

## **1. ORIENTATION TO AND PURPOSE OF THE GUIDE**

This guide contains an exposition of the requirements in respect of assignments, essays, papers or any other written material submitted for evaluation in the **Department of Sociology**. The purpose of the guide is to help students develop the ability to submit written records of research findings that consistently meet the requirements of science. Repeated use and increasing knowledge of the information in this guide should promote discipline in the writing of scientific documents.

## **2. A FEW REQUIREMENTS AND GUIDELINES FOR THE WRITING OF ASSIGNMENTS**

### **2.1 FORM REQUIREMENTS**

- An assignment must always exhibit a continuous train of thought and should not consist of loose, unconnected fragments. Keep to the subject. Avoid tedious explanations, repetitions and unnecessary information.
- Each assignment starts with an introduction and ends with a summary/conclusion.
- An assignment must be provided with adequate headings and subheadings, and such headings and subheadings must be numbered clearly and in a consistent manner.
- Consult different sources representing different points of view.
- Provide clear definitions of key terms.
- Language usage must be neat and correct. Pay attention to the construction of sentences, punctuation, paragraphing, etc.
- Avoid usage of abbreviations. Numbers smaller than 10 as well as fractions must be written out.
- Pages must be numbered.

## 2.2 CONTENT REQUIREMENTS

By working independently you should provide proof of your ability to

- integrate the subject matter in a meaningful manner;
- use sociological concepts, identify specific sociological approaches, models and theories and indicate their relevance to the topic;
- compare and critically evaluate different viewpoints on a specific theme as displayed in the literature;
- formulate an own point of departure and provide reasoned arguments to support and qualify it.

The value of any scientific study is enhanced by the use of as many **primary sources** as possible, that is, through direct reference to the original works of specific authors.

## 2.3 TECHNICAL EDITING

As a rule an assignment has the following structure:

- Title page
- Table of contents
- List of tables, graphs, figures, maps and appendices
- Text
- List of references
- Appendices

In the case of assignments and other departmental activities of limited scope, a foreword is normally not required. In the case of research reports, master's dissertations and doctoral theses, that do contain forewords, it is advisable to consult a more advanced guide (e.g. Du Plessis, 1987).

### 2.3.1 Title page

The title page must contain the following information:

- The title of the assignment
- Name and student number of the candidate
- Course and degree of the candidate
- Date on which the assignment must be submitted
- Name of the lecturer

### **2.3.2 Table of contents**

The purpose of a table of contents is to provide a systematic overview of the contents of the assignment, and to link headings and subheadings to specific page numbers for easy reference.

The numbering of headings and subheadings in the table of contents must agree with the headings and subheadings in the text - all headings and subheadings must be contained in the table of contents.

### **2.3.3 List of tables, graphs, maps, figures and appendices**

The table of contents is followed immediately by a separate list of the tables, figures, graphs, maps, etc. contained in the assignment. This list contains the **numbers** and **headings** of these items, as well as the **numbers of the pages** on which they appear in the text.

### **2.3.4 Text**

The text of an assignment comprises both content and form components. During the planning and writing of an assignment both must receive continuous attention.

#### **2.3.4.1 The content component of an assignment**

- (i) Introduction:** Explains the aims of the assignment and the intended course of the study. If applicable, provides an exposition of the methodology.
- (ii) Body:** Comprises the logical and reasoned development of ideas, theories and arguments concerning the theme of an assignment. In accordance with the aim (as set out in the introduction), the key concepts are identified, defined and connected with a view to the elucidation of the theme. In this respect clear-cut, logic and systematic coherence as well as analysis of data are of the utmost importance.
- (iii) Summary:** Entails a concise exposition of the most important ideas, results or conclusions. The broad topic is summarised in the form of conclusions. **The summary should contain no new information.**

## **2.3.4.2 The form component of an assignment**

### **(i) Headings, subheadings and numbering**

After you have read on the theme, the next step is to use your short notes to draw up a broad framework for your assignment. Such a framework is an important aid in the ordering of your thoughts and should enable you to discuss and explain each aspect under a specific heading. However, the discussion of aspects must not be confined to watertight compartments; their interrelationship and the connecting theme must be indicated throughout, and this can only be done on the basis of an in-depth study.

The broad framework is composed of divisions with appropriate headings. In turn, the divisions are divided into subdivisions with suitable subheadings.

It is essential that each division, subdivision, etc. should be provided with a number. Start with 1., followed by 1.1, and, if further subdivisions are made, 1.1.1 and 1.1.2, etc. In similar fashion the next division and its subdivisions are numbered 2; 2.1: 2.1.1; 2.1.2, etc.

Please also note that all main headings (numbered 1, 2, 3, etc.), as well as first-line subheadings (numbered 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2, etc.) are usually typed/written in capital letters. All further subdivisions are typed/written in lower case letters.

- 1. METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES**
- 2. DATA COLLECTION**
- 2.1.1 The sociometric survey**
- 2.1.2 The schedule**
  - (i) Point of departure in handling the schedule
  - (ii) Construction of the interview
  - (iii) The questionnaire schedule

Please note that pages are numbered at the top and in the middle of the page and that no punctuation marks are used.

The recommended spacing between headings for all pregraduate assignments is one and a half spacing.

### **(ii) Quotations**

- \* Place direct quotations between quotation marks.

- \* Retain the original spelling and punctuation exactly as they appear in the source.
- \* Use a dotted line consisting of three dots to indicate that a part of the quotation has been left out.
- \* If you add any words of your own to a quotation, place these between square brackets: [ ].
- \* If you wish to emphasise any part of a quotation by underlining it, or by using italics or bold type, please indicate this by adding in brackets immediately after the quotation: (own emphasis).
- \* Quotations may be translated to the language in which the assignment is written, but in this case no quotation marks are used. The original source must, however, be acknowledged between brackets.
- \* If the quotation contains printing or language errors that appear in the original source, you must not correct any such mistake, but indicate that you are aware of it by writing the word **sic** in square brackets immediately after the mistake: [sic].
- \* If the quotation is part of a longer sentence and placed at the end of that sentence, the full stop follows **after** the quotation mark.
- \* If a complete sentence is quoted, the full stop comes **before** the quotation mark.

Quotations must be relevant and integrated with the text.
---

### **(iii) References**

Factual material must be accounted for (where it was found and how it can be found again) by means of a system of reference and a list of references.

The content and construction of an assignment must testify to the fact that sources have been consulted and the subject matter properly integrated. Whether you quote an author directly or not, the mere fact that you make use of such an author's ideas and arguments, places you under an obligation to acknowledge the source concerned. Should you neglect to acknowledge your sources, you would be guilty of plagiarism!!! Sources are acknowledged by means of a comprehensive list of references at the end of the assignment and an abridged reference to the source concerned in the text itself

immediately after the point at which you make use of the idea(s) and/or argument(s) of the author. The system according to which a source is acknowledged is referred to as a **reference technique**.

### **References are used to**

- provide a frame of reference around which the statements, arguments and conclusions of the author of the assignment are constructed, and simultaneously to provide proof of research, study, checking against and comparison with other sources and literature.
- acknowledge the author(s) whose factual information, standpoints or conclusions have been used. If this is not done, the student is guilty of plagiarism.
- enable the reader to consult the indicated sources and or documents himself/herself in order to check the facts, or obtain more information regarding a certain matter.

If you refer to or quote from a book, an article or any other source, the reference must be positioned at a suitable point in the text. The reference must contain the following information **between brackets**:

- The **author's surname** (except if it has already been referred to in the relevant part of the text), followed by a comma.
- The **year of publication**, followed by a colon if a page number is to follow. (If the publication date cannot be found, use the copyright date, e.g. 1963. If no date can be found at all, indicate this by writing s.a. or n.d.)
- The **page number(s)** referred to (except when you are referring to the source as a whole, in which case no page number(s) is/are indicated).

Examples:

- If the **author's surname appears in the text**:  
... Cilliers (1965:132) is of the opinion that ...
- If the **author's surname is not mentioned in the text**:  
... a certain author (Smelser, 1962:85) maintains that ...
- If reference is made to **a source as a whole**, no page numbers are indicated:  
... some authors, such as Parsons (1966), go further than others (MacIver and Page, 1949) ...

- If there are **two authors**, the names of both are mentioned:  
... (Joubert and Steyn, 1965:61-64) ... or (Joubert & Steyn, 1965:61-64)
- If there are **three or more authors**, the surnames of **all three** are indicated in the **first** reference. **Further** references to the same source will only contain the surname of the **first** author, followed by the abbreviation et al. (Note: et al. can be underlined or italicised.)  
... (Meyer et al., 1967:125) ...
- In the case of **organisations**, you must provide the minimum identification:  
... (South African Statistics, 1968: A-12) ...
- In cases where the same author **published more than one work in the same year**, the letters a, b, etc. are used after the date to distinguish between the different publications:  
...(Davis, 1963a:331) ...
- Arrange a series of references in **alphabetical order** according to the surnames of the authors and separate them by means of semicolons:  
... (Cilliers, 1965:103; Inkeles, 1964:12; Johnson, 1961:32) ...
- If the source concerned is not the work of a specific author, but a **report** (for instance by a commission of inquiry), you should mention the specific commission in the text (this takes the place of the author's surname) and follow this up with the date between brackets:  
  
... in the report of the Commission of Inquiry into Alcoholism (1970) it was found that ...
- References to **dictionaries** in the text:  
  
... (Brown et al., 1979:100)...  
According to the Concise Oxford Dictionary (J.B. Sykes [ed.], 1982:229), ...  
  
The Reader's Digest Dictionary (1987:100) ...
- If the source is a **newspaper**:  
  
... (*The Sunday Times*, 14 February 1983:19) ...

- Contributions to **conferences** or **symposiums**, as well as **personal interviews**, **telephone conversations** and **correspondence** are entered under the name of the author:

... (Smith, 1980) ...

- A page number is added if the contribution forms part of a **volume of papers** read at such a conference or symposium:

... (Collins, 1980:20) ...

- If **the contributor's surname is not known**, reference is made to the conference or symposium itself:

... during the Manpower 2000 Conference at UNISA (March, 1989 ...

- If the source is an **article** published in a volume edited by a different person, it is referred to under the name of the **author**:

... Marais (in Smit, 1988:13) ...

- If the source is the **Internet**

Canadian Abortion Rights Action League (CARAL). 1998. Responses to Anti-abortion Arguments about Morality and the Law (<http://www.caral.ca/respfutu.htm>)

Garago, CC. 1998. Abortion. My views as a pro-life woman. (<http://www.gargaro.com/abortion.html>)

### 2.3.5 List of references

The **list of references** at the end of the assignment comprises a complete list of the sources referred to in the text (as set out above). (This list of references is not a bibliography, since a bibliography is a list of all the works consulted on the topic, whether they have been referred to in the text or not.)

All publications are arranged **alphabetically** according to the surnames of the authors. If more than one publication by the same author have been consulted, they must be arranged chronologically according to date. **There**



**is no need to separate the different types of sources.** The sources are not numbered.

- The following must be indicated in respect of each source:

The **author's surname** and **initials**. If the person is an editor, (ed.) is added after the initials. The plural is (eds.). This is followed by the **date of publication, the underlined title of the source, place at which it was published** and **publisher**. In the case of articles in periodicals, one starts with the author's surname and initials, followed by the date of publication and the title of the article **not underlined**. This is then followed by the underlined title of the periodical, the volume, the number between brackets, a colon, and the page number/s. **If no date is indicated, use s.a. between square brackets: [s.a.]. If the place of publication is not indicated, write [s.l.], and if the publisher is not mentioned, [s.n.].**

**The following examples give an indication of the required punctuation:**

- **Book:**

HEALEY, JF. 1990. **Statistics. A Tool for Social Research.** Belmont: Wadsworth.

- **Periodical article:**

MORROW, RA. 1985. Critical theory and critical sociology. **Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology**, 22(5):710-747.

- **Article in a collective volume:**

ADAMS, B. 1979. Mate selection in the United States: a theoretical summarisation. In BURR, W. (ed.) 1979. **Contemporary Theories about the Family.** New York: The Free Press, pp.17-24.

- **Dictionary:**

SYKES, J. B. (ed). 1979. **The Concise Oxford Dictionary.** Sixth edition. Oxford: University Press.

- **Newspaper article:**

**SOWETAN**, 28 August 1991. 7 Killed in Union fights, p.1.

- **Organisations:**

CENTRE FOR SOCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES. 1994. **A profile of the centre for social and development studies.** Durban: University of Natal.

- **Conferences or symposiums:**

- **Published papers:**

MOTSUENYANE, S. 1993. Socio-economic implications for the elderly in the new South Africa. National Conference of the South African Council for the aged. Durban: The South African Council for the Aged, pp. 10-15.

- **Unpublished papers:**

DE KLERK, GW. 1988. Merton en Lemert. SASOV-kongres. Pretoria: Universiteit van Pretoria.

- **Dissertations, theses, research reports, inaugural lectures and supplementary notes:**

BOTES, LJS., DE WET, M., HEUNIS JC. 1995. Land needs and related issues in the "Northern" Free State: Survey and Qualitative case studies in Tseki, Tshiame, Viljoenskroon and Maokeng. Research report, Department of Sociology, Bloemfontein, University of the Orange Free State.

- **Personal interviews, telephone conversations, correspondence:**

NORVAL, RD. 25 December 1987. Lecturer, Department of Physics, University of Fort Hare, Alice.

- **Remember the following prescriptions:**

- If a specific source has more than one, but no more than three authors, all the surnames, followed by the initials are indicated:

BOTES, LJS, DE KLERK, GW. and ADAMS, B. 1987. ...

If there are four or more authors, only the surname and initials of the first author are indicated, followed by et al.:

ADAMS, B. et al. 1980. ...

- Note that a source is indicated in the language in which it was published in both the text and the list of references - it may not be translated.
  
- If the source has not been consulted **physically/personally**, the source may not be referred to (whether in the text or list of references) as if this had indeed been the case. If it is an important source/information, but the primary (direct) source cannot be found, the same style of reference as in the last example under **References** [2.3.4 (iii)] is used.

### **3. GENERAL SUGGESTIONS REGARDING THE WRITING OF ASSIGNMENTS**

It is of the utmost importance that notes on what is being read should be jotted down while the student is engaged in literature study.

- The following information regarding each source consulted should be written down in all cases:
  - title of source and name of the author
  - page numbers
  - publisher and place of publication
  - date of publication
  
- After a few general sources have been consulted, you should be able to draw up a preliminary scheme for the assignment.
  
- With a view to the definition (clarification) of concepts, it is always advisable to consult explanatory dictionaries. In the case of Sociology, there are also a number of **sociological dictionaries**. In addition to these, **encyclopaedias**, e.g. the International Encyclopedia for the Social Sciences, may also help you to come to understand and be able to explain concepts peculiar to the subject field. Consult the subject adviser for Sociology in the Library in this respect.
  
- The scheme is always aimed at establishing a broad framework.
  
- Initially the scheme will only consist of a few main and subdivisions (headings and subheadings).

- A scheme is almost never (at no stage) final, and must be adapted and altered during the writing of the assignment.
- A preconceived scheme may never be imposed on the subject; the factual material determines the scheme, not the scheme the subject matter.
- Relevant factual material must be sought for, collected and recorded.
- The information collected in this manner, must be sifted and evaluated. Its value and significance must therefore be determined.
- Next the collected data must be processed to form a meaningful, well-argued and logical whole, in order to enable you to compile an accurate and reliable report on the topic concerned.
- A source can be any person or document that provides information, e.g.: archives, institutes, libraries, periodicals and newspapers, dissertations and theses, books, interviews, etc.

#### 4. **TABLES AND FIGURES**

- On a separate page, following the list of contents, a comprehensive list of tables must be included. This is followed by a list of all figures that appear in the text. The page number that the tables and/or figures appear on must also be included.
- Tables have headings (inserted above the table) and figures subheadings (inserted below the figure)
- Keep the following guidelines in mind when using a tables and/or figures.
  - i) tables and figures must complement, not duplicate, the written text
  - ii) tables and figures must be clear and easy to understand
  - iii) reference to the tables/figures must be made in the text
  - iv) ideally, tables and figures must appear next to/directly below or above the text that deals with the same subject.

#### **LIST OF REFERENCES**

COMBRINK, J. 1992. **Hoe om 'n verslag te skryf**. Kaapstad: Tafelberg.

DEPARTEMENT SOSIOLOGIE. 1988. **Algemene studiebrief vir alle voorgraadse Sosiologie-studente.** Studiebrief, SOSVAK-5/301/1988. UNISA: Pretoria.

DU PLESSIS, D. 1987. **Die Harvard-bronverwysingstelsel en die tegniese versorging van verhandelings, proefskrifte en navorsingsverslae: 'n gids vir studente en tiksters.** Bloemfontein: Schnehagesingel 30.

JOUBERT, D. 1987. **Riglyne vir opstelle in Sosiologie en verwante vakke.** Stellenbosch: UUB.

SMIT, W.A. 1975. **Mens en persoonlikheid: 'n antropologies-sielkundige studie.** Bloemfontein: Sacum, pp.3, 4, 32.