

## Marking scheme for research paper

### Introduction /3 Marks

**Rationale.** Whether or not they make you feel that the topic is interesting and worth studying. How well does the introduction describe what will follow in the body of the paper? /2

- 2/2 should be reserved for a paper that makes you want to read more and that clearly states what will be discussed.
- Most papers that say why the topic is important (perhaps with an anecdote, a statistic, etc) and include the sentence: “This paper will discuss...” will receive a 1.5 out of 2. Note: this does not mean that writing “this paper will discuss” is in any way unacceptable, just that doing so without also grabbing the reader's attention is not sufficient for a mark of 2/2.
- If it is unclear what the paper will discuss, or there seems to be no attempt to make the topic sound important and interesting, the intro should receive 1 out of 2.
- A mark of 0/2 would be given to an introduction that does not mention the topic (really, this happens!) and makes no effort to describe why the topic is important.

**Clarity/style.** /1 – You might take points off here if the introduction is overly long or short (relative to the length of the paper), if the writing/grammar/spelling are poor, or if it is for some other reason hard to follow.

### Body of paper /11 Marks

#### **Choice/quality of research discussed.** /3

How well the choice of articles allowed them to discuss the topic. Basically, did they just use the first few articles that came up in a search, or did they do competent research that focused on some specific topic? Sources other than articles and academic books are acceptable, as long as they also have the minimum number of academic references. However, more than three uses of the textbook should lower their grade by at least one point. Any use of mass media (websites, newspapers, magazines, popular books) should be assessed carefully; it can be appropriate to use a case or two as an illustration or to help make a point, but take off 1 mark if it is used as though it were scientific evidence.

In some cases, there might not have been much research on the topic, and the student may use peripheral material. That is ok if it is done well (ie: one student wrote about friendship in patients with schizophrenia, and there is very little literature on that, so he combined research from related areas to write a good paper). However, if a student says there is not much research on a topic that should be a red flag to do a (very brief) literature search to see if that is true.

Please note that including many references does not mean that the paper is good. It is often clear that students have cited articles that they have not read; a good sign of this is when they cite all the same articles as the ones mentioned in the introduction to another paper. So be a bit cautious when there are tons of references (I have received up to 85 references for an 18 page paper!). On the other hand, some papers get full marks on this section (and high marks overall) with the minimum number of references, if those references are well chosen.

#### **Original thought.** /4

Students are expected to “go beyond” the articles that they cite, and do more than just repeat the conclusions of others. This could take many forms: criticism of the papers, new ideas, connections between articles, real world applications, specific ideas for future research. It is not necessary for all of these to be covered. In other words, did they just summarize five articles, or did they show real

understanding of the material, thought critically about what the articles mean and what is missing, etc? Simply saying “more research needs to be done on this topic” is so vague that it is not considered original thought and shouldn't improve their mark (although it doesn't hurt their mark either). When assigning this mark, be sure to check the conclusion section; although it is much better for this kind of discussion to go in the body of the paper, some students leave it to the very end.

- Clever ideas, clearly presented, that show a very strong understanding of the topic. For this mark, a student has written a significant amount (>2 paragraphs) that could constitute critical thought: 4/4
- Several insights showing that the student understands the topic beyond just the articles: 3/4
- Little in the way of original thought. Maybe one or two sentences that would qualify. 2/4
- Very meagre evidence of original thought, but barely goes beyond the articles cited: 1/4
- Total absence of original thought, appears to have very poor/limited understanding of the topic **OR** obviously and completely faulty premises or reasoning **OR** a significant portion of the paper (>2 paragraph) is written in the student's own words but is reporting the findings of others without citation: 0/4

**Clarity/style.** Including flow/connections between topics and paragraphs. There is no need to count grammar and spelling mistakes, but take off marks if these errors make the paper more difficult to read. A paper does not require extraordinary style to receive a score of 2/2. Scores of 0/2 should be reserved for very poorly written papers that appear to have not been proof-read. /2

**Gestalt.** Overall impression of the paper's content. /2

Conclusion /3 Marks

**Conclusion or summary.** Should flow from rest of paper (ie: new information or arguments should not be introduced in the last paragraph, it should summarize what has already been stated and argued. 2/2 reserved for interesting or insightful conclusions, not merely a restatement of the introduction. A reasonable summary should get 1.5 out of 2. Marks of 0 or 1 out of two should only be given in the case of a very poor summary, or the complete absence of a conclusions (really, this happens!) /2

**Clarity/style** /1

References / Formatting /3 Marks

**Reference section matches in-text citations.** Everything in the text is included in the references, and everything in the references is cited somewhere in the text. This is true for “as cited in” references; the original article and the one citing it must both be in the reference section. /1

- No discrepancies: 1/1
- Any single discrepancy between references and text: 0/1

**APA formatting throughout** /2

- No more than one or two APA mistakes. Consider a mistake made multiple times to be a single mistake. For example, if the student uses improper APA format like (Coates, Smith, 2013) throughout the paper, this is one mistake: 2/2
- Numerous mistakes but appears they were trying to follow APA: 1/2
- It appears as though they made no effort to follow APA guidelines. Reserve this mark for the papers that are clearly not even trying to do APA format: 0/2
- Note: The title page and running head do not need to be in APA format.