The command verb of each assessment criteria has been clearly answered
<input type="checkbox"/>	- A footer has been included with your name and page numbering
<input type="checkbox"/>	- No cut and paste from the internet – it's all your own work
<input type="checkbox"/>	- Print off, sign, scan and save as a .pdf the Assessment Declaration Form
<input type="checkbox"/>	- Both Declaration and Assignment then emailed to named contacts as briefed