

Writing effective conclusions



University of
Southern
Queensland

Why is this important?

A good quality response to an academic assessment task, such as an essay or report needs to have an effective conclusion. This should restate the argument, remind the reader of the most important points which support for the argument and then draw the writing to a definite close. The conclusion should generally be about 10% of your total assessment word count (unless specified differently).

How do I know what to include in a conclusion?

An effective conclusion needs to more than just restate or summarise the main points of your body paragraphs. Take care to allocate sufficient words to be able to effectively draw your writing to a logical and thoughtful end. The conclusion must “conclude” and not simply stop because you have run out of words.

How should I structure a concluding paragraph?

State clearly, using past tense, what you have achieved in the assignment, for example,

“This paper has argued...”; “This essay has analysed...”; “This report has presented...”

Provide a summary of key points (an overview of the structure):

It is important to provide a clear and logical overview of what you covered in your response (list the topics in the order they were discussed in the assignment). This reminds the reader of the points and evidence raised to support your argument.

Refer to your assessment task and the specific focus of your thesis statement (if relevant):

This helps to provide cohesion to your writing by pulling your argument together neatly.

If relevant, mention any parameters or scope that you defined in your introduction:

This reminds your reader of any choices or any aspects that were in or out of the range of discussion in your response.

End your paragraph with a final definitive statement (or recommendation if appropriate):

This leaves your reader with a strong take away message.

Conclusion paragraph example

“Graduate registered nurses (GRNs) require more than clinical skills to meet the needs of patients”. Critically discuss this statement. Relate it to the Nursing & Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA) - Standards of Professional Practice (2016).

This paper has analysed the complexity of the GRN role in the Australian Health care system by examining skills that nurses require in addition to their clinical expertise. As reflected in the NMBA standards, a range of skills including communication, teamwork and critical thinking are required, if GRNs are to provide care which is effective holistic, compassionate and patient centred. It is therefore determined that while clinical expertise is paramount, it should not be considered as the sole function of the GRN, as this is not reflective of the complexity of the role.

Statement
of aim/
purpose

Scope

Structure
overview

Overall
conclusion

Final check list

- Have I written the conclusion in past tense?
- Have I made sure not to include any new information in the conclusion?
- Have I clearly signposted the structure of the assignment?
- Have I referred to my thesis statement if relevant
- Have I referred to any scope or parameter previously mentioned?

Further support

Contact your student learning advisors via the Support for Learning team here:

supportforlearning@unisq.edu.au

Ph: +07 4631 2372