**Revision Checklist for Essays**

Writing experts generally agree that while details such as grammar and punctuation are important in papers, they are far less important than solid organization, fresh writing, and creative content. The following guidelines give students an essay checklist.

# Organization

Is there an informative and clear title that applies to the content within the paper?

Is there a clear introduction, body, and conclusion?

Does the introduction provide sufficient background for the reader? Are the "who," "where," "why," "what," and "how" questions addressed?

Is there a thesis sentence? Is the purpose of the essay clear?

Does the essay move from general to specific?

Are there good transitions between related ideas?

Is the overall organization murky or clean? In other words, does the writer avoid introducing new material in the conclusion or switching subjects in the middle of a paragraph in the body?

Does every paragraph address the subject matter of the thesis in some way?

# Content and Style

Does the essay show that the writer has a knowledge of the audience?

Is the length appropriate and adequate?

Has the writer used sufficient examples and detail to make his or her points clearly?

Has the assignment been addressed?

Is the tone of the essay appropriate?

Has the writer avoided insulting the reader?

Is the tone of the essay professional and appropriate?

Is the language convincing, clear, and concise?

Has the writer used fresh language and a creative approach?

# Research and Sources

Are all sources credible?

Is the research accurate, unbiased, and complete?

Has the writer fully interpreted the findings?

Has the writer commented on each source used?

Is the analysis based on hard evidence?

Is the analysis free of faulty reasoning?

Is the documentation in the Works Cited page and body of the essay correct?

Have all quotations been checked against the original?

Are all quotations introduced? Is the flow of the essay seamless?

Are all long quotations set off from the text using block quotes?

If material was paraphrased, are the sources still mentioned?

If necessary, are limitations clearly spelled out?

If included, are recommendations based on accurate interpretations?

Have all facts been checked for accuracy?

Have any potentially libelous statements been eliminated?

Does the paper adhere to MLA or APA format both within the text and in the Works Cited page?

Proofreading

Has the writer checked grammar and punctuation?

Has the writer spell checked the essay?

Has the writer checked for his or her particular pattern of error?

Are the page numbers correct?

Is the title capitalized correctly?

Has the writer used the correct margin and font?

# SPECIFIC TYPES OF PAPERS

Lab Reports and Scientific Papers

Are the appropriate headings and subheadings included and in proper order? A typical scientific paper has: title page, table of contents, abstract, introduction, body (with subsections), conclusions, and appendix. A typical lab report includes: title, abstract, introduction, methods, results, discussion, and references.

Does the writer use passive voice, which is the correct convention in science papers? For example: “Solution A was centripetal.”

Does the writer shy away from using anything other than factual language (no entertaining anecdotes)?

Are sentences short and concise?

Argument Papers

Is the claim or proposition clearly stated?

Are all assertions supported by evidence?

Is the evidence – facts, interpretations of facts, opinions—appropriate?

Is the evidence’s arrangement logical?

Is the evidence carefully documented?

Is the reasoning sound, avoiding all logical fallacies?

Are controversial or ambiguous terms defined?

Are opposing arguments considered and refuted?

Literature Papers

Does the writer use examples from the text to support their own interpretation?

Has the writer avoided a simple plot summary as the basis of their essay?

Are parts of a work clearly and accurately indicated? Writers must refer to sections or parts by saying “the scene where…” or “at the end of Chapter 1.”

Does the writer use the present tense to describe events from the story?

Are titles properly punctuated?

Has the writer referred to author properly, initially using the full name then subsequently using the last name?



