

Info skills



Top Tips for identifying what you need

When you first start the research for an assignment, it is important you understand what types of information you should be using, and know where to start. Below are some quick tips on what you should and should not do when identifying the information you need.

Do's

Before you start

- Think carefully about the assignment question so that you can target your research.
- Plan how you intend to approach your answer making sure it fulfils the requirements.
- Decide the information and resources you will need to find.

Starting your research

- Start with the UEL library resources available through the Library Search and databases on the library website.
- Use a combination of sources such as books, journals, websites, newspapers, archives and collections, official publications as appropriate.
- Use databases to search for more specialised information such as conference proceedings, statistics, government reports, British standards, building regulations, marketing reports, company information, trend predictions, advertising materials and much more. See the 'Types of information sources' guide for descriptions of each of these.
- Use a mixture of primary and secondary sources.

Evaluating and referencing what you've got

- Carefully evaluate all internet resources. See the 'Evaluating websites' guide for more information.
- Always keep a note of every source you have consulted in order to have a complete bibliography. This will save you a lot of time and ensure you reference all your information correctly and avoid plagiarism.
- Reference all your information using the Harvard 'Cite Them Right' style. For more information, see the 'How to Harvard reference' guide. Students in the field of Psychology are advised to use the APA (American Psychological Association) referencing style.

Getting more help

- Make an appointment to see your lecturer if you are still not clear on the nature of your assignment.
- Make an appointment with your Subject Librarian if you have any problems finding resources.

Don'ts

Before you start

- Do not start your research without a clear plan of what you need and how you will answer the question.

- Do not leave your research to the last minute. You will need time to develop your ideas as you find information.

Starting your research

- Do not stray from your chosen topic or your plan for answering the question. If your plan is not working, stop your research and revise it.
- Do not rely solely on the internet for your information. The resources you can access through the library are guaranteed to be the right academic level for your studies.
- Do not just rely on UEL resources. You may need to consult other libraries, organizations or individuals. See the pages on 'SCONUL Access', 'Other libraries' and 'Inter-library loans' for more information.

Evaluating and referencing what you have got

- Do not include information which has not come from a legitimate academic source. See the 'Evaluating information' section for more information.
- Do not rely entirely on your own opinions or views.
- Do not include material without referencing it correctly. See the 'Referencing information' section for further help.

Getting more help

- Do not 'go it alone'. Librarians are here to help you to find what is available.