Rough guide: Science

Here are a few areas you may wish to focus on as you begin your studies in Science. Explore these materials and bookmark them so that you can refer to them when you need to.

Academic approach
You will find advice and samples of student writing under the Writing tab in the Language and Learning Online site: http://www.monash.edu.au/lls/llonline/.

- General guidance on writing including essays, reports and editing: http://www.monash.edu.au/lls/llonline/writing/general/index.xml

- Specific advice on writing in Science with samples from assignments and skills-building tutorials: http://www.monash.edu.au/lls/llonline/writing/science/index.xml

The Research students’ site has material devoted specifically to the needs of students undertaking postgraduate research: http://www.monash.edu.au/lls/hdr/index.html.

Your own Faculty website has some very useful materials in the Science First Year Portal: http://www.sci.monash.edu.au/undergrad/firstyear/index.html.

Self-help resources

Referencing
Check the guide to the preferred styles of referencing in the various schools of Science on the Library site: http://www.lib.monash.edu.au/tutorials/citing/science.html.

Good luck!!

The Learning support team
CALT
Building your repertoire: interdisciplinary awareness

Each discipline has a unique perspective and understandings which inform its academic expectations. As you undertake units in diverse disciplines, pay conscious attention to what the 'customs' are for referencing, developing arguments, presenting assignments, and discussing ideas.

Some initial questions you might ask yourself:

✓ What unique language is expected?

For example, in Psychology, the writer tends to refer to the subjects in studies as participants rather than 'subjects' or 'people'. In Nursing, people who are undergoing some medical treatment could be referred to as 'clients' or 'patients'.

✓ How is the work of others acknowledged?

Psychology, for example, uses the APA (American Psychological Association) referencing style; other disciplines may recommend APA but be happy with Harvard. The whole BusEco faculty has nominated the referencing style of the Student Q Manual. In each of these cases, page numbers are provided for direct quotations. In Sociology, however, the convention to supply a page number for all citations (with some exceptions!)

✓ How objective must you be?

In Education, for example, where writers are often asked to reflect on their practice, the use of 'I' is expected and so is personal experience. In contrast, for Management in BusEco, for example, the convention is to avoid the use of personal references. So, for that discipline, the following sentence would need to be amended:

In my experience, talking directly with staff is an important component of successful change management. I argue, therefore, that relying on general emails to communicate with staff is largely unsuccessful.

As Scully's study (2005) concluded, talking directly with staff is an important component of successful change management. Relying on general emails, therefore, to communicate with staff is largely unsuccessful.

✓ What assessment format is expected?

Your lecturer will usually indicate if an essay or report format, for example, is required. There are, however, established understandings about how an essay will be presented in Psychology, for example, which will be quite different for Sociology.