

What is academic writing?

This is a good question and is asked by many students who are new to higher education. Academic writing is a particular way of making meaning and at university it has three main purposes:

Assessment

This will often be the main purpose of your writing

Learning

Writing can help you to grapple with the knowledge of your discipline as well as help you to develop more general abilities such as critical thinking

Taking part in the writing practices of your subject

Learning how to adopt the norms and conventions associated with your area of study

One of the first things to remember is: 'Don't panic.' Whilst academic writing is an important part of assessment at university, your tutors understand that it is something which you develop over time and you are not expected to be a competent academic writer at the start of your course. In fact, many suggest that developing as an academic writer is an on-going process, which all writers are engaged in.

You may be asked to produce writing in a number of formats, such as, writing an essay, a report or reflective article or writing in an examination. Learning Services have developed a number of academic skills guides and can point you to web links to help you to plan, write, edit and proofread effectively and as a result develop your academic ability.