Traditional Academic Writing

Writing Case Studies

This resource is designed to give you a brief guide on the areas you may like to consider when writing a case study assignment. It is likely that an assignment brief will provide you with detailed information on what the marker is expecting you to cover and so you should ensure that you have fully engaged with your brief.

Introduction

This may include:

- Telling the reader a little about focus of the case study e.g. the person/event/institution/country you will be discussing
- Why you chose this case in particular
- Information which sets the scene and context of the case
- Sharing the structure of the assignment with reader, telling them what you will be discussing.

Aims and goals

You should make it clear to the reader what the aims are:

- This may include a series of short term goals in order to accomplish your overall aim
- Any problems you identified and how you planned to overcome them.

History

You may wish to include some background information if it is relevant to the presenting case. For example:

- If the case study is based on a person you may wish to discuss any relevant history
- If it is an institution/business you may wish to examine the previous performance.

Reviewing literature

- Even though the case will be specific to your assignment you must still use sources to evidence your understanding throughout
- In addition it is likely you will need to include a section discussing relevant literature and theories in the form of a literature review. The length of this will depend on the word count of your assignment e.g. a short essay may limit this
review to a few paragraphs whereas a longer assignment or project may devote an entire chapter to this.

Analysis

You should:

- Ask yourself how the case you are examining relates to the literature e.g. does it support it or suggest contradictory evidence. Why do you think this is?
- Question whether you met the aims you set out for yourself. If so how? If not why?
- Make judgements based on the evidence you have put forward.

Conclusion

As with any assignment it is important that you include a conclusion. This means:

- Bringing together the key points in your assignment, making it clear how they have addressed your assignment brief
- Leaving the reader in no doubt of your overall conclusions and why they are significant.

Recommendations

Recommendations are:

- Achievable actions which are specific and measurable.
- Steps which you believe should be taken in the future in order to achieve certain goals relating to the case you have been discussing. For example, what should be done to improve a certain situation?