



# Wollongong College Australia

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# Foundation Studies Program

(CRICOS course codes: 007732G, 023266F)

## Subject Outline Summer 2009/10

## FSP 111 Session 1 FSP 211 Session 2 Academic English

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WCA-FSP 111/FSP 211-S0/10

# Academic English

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## Subject description

Academic English is a skills-based subject designed to help students acquire the essential academic skills required at university. The subject introduces students to analytical and critical thinking, supervised and independent academic research, and appropriate oral and written presentation of research results.

Academic English aims to ensure students' academic success in their first year at university by helping them become independent learners. A key element in achieving such success is willingness on the part of students to take responsibility for their own learning and to strive consistently to improve their own work. Students are expected to reflect on their study methods and apply skills and strategies learnt in Academic English to all their subjects.

In their first session, students will be introduced to the expectations of tertiary study and essential skills and strategies. These will be revised and built upon in their second session with the expectation that students will have developed greater independence in academic skills.

## Subject structure

Academic English is a 16 credit point, two-session subject delivered as 8 hours of scheduled classes per week. Session 1 has a credit point value of 6, while Session 2 is valued at 10 credit points. Classes consist of mini-lectures, demonstrations, class discussions, group activities, research consultations, seminars and tests. Each session is of 14 week's duration with face-to-face classes scheduled for the first 12 weeks and a study/examination period in Weeks 13 and 14.

New and continuing students are deliberately placed together in tutorials to allow both first and second-session students to benefit from interaction with their peers. Second-session students are expected to take the initiative in mentoring new students, a process which allows them to build on and refine their communication and other academic skills, while new students are expected to seek and accept assistance from their more experienced peers.

In addition to scheduled class sessions, students are expected to spend additional time in individual study and research. As a general guideline students will need to spend at least 1 hour in private study (including completing homework and revision) for every hour of scheduled class time. During Weeks 2 to 10, students are also expected to engage in weekly research discussions with their tutor.

Teachers will be available for a consultation time each week. Students will be notified of the time and location of the consultation session during Week 1 of the Session. It is recommended that students experiencing difficulty with this subject arrange to consult with the teacher as difficulties are encountered.

Some students may require tutorial support to improve language/literacy skills. Where this is recommended, students will be advised to use the College's self-access facilities in the Multimedia Centre in their own time. These facilities are located upstairs in building 30. Where this is recommended, your attendance at and use of these facilities may form part of your participation mark.

## Learning resources

There is no set text for this subject. However, students are strongly advised to purchase the latest edition of a concise dictionary such as the *Macquarie Concise Dictionary*, the *Australian Concise Oxford Dictionary*, or the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, as well as a thesaurus, preferably the *Oxford Compact Thesaurus* or Roget's.

Student learning will be supported by library skills classes, online tutorials, one-on-one student-tutor consultation and a variety of reading materials supplied by the class tutor. These and the student's own research will form the basis of assessment tasks, in-class activities and homework throughout the session.

For the majority of their assessment components, students are expected to use the online resources of the Wollongong University Library and resources at their relevant university/campus library. They will also be expected to keep up to date with news and current affairs by regularly reading reputable English language newspapers and current affairs journals and watching English news and current affairs programs.

## Subject outcomes

Successful completion of Academic English will enable students to:

- analyse questions and understand directional terms
- confidently and competently use the resources of an academic library
- evaluate sources of information
- synthesise information from various sources
- understand and construct academic argument
- present research results in well-structured formal presentations, academic papers and essays
- accurately and appropriately acknowledge sources in oral and written work
- understand and avoid plagiarism and other inappropriate use of sources
- participate effectively in academic discussion
- take a leading role in peer mentoring
- reflect upon and edit their own work
- reflect on their learning skills and evaluate their own needs and achievements.

## **Subject outline in weeks**

The following guide to lessons and activities may be adjusted to suit the needs of the group as long as subject outcomes and assessment criteria are met.

### **Week 1 - Introduction to academic study**

Review of subject requirements and assessment components

Needs analysis: Listening / Reading / Writing

Successful learning strategies

Beginning the research process:

- Analysing questions and understanding directional terms

- Discussion and selection of research questions

### **Week 2 - Finding and evaluating sources**

Library skills

Evaluating sources: introduction to online tutorial

Evaluating sources

Research assistance & consultation

### **Week 3 - Gathering information and avoiding plagiarism**

Individual presentations of definitions

Reading strategies

Note-taking & summarising

Acknowledging sources

Research assistance & consultation

### **Week 4 - Writing explanations**

Understanding and constructing academic argument

Evaluating sources / Writing annotations

Research assistance & consultation

#### **Evaluating Sources Quiz**

### **Week 5 - Structure in academic writing**

Introductions / Extended definitions

Paragraphs / Conclusions

Research assistance & consultation

#### **Research Progress Paper Due**

## **Week 6 - Presentation skills / Reflection on learning**

Presentation skills

Reflection on learning

Research assistance & consultation

## **Week 7 - Academic discussion skills**

Academic discussion skills

Research assistance & consultation

### **In-class Assessment**

## **Week 8 - Practising presentation and academic discussion**

Preparing presentation summaries and notes

Presentation and discussion practice

Research assistance & consultation

## **Weeks 9 & 10 - Presentations**

Tutorial presentations and class discussions

## **Week 11 - Editing one's work / Academic skills practice**

Academic writing and editing of draft essays

Preparation for debate

Academic skills practice

## **Week 12 - Reflection on learning / Academic skills practice**

Final editing of essay drafts

Reflection on learning

Academic skills practice:

Reading comprehension

Debate

### **Essay Due**

## **Weeks 13 & 14 Final examination Period**

Please note that there is no final examination for Academic English in this study period.

# Assessment

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## Assessment and plagiarism policy

All written assessment tasks, with the exception of examinations and in-class tasks, must be word-processed unless students are otherwise advised.

Students must keep copies of all assessment tasks submitted for marking with the exception of class tests and examinations.

Plagiarism is a form of cheating or stealing that happens when a student uses someone else's work and presents it as his/her own without showing where it comes from. To avoid this, students are expected to submit their own original work for assessment and to acknowledge accurately and appropriately all sources used in essays and other assignments.

For information regarding assessment, plagiarism, acknowledging sources and examination rules, please refer to the Wollongong College Australia Student Handbook <http://www.wca.uow.edu.au/handbook>

## Assessment schedule

Task	Due	Weighting	Length/Time
Evaluating Sources Quiz	Week 4	5%	20 minutes
Research Progress Paper	Week 5	15%	500 words
In-class Assessment	Week 7	25%	1.5 hours
Tutorial Presentation & Discussion	Weeks 9-10	20%	15-20 minutes
Essay	Week 12	25%	Session 1 - 1,000 words; Session 2 - 1,300 words
Participation	Ongoing	10%	Weeks 1-12

**Session 1 results are weighted at 37.5%, Session 2 results at 62.5%.**

## Marking Guidelines

WCA best practice is that students can normally expect to have assessment tasks handed back within two weeks, and before the next assessment task is due. On occasion there may be exceptions to this time frame due to, for example, the size of the task, the size of the class, teacher illness or teacher leave.

Where there are several teachers marking a major assessment task, tasks will be handed back by all the teachers within the same week.

## Assessment criteria and explanation of components

All assessment components are marked according to set marking criteria. Some assessment tasks may undergo check-marking by a panel of tutors.

### **Evaluating Sources Quiz** **5%**

During the first two weeks of session, students will receive a library skills lesson in the library and a lesson on evaluating sources of information. To reinforce these lessons, students will complete online tutorials in evaluating sources by the end of Week 3.

The quiz consists of 10 multiple choice questions and will be administered as an in-class test during Week 4.

### **Research Progress Paper** **15%**

The research progress paper is the first of three assignments related to the research question selected by the student in Week 1. The selected research question also forms the basis of the student's tutorial presentation and final essay.

The research progress paper must be word-processed, formatted and structured according to the marking criteria specified on the research progress paper cover sheet. The paper will be assessed on the interpretation of the research question, the analysis of the issues arising from the question, definitions of key terms, development of argument, use and evaluation of at least three (3) academic journal articles and acknowledgment of sources, and use of English.

Specific marking criteria can be found on the research progress paper cover sheet and will be explained in tutorials.

### **In-class Assessment** **25%**

The In-class Assessment will involve planning and writing an argument essay of at least 500 words. Students will be given an essay question and related stimulus material. The essay will be assessed on analysis of the question, planning of the essay, structure, argument and refutation of counterargument, and use of English.

Specific marking criteria will be explained in tutorials.

### **Tutorial Presentation & Discussion** **20%**

The tutorial presentation is the second of the three assignments related to the research question selected by the student in Week 1.

The presentation will be assessed on structure, interpretation of the research question, analysis of issues arising from the question, definitions of key terms, development of argument and refutation of counterargument, range of research, acknowledgment of sources throughout the presentation, communication skills and ability to answer questions during the discussion time which follows the presentation.

Students must submit a tutorial presentation summary and annotated bibliography no later than 24 hours before the scheduled presentation.

Specific marking criteria can be found on the tutorial presentation cover sheet and will be explained in tutorials.

## **Essay** **25%**

The essay is the culmination of the student's research effort. The essay should be written after the presentation and take into account the tutor's comments on the presentation.

The essay will be assessed on structure, interpretation of the research question, analysis of issues arising from the question, definitions of key terms, development of argument and refutation of counterargument, range of research, acknowledgment and evaluation of sources, and use of English.

Specific marking criteria can be found on the essay cover sheet and will be explained in tutorials.

To allow markers to check for plagiarism, students will be required to submit **both** electronic & hard copy versions of the essay by the due date. The mark for this assessment will be unable to be finalised until both electronic & hard copy versions have been submitted.

## **Participation** **10%**

Active participation in tutorials is expected of all students in all classes in the Foundation Studies Program. Participation in class discussions will help develop the student's confidence in questioning and commenting on material presented, encourage critical thinking and allow the tutor to evaluate the student's progress.

Participation marks will be allocated according to the following criteria:

- Constructive contribution to general class discussion
- Constructive contribution to discussions following presentations
- Proactive consultation with tutor
- Proactive consultation of language and literacy support facilities, especially where this has been recommended by the tutor following the needs analysis or an assessment task
- Completion of non-assessable tasks including homework
- Active preparation for research consultations, group work and debates
- Participation in group work and debates
- Second-session students: active mentoring of new students, ie, assisting with questioning, explanation, vocabulary and, where relevant, cultural background
- New students: active enlistment of peer assistance, especially from students of different cultural background and language