

# CHECKLIST FOR STUDENTS AT RISK

The checklist can be used as a prompt to identify issues students may have that become apparent through assessment. Below is a checklist of nine questions. If a problem is indicated, possible reasons are given with links to learning resources for student and tips for teachers. The resources for students and the teaching tips will be updated and added to over time.

## Question 1: Is it on time?

If not, possible reasons may be: poor time management, one or more late submissions, difficulty starting, did not understand the question, lacks confidence to ask for assistance in starting, planning.

It may indicate: over-committed with work/other activities, lack of engagement with course, unclear about services available for academic support, unsure of how to start.

### Tips for students (links):

- [Managing my time](#)
- [RMIT Study and Learning Centre \(SLC\)](#)
- [SLC Drop-in: Locations and timetables](#)
- [Assignment planner](#)

### Tips for teachers (links):

- [Sequencing activities \(PDF\)](#)
- [Student self-assessment checklist \(PDF\)](#)
- [Assignment planner](#)

## Question 2: Did the work address the task?

If not, possible reasons may be: did not understand the question/task, did not read (or understand) the entire assignment brief, did not plan well.

It may indicate: lack of engagement with course insufficient understanding of CLOs, insufficient English language, doesn't know the assignment genre.

### Tips for students (links):

- [Assignment planner](#)
- [Essay writing process \(PDF\)](#)
- [Developing your English while you study](#)
- [Difference between an essay, report and a reflection](#)

### Tips for teachers (links):

- [Using rubrics](#)
- [Tips for teaching the task \(PDF\)](#)
- [Feedback on assessment tasks](#)
- [Enhancing work between local and international students \(PDF\)](#)

## Question 3: Is it on topic?

If not, possible reasons may be: did not understand the question, did not read (or understand) the entire assignment brief, does not understand the topic, has not read enough on the topic.

It may indicate: unaware of the task type (may need models), lack of engagement with course content/topic, lack of academic critical reading skills.

## STUDY TIPS

**Tips for students (links):**

- [Understanding an assignment task \(PDF\)](#)
- [Reading academic articles \(PDF\)](#)
- [Reading skills](#)

**Tips for staff (links):**

- [Checking a student's understanding \(PDF\)](#)
- [Encouraging students to read \(PDF\)](#)

**Question 4: Is it easy to read?**

If not, possible reasons may be: does not convey the information coherently, does not use sufficient mix of simple and compound sentences - sentences run on or are punctuated poorly, spelling and/or word use inaccurate to the point of unintelligibility.

It may indicate: insufficient English language proficiency to meet demands of tertiary study, inadequate literacy proficiency to meet demands of tertiary writing, inadequate editing skills.

**Tips for students (links):**

- [Improve your English](#)
- [English language assistance](#)
- [Active learning strategies](#)
- [Editing an essay \(PDF\)](#)
- [Writing skills](#)
- [Writing sentences](#)
- [Spelling tips](#)
- [Smarthinking](#)

**Tips for staff (links):**

- [Language development through student interaction \(PDF\)](#)
- [Integrating language-focussed activities in class \(PDF\)](#)
- [Teaching for transition and diversity](#)

**Question 5: Is there a logical sequence of discussion or points?**

If not, possible reasons may be: related points, events, ideas and/or opinions are not organised in a logical academic sequence; does not use multiple, related paragraphs addressing the task; lack of and/or confusing linking words and phrases.

It may indicate: inadequate planning and drafting skills, insufficient English language/ academic literacy proficiency, lack of familiarity with Australian university discourse.

**Tips for students (links):**

- [Starting my first assignment](#)
- [How to create a mind map](#)
- [Linking words](#)

**Tips for staff (links):**

- [Language and academic skills \(PDF\)](#)
- [Helping students understand and remember \(PDF\)](#)
- [Assessment for learning](#)

## STUDY TIPS

**Question 6: Is there repetition of information or sentence structures?**

If there is repetition possible reasons may be: an attempt to clarify a point; an attempt to obscure lack of understanding/ fill in space, sentence structure used repeatedly, with changes only in vocabulary.

It may indicate: lack of engagement with course material and/or topic.

**Tips for students (links):**

- [Academic style](#)
- [Writing skills](#)

**Tips for staff (links):**

- [Promote better learning](#)
- [Encouraging students to read \(PDF\)](#)

**Question 7: Is structure adequate for the purpose?**

If not, possible reasons may be: paragraphs are too short to express an idea, paragraphs are overly long and confusing, no evidence of coherent paragraph structure (TEEL structure).

It may indicate: lack of knowledge about western academic rhetorical culture (i.e. the important stuff comes first), doesn't understand paragraph structure in formal (academic) writing.

**Tips for students (links):**

- [Structuring assignments](#)
- [Paragraphs](#)

**Tips for staff (links):**

- [Promote better learning](#)
- [Teach the task, including the genre \(PDF\)](#)
- [Checking a student's understanding \(PDF\)](#)

**Question 8: Is there a lot of irrelevant information?**

If so, possible reasons may be: narrative moves off topic, introduces distracting information, over describes or over-justifies a point, information does not address, or is superfluous to, assignment criteria.

It may indicate: doesn't understand the assignment topic, has not done adequate research, criteria are not explicit enough for student.

**Tips for students (links):**

- [Efficient academic reading \(PDF\)](#)
- [Starting my first assignment](#)

**Tips for staff (links):**

- [Checking a student's understanding \(PDF\)](#)
- [Encouraging students to read \(PDF\)](#)

**Question 9: Is there a lot of irrelevant information?**

- If so, possible reasons may be: over-reliance on quotations as a substitute for student voice, discussion, analysis.

It may indicate: lack of knowledge about referring to theory/peer referenced material and/or integrating research.

**Tips for students (links):**

- [Paraphrasing](#)
- [Referencing](#)

**Tips for staff (links):**

- [Strategies for helping students learn \(PDF\)](#)
- [Promoting better learning using written modules \(PDF\)](#)