Editing is an essential part of the writing process. Good writers typically edit and revise what they have written several times before they hand it in. Editing is a process that can be endless, so it is useful to develop criteria before you start.

**Editing in 4 steps**

1. Review your assignment question and make sure you have answered it.

2. Look at the macro level of your writing. This means reviewing the structure and argument. Did you cover all aspects of the question? Is there a clear thesis statement that is supported in your paragraphs?

3. Look at your paragraphs. Do they link to the thesis statement? Are they complete? Does each cover a single topic? Are your claims supported by evidence and examples? Did you correctly reference them?

4. Consider the micro level of your assignment. Focus on your sentence construction, grammar, and spelling. You also need to check that your formatting (page numbers, font, spacing etc) follows the guidelines in your unit outline.

Your assignment will be more coherent if you begin editing at the macro level and work down. This approach will also save time. There is nothing worse than spending a great deal of time carefully checking your spelling and developing perfectly crafted sentences only to realise that these words and sentences are irrelevant to your topic!

Here are some questions you can consider while editing.

- **RELEVANCE (content)**
  Do the introduction, topic sentences (the first sentence of each paragraph), individual sentences within paragraphs and the conclusion all support the thesis statement?

- **ORGANISATION (structure)**
  Is the overall organisation clearly stated in the introduction? Are the ideas sequenced so that the overall argument is developed step-by-step?

- **ARGUMENT (analysis)**
  Is there a clear and consistent point of view or argument stated in the introduction, throughout the paper and in the conclusion? Is analytical (evaluative) rather than descriptive language used where appropriate?

- **EVIDENCE (support)**
  Does the evidence support the argument? Were a variety of reputable sources used to develop the ideas in the assignment? Are they correctly referenced?

- **COHESION (links)**
  Is there a flow of ideas that is easy to follow? Does each paragraph link to the one before it? Does your writing include transition words that show what is coming next?

- **PRESENTATION (clarity)**
  Does the assignment meet all of the requirements mentioned in the instructions? Is the assignment well presented with clear and appropriate paragraphing, spelling, punctuation and grammar?
Quick tips for successful editing

Sometimes it is nice to ask someone else to read over your work and comment on its structure, argument and coherence. This way you can find out what it is like to read your writing.

It can be helpful to allow at least 24 hours between writing your final draft and editing. This way you can ‘stand back’ from your writing and view it more objectively.

Why not go to a café to read your assignment. This way you can view it in a relaxed environment.

The best writers spend time editing.

Leave enough time in the assignment-writing process to edit your work!

Other useful resources
STUDYSmarter Survival Guides: Structuring academic essays, Critical writing, Thinking critically, Structuring essay Arguments, Transition signals.

Using STUDYSmarter Resources
This resource was developed by the STUDYSmarter team for UWA students. When using our resources, please retain them in their original form with both the STUDYSmarter heading and the UWA crest.

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