

# STUDENT MANUAL

## ***ACS Distance Education***

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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## INTRODUCTION

History of ACS.....	2
Affiliations and Memberships.....	3
Philosophy of ACS.....	4
Levels of Study Available.....	5

## COURSE REGULATIONS

Entry Requirements.....	6
Learning Methods.....	7
Qualifications Awarded Upon Course Completion.....	8
R.P.L. – Recognition of Prior Learning.....	9
Course Duration.....	9
Fees Policy.....	10
Withdrawal, Extension and Deferrals.....	11
Refund Cancellation Policy.....	12

## ASSIGNMENTS

Study Guide.....	13
Assignments.....	15
Assignment Cover Sheet.....	17
How to Answer Questions.....	18
Direct Contact with Student Services and Academic Officers.....	20
Feedback from your Academic Officer.....	21
Posted Assignments.....	22
Non-receipt of Assignments.....	22
Undeliverable Marked Assignments.....	22
Online Student Room.....	23
How to Submit your Assignment.....	24
Re-sizing of Assignment Images.....	27
Special Circumstances.....	30

## EXAMS

Exam Procedures.....	31
General information on Exams.....	31
Marking of Exams.....	33
Exam Application Form.....	35
Sample Exam.....	36

## OTHER

Personal Conduct.....	40
Code of Practice.....	42
Student Support Services.....	44

*Details contained within this manual are subject to change without notice – 13<sup>th</sup> October, 2015*

# Welcome to ACS Distance Education

## History of ACS

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### Small beginnings and rapid growth

ACS began as the *Australian Horticultural Correspondence School*, founded by John Mason, in August 1979 in Melbourne, Australia. Initially the school offered one course (Horticulture I) but within a year had expanded to five horticulture courses, being studied by more than 100 students across Australia.

By the early 1980's the school had an annual intake of several hundred students, had expanded its range of courses to include fitness, writing, photography and business in addition to horticulture, and was offering certificate courses. Consequently, the school's name was changed to *ACS Distance Education* to reflect our diverse range of courses and our greatly increased student numbers.

Since then, globalisation and the internet have created a huge surge of students enrolling with ACS from outside Australia. In 1989, a South African Correspondence School (Home Study College) was licensed to operate ACS courses in that country and in 1991 a second office was established in Queensland. Today, the school has staff in Victoria, NSW, Queensland and the UK.

In 1992, following changes to the Australian Vocational Education system, the school was amongst the first colleges to attain formal recognition from government accreditation authorities in Australia. This was followed by formal accreditation of around 70% of the school's courses. When the Australian Government accreditation system changed in the late 1990's, it became less relevant to distance education and to the international clientele of our school.

Consequently, the school decided to reduce involvement with government accreditation and to concentrate more effort on industry and global recognition. It was felt that this would serve students far better than involvement with an increasingly bureaucratic government accreditation system.

In 2001, web sites were established in the U.K. and America as the first step towards a real presence in other parts of the world. In 2002, the Victorian office was closed allowing ACS to centralise the services on offer. A larger, more efficient administration and academic department was set up enabling ACS to better service our students on a global scale.

A school has been incorporated in the UK and operates in that country as ACS Distance Education Ltd.

**ACS Distance Education and ACS Distance Education Ltd. are two separate entities, however these two schools do maintain an affiliation, and in some instances sub contract services from each other.**

### Branching into Publishing and Garden shows

In the 1980's, ACS developed its involvement with industry and this has become an important branch of the school's activities. In 1986, the school began writing articles and magazines for Express Publications. Since then, staff have been contracted to produce all the writing and photography for more than 100 complete magazines. From 1988 to 1992 the school organised major Garden

Exhibitions as part of the Royal Agricultural Society's Royal Melbourne Show. For two years, the school won best exhibit awards.

## ACS in the UK

ACS Distance Education is a Limited company incorporated in England and Wales. Mr. Mason and other staff have travelled widely in order to maintain a current appreciation of trends and developments. Mr. Mason's books and videos are sold worldwide.

# AFFILIATIONS AND MEMBERSHIPS

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Both ACS Distance Education in Australia and ACS Distance Education in the United Kingdom are recognised by the International Accreditation and Recognition Council (IARC) - a self-regulating industry body of colleges and universities from a number of countries. *Certificates and Diplomas offered are accredited through IARC. For details see [www.iarcedu.com](http://www.iarcedu.com)*

ACS Distance Education has a variety of relationships with other organisations, including:

- Institute of Certified Bookkeepers – ACS (Australia) is an accredited training centre
- Institute of Horticulture (UK) Career Advisory Board
- Royal Horticultural Society (UK) – ACS supplies courses for RHS qualifications. These Qualifications are awarded by the RHS after successful completion of RHS administered examinations. These qualifications are accredited through the Qualifications Curriculum Authority (UK)
- Complementary Medicine Association (UK) - College Member of Complementary Medicine Association - assessed to teach a range of areas including Counselling, Nutrition, Natural Therapies
- Organisational Member of the Association of Life Coaching (OMAC) – (UK)
- Membership of -
  - Nursery & Garden Industry Association of Australia
  - International Herb Association
  - Australian Institute of Horticulture
  - Permaculture Association (UK)
  - British Institute for Learning and Development
  - Gold Coast Education Network (Foundation Member)
  - Study Gold Coast
  - Institute of Horticulture (UK)
  - Alternative Technology Association (Aust)
  - Parks & Leisure (Aust)

We are affiliated with over 15 other colleges (mainly in Australia and the UK) many of whom hold various government recognitions and other accreditations.

*Courses offered by these institutions are developed by ACS Distance Education but are not necessarily identical to those provided by ACS.*

Information on these affiliated colleges can be found here:

<http://www.acs.edu.au/about-us/affiliates.aspx>

<http://www.acsedu.co.uk/Info/About-Us/Affiliates.aspx>

Many courses are formally articulated with Warnborough College (UK & Ireland).

# PHILOSOPHY OF ACS

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Students are our priority. Our policies and procedures are aimed at providing each student with the best possible education available at their chosen level. We make every attempt to assist students quickly and appropriately so they can successfully pursue their studies and achieve their goals.

ACS believes that good education develops a foundation for future success. Our courses prepare graduates to face any challenge that confronts them in the discipline for which they have been trained. We believe in providing a balanced education through development of knowledge, understanding and skills. A balanced education does more than provide information. It provides students with the ability to select and use information effectively in any situation. It increases students' awareness of the changes occurring locally and globally in their chosen field, and nurtures their ability to adapt.

ACS achieves its goal of balanced education by focusing on content and delivery rather than assessment, by teaching for maximum learning and retention, and by maintaining a global focus.

In our experience, students frequently place more importance on a qualification than employers or clients do. Increasingly, the movers and shakers of today's world are more interested in what you can do, and what you can contribute. Therefore, our focus at ACS is on what we teach, and how we teach it. We take a flexible approach to assessment that can be readily adapted to the needs of each student.

Our teaching methods encourage students to not only understand the course material, but to retain it in their long term memories. To enhance students' ability to remember and apply what they learn (the key to becoming an expert), we use repetition, presenting the information several times in different ways. Assignments and tasks encourage students to reflect upon the material from different perspectives. This helps to reinforce and clarify concepts, and to improve retention. It also prepares students to use their knowledge flexibly and creatively within a rapidly changing world.

ACS knows that in today's world it is not enough to understand and know how to do something. You must also be able to adapt your knowledge to different situations. For this reason, ACS believes that graduates need to be flexible and have a heightened awareness of changes occurring around them, especially in their chosen fields. When you are aware of what is happening, and understand the world, you can apply your knowledge and understanding to develop innovative solutions. Our courses encourage students to attend to what is happening in their field and around them.

ACS' global focus is also reflected in the flexible nature of our courses and our teaching. More than most courses, ACS courses have been written to meet the needs of a highly mobile global population. Educated people of the 21<sup>st</sup> century move about more than ever, and even at home, they are much more likely than in the past to be dealing with people from other countries or cultures. The modern business person needs to be innovative, lateral thinking, flexible, and able to work independently.

A good international school is able to adapt its courses to the different cultural, geographical, economic or social needs of its diverse clientele. ACS' uniquely flexible approach and emphasis on student learning ensures that our courses can be modified to meet the needs of each student without sacrificing quality.

Flexible learning and assessment provide more opportunity for development, and allows students to learn at their own pace and in ways that are best suited to their learning styles, interests, goals and needs. It also provides more value for money by allowing us to tailor courses to student goals and to eliminate unnecessary paperwork and Academic Officering.

## LEVELS OF STUDY AVAILABLE

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ACS provides education and information services through a variety of methods including:

- Online training
- E-Learning - CD-ROM
- Correspondence – printed paper-based notes
- Electronic Publishing (ebooks)
- ACS Bookshop

### **Hobby & Adult Education**

Study that is undertaken by adults, primarily for general interest or self-improvement.

### **Vocational Education**

Enables students to gain knowledge and skills which prepares them for careers at various levels.

### **Higher Academic Studies**

This refers to study undertaken at a higher level than vocational, which are academically challenging, developing not only a student's knowledge of a subject, but exercising the student's ability to think more deeply about the subject. Higher academic studies will develop the student's depth of thought, and capacity to be innovative and creative in applying their knowledge to real life problems.

# ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

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Generally, no prerequisites apply if you are studying an individual module or short course for self-interest and do not intend using that course as a credit towards a qualification.

It is normally assumed that the student has an education at least comparable with year 10 secondary school-level; that they are English literate and that they have adequate self-confidence and motivation to make a reasonable attempt at completing assignments. Exceptions can be made for younger students if there is demonstrated ability to undertake studies (this would need to be determined on a case-by-case basis).

## Proficiency Awards

A certificate or higher qualification of 200 hrs duration or more; or at least 2 years of relevant work experience; or over 21 years of age.

## Certificates

Year 10 or 1 year of full-time work following Year 9; or over 21 years of age.

## Advanced Certificates

Year 11, or 1 year of full-time work following Year 10, or a vocational Certificate (of 600 hrs); or over 21 years of age.

## Diplomas

Year 12 or a vocational certificate (comprising 600 hours course work); or over 21 years of age.

# LEARNING METHODS

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## Online

Online courses are conducted through our online learning site, [www.acseduonline.com](http://www.acseduonline.com). You can access all course materials through this website, and also complete interactive Self Tests to enhance your understanding of ideas or identify potential weak areas in your knowledge. Assignment submission is through the online Student Room. Course material is in PDF format; course notes can therefore be printed or saved to your computer. ACS interactive online courses are truly unique, allowing not only for online submission and return of assignment, but also allowing for effective, relevant teacher-student communication and interactive course delivery.

## E-Learning

Similar to online courses, except all course materials and interactive Self Tests are mailed to you on a CD-ROM instead of accessed on the internet. Assignment submission is through the online Student Room.

## Correspondence

This is the traditional method of completing home study courses at ACS Distance Education through printed paper-based notes. All course materials are posted to you. Assignment submissions can be posted or submitted via the online Student Room. You can, of course, still e-mail or telephone us at any time for assistance regarding your course.



# QUALIFICATIONS AWARDED UPON COURSE COMPLETION

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## Letter of Completion

A Letter of Completion is given to students who have successfully completed all assignments in a short course, but who have elected not to sit the optional exam. The Letter of Completion is not awarded automatically – you need to request it by emailing [admin@acsedu.co.uk](mailto:admin@acsedu.co.uk)

## Statement of Attainment

A Statement of Attainment is awarded to students who have successfully completed all assignments and the exam in a short course. They are also awarded upon completion of each module within higher qualifications such as Certificates and Diplomas.

## Certificate and Higher Qualifications

Certificates, Proficiency Awards, Diplomas etc. are awarded upon successful completion of the respective course – this includes all exams, assignments, research projects, work experience, etc. As a graduate, you are entitled to use the appropriate abbreviation of your qualification after your name.

**\*\*\* Please note that exams are optional for students studying a single module of study only.**

**\*\*\* Exams are compulsory for Certificate and Higher qualifications. Exam fees apply – see page 31 -36 for more details on exams and application forms.**

# RPL – RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

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Recognition of prior learning simply means that you are considered to have already advanced in or completed some of your course before you begin. In effect this relates to any method by which you may be exempt from studying parts of a course.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) applications should be made prior to enrolling in a course and may only be granted by academic staff.

Also known as advance standing, it is not commonly granted for any more than one third of a formal qualification. In exceptional situations, where both industry experience and formal studies are outstanding, advance standing of up to but never more than 66% may be granted.

## Granting credit

When advance standing is granted on the basis of passes achieved in other courses at this or another institution, the advance standing is referred to as “granted credit”. Credit may be granted on the basis of sighting and signing off transcripts from prior courses.

## Recognition of prior learning

When your application for credit is granted on the basis of both prior studies **and** work experience, it is referred to as “recognition of prior learning (RPL). RPL must be granted on the basis of a formal submission on standard RPL documents, together with collaborating documentary evidence (e.g. resume, copies of previous exam results, an outline of courses previously studied, etc). An RPL application form and more information can be found at: <http://www.acsedu.co.uk/Info/Enrolment/Recognition-for-Prior-Learning-application.aspx>

# COURSE DURATION

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Short Courses (100 hours duration) should be completed within 12 months of enrolment.

Certificates, Advanced Certificates and Diplomas (over 600 hours duration), should normally be completed within 3-5 years of enrolment.

Studies are self-paced. Should you require longer than the set timeframe, you can continue with your studies, however a restart fee may be charged.

# FEES POLICY

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## Up-front payment

You may choose to pay full fees on enrolment. This is the least expensive option.

## Payment Plans

If you choose to pay for a course using a payment plan rather than full fees on enrolment, the overall cost of your course will be greater. However, since ACS is committed to keeping costs to a minimum without sacrificing quality, the overall cost is still very competitive, regardless of your payment plan option.

For individual modules, your payment may be split into two parts. If you have chosen this option, your first payment will have already been paid **on enrolment**. The second payment will be due 60 days after your date of enrolment. The second instalment needs to be paid regardless of whether you continue with your course or not.

If you have enrolled in a certificate or higher qualification, further payment plans are available with the course being split into various stages. The first payment will cover a proportion of your course. Subsequent payments will be due at various stages depending on which payment option you choose.

# WITHDRAWAL, EXTENSION AND DEFERMENTS

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## Withdrawal in Extraordinary Situations

When a withdrawal is requested due to extraordinary circumstances, including death or serious illness affecting the student or an immediate relative, the application will be considered on its merits. The applicant must submit the following in writing:

- a. A detailed account of the extraordinary circumstances
- b. A medical certificate or legal document to verify the extraordinary circumstances
- c. A written request for cancellation of the enrolment

In such cases, a response will be dispatched in writing within one month of receipt of the complete written submission (containing the three items above)

If approved, all course materials will need to be returned. Then any monetary refund will exclude a charge made for any of the following:

- administration and postage costs already incurred
- assignments already marked (if applicable)
- support services provided over the telephone, email, or in any other way, which have already been accessed

## Refusal of application for withdrawal

Withdrawal applications will not be considered in cases where the course has been paid for by an organisation or individual other than the person enrolled; unless the application is supported in writing by the person or authority that funded the course.

These withdrawal applications must be received on an official business letterhead and the signatory of the organisation must be available to confirm the application if approached.

## Extensions and Deferments

Any student requesting an extension or deferment for the first time is granted 6 months, if their records show they have been making some reasonable effort and progress in their studies. No fees apply in this case.

Further deferments or extensions may be granted at 6-month intervals. Please note that studies can be deferred or extended indefinitely, however restart fees may apply.

# REFUND CANCELLATION POLICY

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Upon enrolling in a course with any school, a student is entering a legal agreement under common law, in which they agree to abide by the conditions of enrolment (including meeting stated payments), in exchange for the service offered by the institution in the delivery of the course.

***Please note, ACS cannot be held liable for changes in your circumstances.***

In a situation where a student wishes to cancel or change their enrolment and as a measure of goodwill, ACS Distance Education will allow the following options:

1. **For a period of 14 days** from enrolment - a refund (less minimum £50 administration fee per module, plus postage and handling costs if already incurred –*which may vary depending on the course package and where you are located*) will be given if the student notifies the schools administration department **in writing**. For this to apply, a letter must be received within the 14 day period, either by fax, email, ordinary mail or delivered in person. The onus is on the student to ensure and confirm that written notification of withdrawal is lodged and received. The school will not be responsible for messages going astray.

**Note: If course notes have already been sent to the student - they must be returned before the refund is paid.**

2. **For a period of 30 days** following receipt of the material a student may apply for special consideration to swap their course for another course.

- The application for special consideration must be made in writing (*not by telephone*) and must explain why the student wants to change the enrolment.
- These options only apply if the student has not yet submitted any assignments
- An administration fee of £50 will apply in these circumstances
- The school will provide credit for monies paid for the original enrolment, against the new enrolment (i.e. new course or person), but will not give any monetary refund or credit against other purchases.
- Following written notification by the school of acceptance, the old course notes must be returned to the school within 1 week (2 weeks for overseas students) for it to be valid.

3. **For a period up to 2 months** following receipt of the material, a student may apply to transfer their enrolment to a friend, relative or colleague who agrees to take over the enrolment.

- An application for special consideration must be made in writing (not by telephone), and be accompanied by a letter of explanation.
- This application only applies if the student has not yet submitted any assignments
- An administration fee of £75 (*plus postage and handling costs*) will apply in these circumstances.
- The school will provide credit for monies paid for the original enrolment, against the new enrolment (i.e. new course or person), but will not give any monetary refund or credit against purchases other than courses.

4. **At any time** during enrolment the student may apply to defer their studies for a 6-month period. Such an application must be supported in writing by documentation that explains why they cannot continue their studies for a period of time (eg. a letter of explanation). *Recommencement fees may apply, please contact the school for more details.*

**A student may only take up one of these options once. Please read the above options and apply in writing to the Administration Manager**

# STUDY GUIDE

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Distance education with ACS is different to many other forms of education, and even to distance education through other institutions.

## Common misconceptions about distance education

Students commonly enter distance education with preconceived concepts about how the system might work, based on their experience with “correspondence courses”.

**Assignments are frequently seen as something that MUST be passed. Therefore, students sometimes hesitate to submit an assignment for fear that they might not pass.**

Assignments are an important part of the overall process of interaction between you and the school. They help the Academic Officer evaluate what you do and do not comprehend, and respond appropriately. It does not matter if you get things wrong in an assignment, for this simply allows the Academic Officer to understand your weaknesses better, and help you overcome them. Do not be afraid to make mistakes! You can learn from them. Trying to hide a mistake from your Academic Officer, or giving answers that you have obtained from others (including other people in the school) can mislead your Academic Officer into incorrectly evaluating your understanding and thought patterns. Unless your Academic Officer knows where you need extra assistance or support, you will not receive the assistance you need or deserve.

**Students often equate the value of a course with the quantity of reading they are assigned.**

A modern distance education course is much more than a collection of readings. Books can provide factual information, but if you want to gain a foundation understanding of a discipline which can be remembered and built upon, take a course. A good course provides much more than the most informative book.

## Managing Time

Literature from the school provides an indication of the hours required to complete a course. For most people, it is possible to complete a 100 hour module (short course) in 100 hours. *Examinations and preparation for exams may take more time.*

Students may take longer to get through the work if they are slow at reading or writing, or are living in an isolated area where they need to travel greater distances to visit facilities related to their study (eg. In a horticulture course, one student may need to travel further than another to visit gardens and nurseries). Students who want to get the utmost from their studies and put in a great deal of extra effort may find a 100 hour course taking them a great deal more than 100 hours to complete. On the other hand, students who read fast, and retain information easily (eg. have a photographic memory) and have facilities on hand that relate to their course (such as work in a relevant industry) may complete assignments faster and more easily. However, for most students, the 100 hours quoted is an achievable figure if time is well managed. If you do not manage your time, you may find yourself spending a great deal longer than expected in order to complete your course. In the case of a longer course such as a certificate or diploma, the time spent on study can become excessive if time is not well managed.

## Some points to remember for optimal learning

- Set yourself very **clear goals**, such as completing an assignment every week, and stick to those goals.
- **Limit** the amount of time you spend undertaking some tasks, even though you are not always completely happy with the results. If you were in a classroom with deadlines for an assignment, you would need to limit the time spent on individual assignments in order to complete a course or a qualification within the permitted time frame.
- **Do the best you can** within the allotted time, rather than seeking perfection. It is better to complete the basic requirements of a task well than to spend excessive time trying to turn in perfect work.

## Is it all new to you?

- Are you uncertain what is required in your assignments?
- Are you a little short of confidence?
- Has it been a long time since you did any study?

It is NORMAL if you have answered 'Yes' to one or all of these questions.

Believe it or not, many other students find assignments a little daunting...particularly the first few.

## Don't worry!

The purpose of the assignments is to get communication happening between you and your Academic Officer. It doesn't matter if you make mistakes and get it wrong, because that allows the Academic Officer to get a better idea of where you need help.

Failing assignments does **not** mean that you fail your course; it means that you need to learn more before you pass. If your assignments are unsatisfactory, you will be asked to repeat part or all of the work.

However, even though most students worry about their first assignments, very few need to repeat work, and those who put the effort in when asked to repeat, almost always pass with their second attempt.

## What If you can't find the information?

Remember, the school has the staff and the facilities to help. If there are things you cannot find or lack resources to find them, we will help. You ARE however expected to make an effort to find information and answers to questions yourself, but if you are getting nowhere or are having trouble getting replies from people in the industry when doing research, contact the school at [admin@acsedu.co.uk](mailto:admin@acsedu.co.uk)

# ASSIGNMENTS

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## Presentation of Assignments

The way you present your work is largely up to you. However it is important that your work is easy to read and that you leave enough room for Academic Officers to write comments.

*Identify yourself. Make sure we know who you are and what your assignment is!*

1.) Always include the following at the beginning of your assignment

- a) Your name and address
- b) Your email address
- c) The full name of the course (and code if applicable)
- d) Lesson number
- e) Your Academic Officer's name (Your Academic Officer is assigned once you have submitted your first assignment)

2.) Type the question and number your answers so that they correspond with the question or task numbers.

## Do not “pre-submit” assignments!

It is acceptable to ask your Academic Officers advice on matters relating to questions in assignments but it is not acceptable to ask for substantial direction on how to complete assignments. Students who forward incomplete assignments will have them returned for completion. Students are expected to attempt each question before submission.

## PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is the illegal and/or unethical copying of material without acknowledgment of its source. **Plagiarism is not tolerated, and will be penalised.** Therefore, it is very important that students understand the differences between plagiarism and acceptable use and interpretation of someone else's work.

It is acceptable to use information from another source as a minor part of your own work, **if the original source is properly referenced** (i.e. It is made clear where that information came from). It is not acceptable to present work which is substantially little more than an identical copy of information (words or graphics) from another source without acknowledging the source or in such a way that the reader (or Academic Officer) could believe it is your original work.

Plagiarism is considered by most credible academics around the world to be unacceptable; and for this reason **ACS cannot issue a formal pass and qualification** to anyone who practices plagiarism. Incidents of plagiarism have damaged the reputations of some colleges and universities. ACS has established a very good academic reputation in part because of the fact that we do not tolerate plagiarism. Students will be asked to rewrite and resubmit any plagiarised work. The school accepts no legal liability for the actions of its students during or after studies.



# ACS DISTANCE EDUCATION POLICY ON PLAGIARISM

PLAGIARISM IS NOT ACCEPTED

If you copy part of a sentence or quantities of sentences, word for word from the internet, a book, magazine, course notes or anywhere else ***this is considered to be plagiarism.***

Plagiarism is considered by most credible academics around the world to be unacceptable; and for this reason **ACS cannot issue a formal pass and qualification** to anyone who practices plagiarism.

Incidents of plagiarism have damaged the reputations of some colleges and universities. ACS has established a very good academic reputation in part because of the fact that we do not tolerate plagiarism.

Bearing this in mind; it is in the interest of our graduates that we take a firm stand against plagiarism. The value of the studies you pursue, and the qualification you and other students attain, is dependant upon an anti plagiarism policy.

Plagiarism is easily detected by Academic Officers marking papers, through the use of web searches; changes in writing style and tone and depth of technical content.

- If plagiarism is detected in any work by a student, the incident will be noted on the student's records. They may be asked to rewrite and resubmit their work.
- When deciding the final result for a course or module, we always take into account more than just the performance in an exam. Any student found to have plagiarized will be closely monitored to ensure compliance before being given a pass.
- If a student continues to plagiarise after being warned, they are not going to learn as much as they otherwise would from the course and as a result it is inappropriate to give them a pass.

USE this ASSIGNMENT COVER SHEET or something similar for every assignment submission!

**ASSIGNMENT COVER SHEET**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Post code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: Home - ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Work - ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / 20\_\_\_\_\_

Course Name:- \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Academic Officer: \_\_\_\_\_

Lesson  
Number(s): - \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## HOW TO ANSWER QUESTIONS

Before writing an assignment; analyse the questions you are given. Here is an example of how you might analyse a question:

- *Identify the subject (i.e.: The focus of the question).*
- *Generally a question will have an action (eg: Verb) and a subject which that action relates to. For example:*
- *Explain Whales.*
- *Explain is the action you must perform*
- *The subject is Whales (This is what the word "explain" relates to).*

Often there will also be descriptors or qualifying statements built into the question. These are phrases or words which relate to either the action or the subject. For example:

*Explain, in 1 page, how Whales migrate away from Antarctica over winter.*

You can see extra information has been added to give you more direction about how much to write. When you first see a long question like this though, you should focus on the words winter, and Whales, and get a good understanding of those words before you consider any of the other information in the sentence.

When you are asked to explain, you are NOT being asked to describe or discuss. Explain is a more complex thing to do than discuss or describe. You need to clearly understand and focus on the action you are being asked to perform, before anything else is considered.

*Some people write too much and some don't write enough. **Read the question to understand what is being requested.***

- Don't write answers in point form unless you are asked to do so.
- Don't write lengthy essay type answers unless asked.
- Review the instructions below (define, report, research) to ensure that you understand them.

### **Define**

If you are asked to define something, you are being asked to show that you understand the meaning of something, and that usually takes a sentence or two of writing.

### **Report**

This usually relates to something you have done in a set task or research assignment. You are being asked to show the Academic Officer that you have actually carried out the task or research; and that you have discovered something of value and are able to understand what you have discovered. Briefly describe what you did, what you found, and what you have concluded.

## Research

To complete some assignments you may need to use information other than JUST what is supplied. Research questions are included to give you practice at undertaking research, which is an extremely important skill to develop in the real world. To research means to gather information about a subject to show that you understand it and the main issues surrounding it.

You may find information in your local library, from our online school library, from books or magazines you buy or borrow from public libraries, from people in the industry or by searching the internet.

Don't be disappointed if you do not get far when trying to research something. All these experiences are learning experiences. We do realise some people are in more restricted situations and find it more difficult to undertake research. In this instance, please contact the school for further assistance at [admin@acsedu.co.uk](mailto:admin@acsedu.co.uk)

## Ask questions

If you have any questions about the subject you're studying or queries about how to answer a particular question - email the school at: [admin@acsedu.co.uk](mailto:admin@acsedu.co.uk)

## Grammar and spelling

Grammar and spelling are considered important for students doing advanced certificate or higher qualifications. You will be expected to develop reasonable skills in these areas if you are doing courses at this level. For certificate or lower level courses, these things may be corrected from time to time, but they are not generally considered as important.

### REMEMBER:

The Academic Officer is not there to judge you! Your Academic Officer is there to guide you in your learning.

## **ASK YOUR ACADEMIC OFFICER QUESTIONS**

**Submitting assignments through the online student room will increase the speed of the assignments being marked.**

## DIRECT CONTACT WITH STUDENT SERVICES AND ACADEMIC OFFICERS

The school will not give private contact details of Academic Officers to students, for both legal and administrative reasons. Academic Officers are at liberty to give their personal details to a student if they wish, but in such cases, the school will not accept responsibility for any problems which may arise.

Students may contact Academic Officers by email either via the online Student Room or by contacting Student Services at [admin@acsedu.co.uk](mailto:admin@acsedu.co.uk). Please provide details such as the name of the course, lesson and question number. Students can also request for an Academic Officer to phone them by indicating a range of times during normal work hours when they may be reached. In most cases students receive a response within 1 working day.

Academic Officers will provide whatever advice and/or additional information, necessary to complete assignments at a standard required by the school for the course you are studying. The nature and quantity of advice provided is however at the Academic Officer's discretion. Students need to appreciate the fact that the school is providing them with a process by which they will learn, and NOT an information service.

The role of the Academic Officer is to "guide" your journey of discovery rather than "feed you with factual information". For this process to work, you must put your faith in the Academic Officer and the school, and sometimes it may be necessary to follow a path where you cannot see the end until you have reached it.

***In simple terms; for most students, you will not realise the full benefit of your studies until sometime after you have completed them.***

All students should recognise that while these services are not restricted, the course fees you pay are determined by the cost of providing these and other services. Clearly, if some students abuse this privilege, course fees will increase.

***In fairness to all, the school reserves the right to place restrictions on the amount of access to Academic Officers, for students who in our opinion are unnecessarily overusing services.***

## FEEDBACK FROM YOUR ACADEMIC OFFICER

Occasionally, an Academic Officer may ask you questions to stimulate your mind into new ways of looking at and doing your assignments.

Academic Officers comments are generally designed to support your learning and, even though you may not always understand why they comment a certain way, you need to maintain faith in the Academic Officers position as a skilled professional and trust their capacity to assist you. Without this trust, you risk impairing your learning.

The Academic Officer should print their name clearly at the end of each assignment (bottom of the last page), and give you one of the following grades:

- "More effort needed"
- "Fair...passable but you could do better"
- "Good attempt, but there is room for improvement"
- "Good Work"
- "Excellent"
- "Outstanding effort"

If the standard is not adequate, the Academic Officer should have given you suggestions as to how the standard might be improved. At certificate or diploma level, you may be asked to repeat below standard work, which needs attention in order to satisfactorily pass the subject. You should resubmit work as requested or else risk failure in the course. Remember, if we do not maintain such standards, your qualification at the end of study would not have the same value.

*Every page should have a tick or comment written so that there is no question as to whether the Academic Officer has looked at that part of the work or not.*

### **Resubmission of Assignments**

If an assignment or part of an assignment is unsatisfactory, you may be asked to resubmit.

While there is no time limit for resubmission, for your own benefit we advise you to undertake the additional work as soon as possible, while your original study for that assignment is still fresh in your mind. We recommend that resubmissions be made within **2 weeks** of being requested.

## Posted Assignments

If sent by mail - Assignments are stamped by the office with the date of receipt.

Normally, an Academic Officer will collect assignments from the office within 3 days of receipt, mark them and return them to the office within 7 days from receipt date. Within a few working days, the marked assignment is processed by Student services, assignment information is recorded in the Student Database, and the assignment returned to you via post or email. Where an assignment requires more lengthy examination by the Academic Officer, we will return it to you with an explanation as soon as possible, rather than make you wait, and follow up as needed.

If submitted work is lost in transit, the student will be asked to resubmit their work. It is therefore recommended that students keep a copy of their assignments.

## Non-receipt of assignments

In most cases where student room submissions are not received, it is probably due to one of the following:

- The email was too large, perhaps because your scanned images were saved as excessively large files;
- The email address was incorrectly typed;
- Your computer was infected with a virus, and our computer or server detected the virus and trashed the file;
- There is a national or international problem with the internet (i.e. a new virus, a major communications link damaged etc.)

*If you do **not** receive notification that your submission has been received, please contact the school and determine if it needs to be sent again.*

## Undeliverable Marked Assignments

If assignments are returned to the school as undelivered by the postal service or courier, they will be held for three months and then disposed of. This situation may arise because:

- you move and do not inform the school of your new address
- you give the school an incorrect address or contact details
- you do not write the address clearly enough on your work
- you do not attach an assignment cover sheet to your work

If you do not receive your work back within a month of submitting it, you should always check with the school to ensure it is not lost.

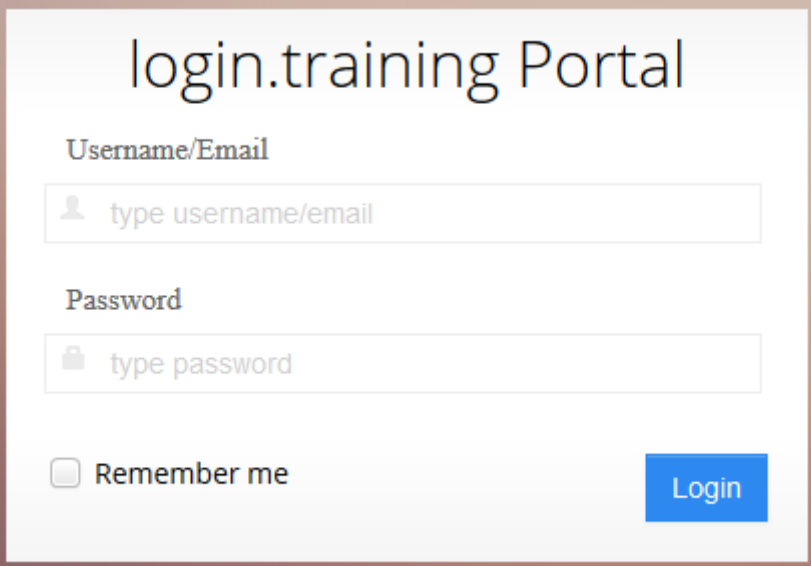
## **ONLINE STUDENT ROOM**

Our online student area gives you added flexibility and efficiency when dealing with ACS. Once you have your username and password, you can log in at any time to upload your assignments, ask your Academic Officer questions, apply for an exam, pay your bill and much more. To access the Student Room, please go to the following link: <http://login.training/Login.aspx>

Your Username is your email address and the Password is your first name in lower case.

**\*\*\*\* NOTE FOR ONLINE STUDENTS: CHANGING YOUR ONLINE COURSE ACCESS PASSWORD WILL NOT CHANGE THE STUDENT ROOM PASSWORD**

**\*\*\*\*THE PASSWORD FOR THE STUDENT ROOM CANNOT BE CHANGED**



The image shows a login form for the 'login.training Portal'. The form is set against a light grey background with a white border. At the top, the text 'login.training Portal' is displayed in a large, black, sans-serif font. Below this, there are two input fields. The first is labeled 'Username/Email' and contains a person icon followed by the placeholder text 'type username/email'. The second is labeled 'Password' and contains a lock icon followed by the placeholder text 'type password'. Below the password field, there is a checkbox labeled 'Remember me'. To the right of the 'Remember me' checkbox is a blue rectangular button with the word 'Login' written in white text.



## HOW TO SUBMIT ASSIGNMENTS

**For speedier marking of assignments, we recommend you utilise the assignment submission feature in the online student room.**

**Student Room** submissions are allocated a *tracking number* and are notified by email that their assignment has been received. This allows for more efficient handling of assignments.

Submitting assignments this way means we will receive the assignment and give it to your Academic Officer promptly. Once your Academic Officer has marked your assignment, we will then send it back to you via email, ensuring a very quick turnaround of your assignments. Please allow up to 7 working days for marking.

Each assignment should be submitted as **one document** with scans or other supporting files saved a separate document. No more than a total of 5 documents can be submitted for each assignment.

**Please note the accepted file types are:**

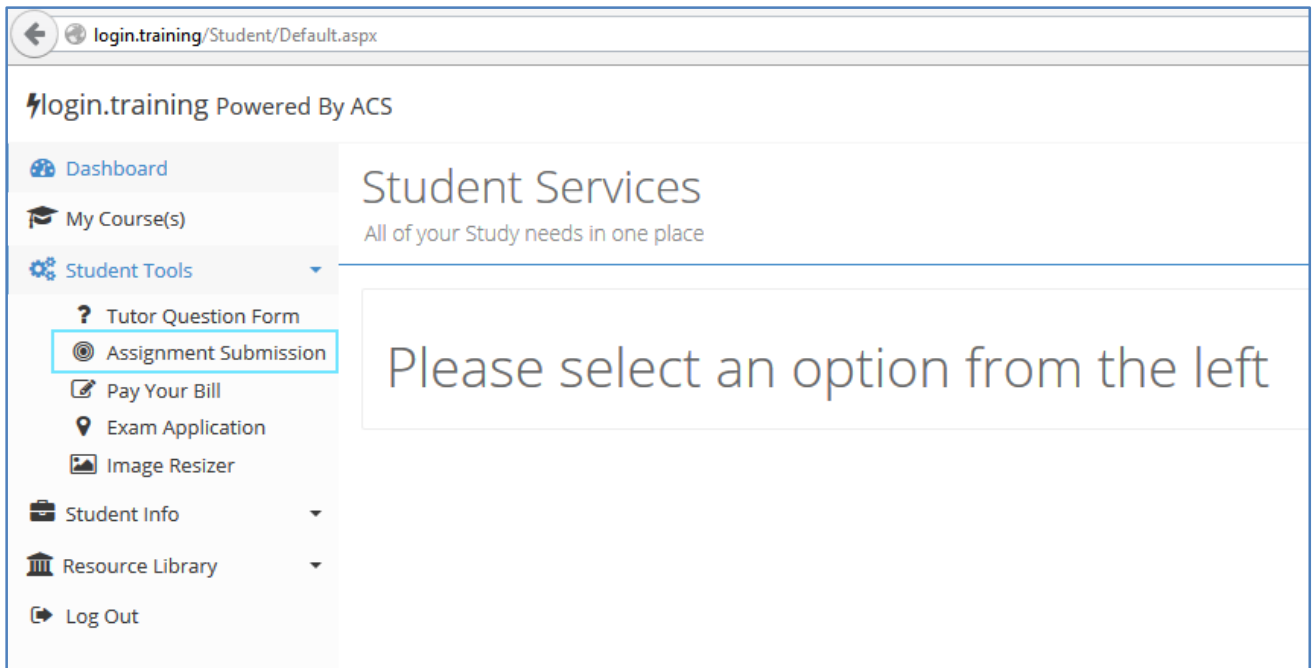
**.doc, .docx, .pdf, .txt, .pub, .png, .ai, .jpg, .bmp, .gif.**

***Photographs or drawings:*** These can be submitted as scans. These scans should be kept as relatively small files. Please ensure that the images are legible.

**\*\*\*PLEASE NOTE:**

***DO NOT SUBMIT ASSIGNMENTS CONTAINING MORE THAN 1 MB OF INFORMATION IN TOTAL.  
PLEASE REFER TO RESIZING INSTRUCTIONS ON PAGE 26***

After logging into the student room, please select the 'Student Tools' tab. Click on the option 'Assignment Submission' as shown below.



The *Assignment Submission* page will show up with your name and email address already filled in. Next, select your course and lesson number and now click on 'browse' to add your assignment file(s).

login.training/Student/assignment.aspx

login.training Powered By ACS

- Dashboard
- My Course(s)
- Student Tools
- Student Info
- Resource Library
- Log Out

## Assignment Submission

**IMPORTANT NOTICE:** Please submit this form only ONCE per assignment. You may attach up to five separate files per assignment (using the fields below). If you have difficulties submitting your assignment, please contact [Student Services](#)

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email \_\_\_\_\_  
 Course   
 Module   
 Lesson

Select each file you wish to include in your assignment using the fields below. You should include no more than five files per assignment and your **total assignment size should be no more than around 1 MB.**  
**REMINDER:** To reduce the overall size of your assignment, use the [Image Resizing Tool](#) to reduce each image in your assignment.

File 1  No file selected.  
 File 2  No file selected.  
 File 3  No file selected.  
 File 4  No file selected.  
 File 5  No file selected.

Comment

### Submitting Videos and other objects

If you are requested to submit a video as part of your assignment either follow instructions given specifically to that item, or check with administration before mailing these items.

Assignment & Project materials may sometimes be mailed direct to your assessor/examiner in order to expedite assessment and minimise postage charges. Please keep in mind to always submit a complete assignment.

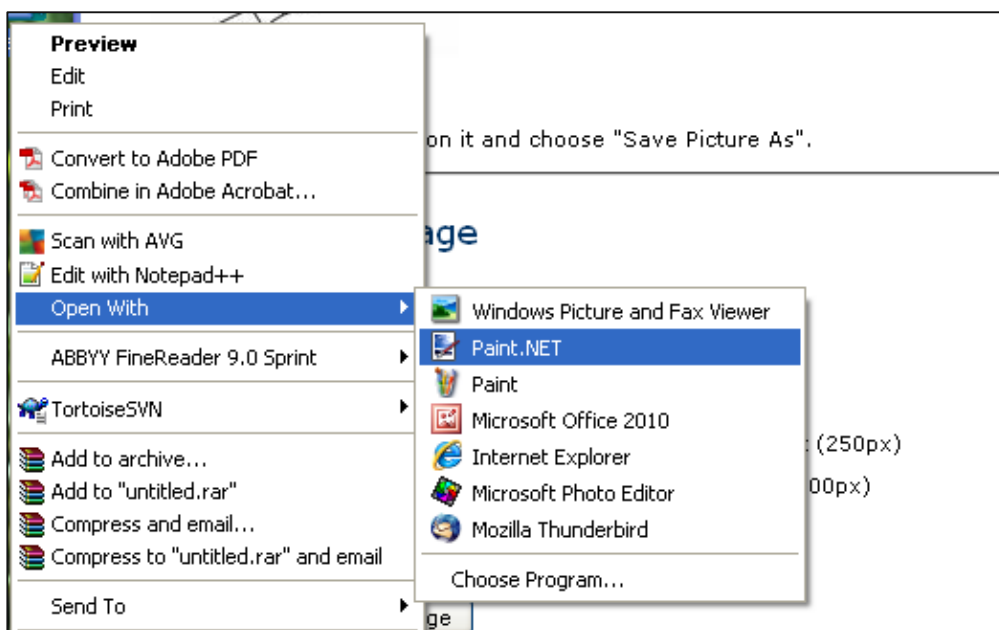
## RESIZING OF ASSIGNMENT IMAGES

### *Making Images Smaller*

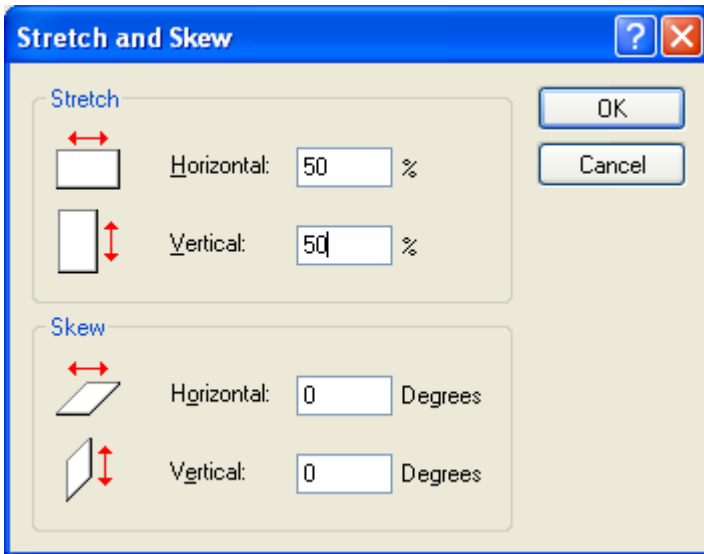
You can use software like **'Paint'** to resize images. **Paint** is provided with all current windows operating systems.

### Resizing in Paint

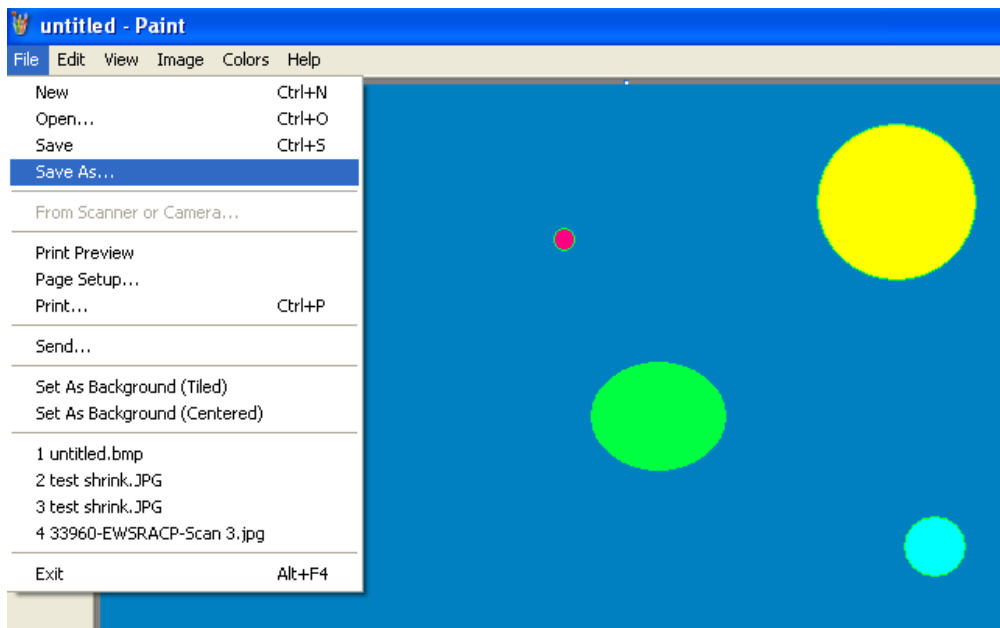
Firstly, right click on the icon of the image you want to resize. Then click on 'Open With', and then click on **Paint**.



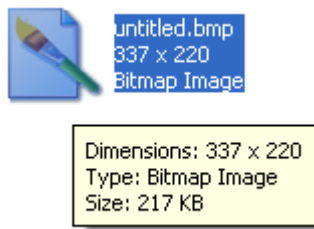
Your image will open in **Paint**. Now click on 'Image' in the menu at the top then 'Stretch/Skew'. For example, if you want to resize the image to half its size; in the Stretch section enter 50 for the Horizontal % and 50 for the Vertical %. To ensure that the image looks as natural as possible always make sure that your Horizontal % and Vertical % is the same value.



Now click on 'OK'. You can then either cut and paste the image directly into your document, or in the file menu at the top click 'File' then 'Save As'. Choose a location and name to save this new resized image (most of the time you will select JPEG as the file type as this helps ensure a small file size). Note if you put (RESIZED) or similar in the file name this will allow you to more easily identify that this is the resized image as opposed to the original.



To check the file size of your image move your cursor over the image icon and wait a few seconds. A yellow tool tip will appear with the Size information. PLEASE NOTE: Your whole assignment must be less than 1 MB. If your assignment exceeds this file size you may have to resize your images further.

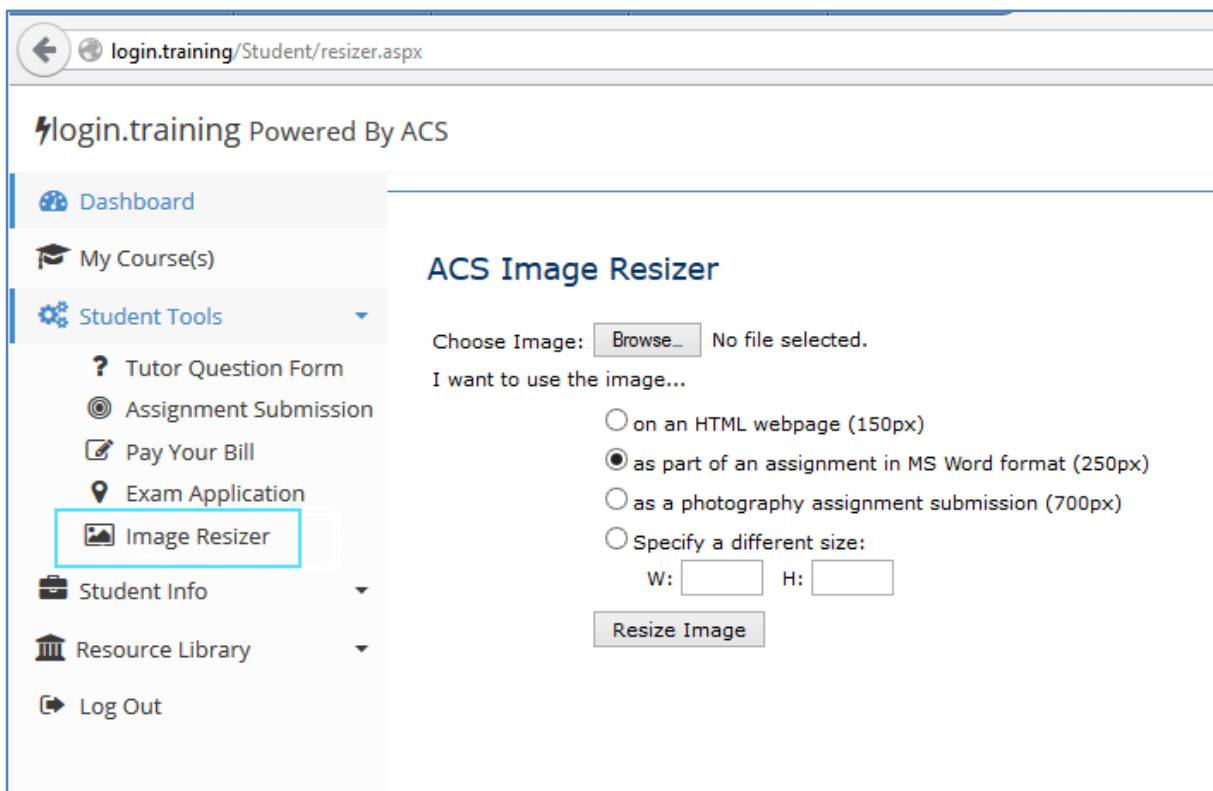


## Re-sizing Tool in Student Room

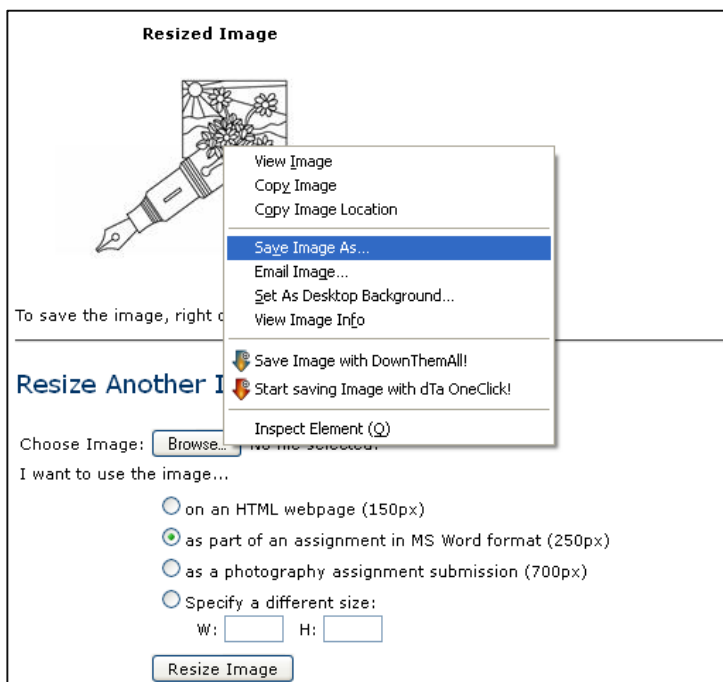
We also provide a resizing tool in our online Student Room, under the 'Student Tools' tab.

The Image Resizer will show up. Click 'Browse' to select an image then select one of the preset size settings. Additionally, you can specify the width and height yourself.

Now click 'Resize Image'.



You should see the image displayed with its new dimensions. Right click on the image and click on 'Save As', now choose a location and name to save it to. If you add '(Resized)' to your filename you will be able to identify the image as the resized image much easier.



## SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

The underlying purpose of any tasks within a course must be satisfied. However, there are often alternative ways of satisfying the purpose which can be prescribed in special circumstances.

Special circumstances that might make certain tasks difficult to carry out might be:

- A temporary or permanent physical handicap which limits your ability to undertake a specified task;
- An illness which limits your mobility;
- Changed family or work circumstances (eg. Arrival of a baby, working on night shift);
- Accessibility to places or facilities are limited by distance;
- Accessibility or the use of certain facilities may be restricted because of cultural, religious, climatic, financial, or other considerations.

In these and other special circumstances you may apply in writing (preferably by email) for an alternative task or assignment. Your application should briefly explain why you cannot undertake the specified task. In almost all cases you will be given an alternative task which is more achievable. In rare instances, it may be impossible to give you an alternative task; in which case, the original task may be deferred until such time as you can undertake it with assistance of a friend, colleague or relative.

A formal “pass” in a course will not be given until either the alternative task or original task has been carried out.

# EXAMS

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On completing all required assignments for a subject, you are entitled to sit an examination in that subject. If you pass the exam, you will be sent a Statement of Attainment from the school acknowledging this. An exam is designed to not only test factual knowledge. It also provides an indication of:

- the way the student might apply skills and knowledge gained throughout the course;
- how a student might draw on their learning to perform under pressure;
- the student's ability to think creatively or laterally.

An exam is designed to test how you will respond when you are confronted with unexpected problems and have little more than your own inherent capabilities to depend upon.

## Applying to sit an exam

You may apply to sit an examination upon satisfactorily completing all assignments for a module.

The **exam application** and **secure credit card payment** can be submitted via the **student room** . Alternatively if you prefer to make payment via bank transfer or cheque, please use the standard exam application form which can be found on the internet at- <http://www.acsedu.co.uk/Info/Enrolment/How-Exams-Work.aspx>

An example of this form is located at the rear of this student handbook.

## Examination Procedure

There are two ways you can sit the exam:

1. You can apply to sit the exam at the school's office during normal business hours by appointment. Two weeks' notice must be given prior to the date you wish to sit your exam.
2. You can sit the exam away from the school at a location which is convenient to you. The procedure is as follows:
  - a. You nominate an adjudicator (i.e. supervisor) to oversee the exam. This must be a reputable person (such as a police officer, Justice of the Peace, Minister of religion, school principal, tertiary Academic Officer/lecturer, employer or manager of a business or organisation established for more than 5 years, or member of a professional association which has an established code of ethics. Adjudicators cannot be relatives.
  - b. Set a date, time and place for the exam (usually held at the adjudicator's office).
  - c. Submit your exam application 2 to 3 weeks prior to the nominated date.
  - d. We will send the exam to the adjudicator.
  - e. At the set time you attend the nominated place and sit the exam.

The adjudicator will conduct the exam. On completion of the exam, your work is taken by the adjudicator and sent by him/her directly to the school.



## General information on exams

- Exams are usually one and a half hours in duration.
- Students should bring pens and a few dozen sheets of foolscap or A4 paper to exams.
- No texts or notes are allowed in the exam.
- Non-programmable calculators are permitted for subjects like Landscaping, Engineering, etc.
- Exam Fees are £27 made payable to ACS Distance Education and apply each time you sit an exam. This must be paid when you submit your exam application

If you have difficulty finding an appropriately qualified person to act as an adjudicator; you should request assistance from the school by emailing: [admin@acsedu.co.uk](mailto:admin@acsedu.co.uk)

Exams are posted to the adjudicator no less than 2 weeks prior to the exam date for exams within the UK. For exams outside of the UK; exams are most commonly sent by email or air mail.

## Structure of an Exam

Exams may contain any type of question, but will always be designed in a way that should result in a pass for anyone who has successfully completed all lessons, set tasks and assignments for the course being examined.

Normally an exam will contain:

- Questions from each lesson, even if only a short answer question.
- Different types of questions (e.g. short essay, short answer, perhaps drawing diagrams etc)

A sample exam has been attached to the rear of this booklet. Generally, our exams follow a similar format.

## **MARKING OF EXAMS**

### **Assessment**

ACS views examinations as something to give us an "indication" of whether a person is learning or not.....rather than as a tool for grading a person on a sliding scale from 1 to 100.

You are assessed on the basis of three things:

- a. Your submitted assignments.
- b. Your exams.
- c. Any other communication that occurs between the school and yourself, as you progress through the course.

Through these three things, we are able to get to know you and follow your progress, as you learn about the subjects you have chosen to study.

We fully appreciate that some people do not perform as well under pressure in an exam situation and for this reason alone, it is important for us to take more into consideration than just a final exam.

### **Determining a Percentage Mark**

The percentage is not a "formal" result as required in administering a qualification, but it will be provided for the student's own edification or encouragement.

Different questions are NOT assigned specific percentage points, this concept conflicts with competency based assessment.

A percentage will be granted on the following basis:

- 100% indicates absolute perfection.
- 90-99% indicates all questions have been answered correct, and in greater depth than what is required. Not one mistake has been made.
- 80-89% indicates questions have been answered correct, but some minor mistakes may have been made.
- 70-79% indicates the vast majority of important issues are shown to be understood in general terms.
- 60-69% indicates that most important issues are understood, and there are no serious broad issues that are badly misunderstood.
- 50-59% indicates that the student has demonstrated they are sufficiently competent in most issues to be of value to an employer in the workplace.
- Below 50% means a lack of competence in some serious areas.

## Who marks Exams?

Exams are marked by two different Academic Officers. This provides a quality check, and ensures that your final grade is not influenced by unforeseen personal prejudices. If a serious discrepancy is found between the two marks, there will be further discussion between your Academic Officer, two assessors and the principal before a final grade is decided.

## Special Considerations

When a Academic Officer is uncomfortable about the exam mark awarded or suspects that a different result should have been given; the student database record is consulted. The case is also discussed with any Academic Officer(s) who have dealt with you.

We also take into account the "overall impression" that an examination conveys.

For example: If the Academic Officer determines a low percentage mark but knows that the student is generally much more competent; it may be appropriate to increase the marks granted. Should this be the case the Academic Officer or examiner will include a written explanation.

The exam mark is influenced by all these considerations. Your final overall result will be either pass or fail.

Your assignments and exam papers will be marked to indicate the level of achievement beyond just pass or fail (as follows)

***\*\*If you fail, you will have the option of applying for and sitting a second exam (in order to show improvement after further study). Exam fees apply.***

## EXAMINATION PROCEDURE

On completing all required assignments for a subject you are then entitled to sit for an examination in that subject. **Exam application forms will not be accepted until after all assignments have been marked and sent back to the student.** If you pass the exam, you are awarded a pass in that subject, and a Statement of Attainment will be sent from the school acknowledging this.

NOTE: You do not have to do an examination unless you want to, but to gain an official pass - the exam is necessary.

There are two ways you can sit the exam:

1. You can apply to sit the exam at our Queensland office in the daytime or of an evening, by appointment. Three weeks' notice must be given prior to the date you wish to sit your exam.
2. You can sit the exam away from the school at a location which is convenient to you.

To do this the procedure is as follows:

- a) You nominate an adjudicator (i.e. supervisor) to oversee the exam. This must be a reputable person (*such as a police officer, Justice of the Peace, Minister of religion, school principal, tertiary Academic Officer/lecturer, employer or manager of a business or organisation established for more than 5 years, or member of a professional association which has an established code of ethics. Adjudicators cannot be relatives.*)
- b) Set a date, time and place for the exam (usually held at the adjudicator's office).
- c) **Submit** your exam application **3 weeks prior** to the nominated date.
- d) We will send the exam to the adjudicator.
- e) At the set time you attend the nominated place the adjudicator will conduct the exam. On completion of the exam, your work is taken by the adjudicator and sent by him/her directly to the school.

### GENERAL INFORMATION:

- Exams are usually one and a half hours in duration.
- Students should bring pens and a few dozen sheets of foolscap or A4 paper with them.
- No texts or notes are allowed in the exam.
- Non-programmable calculators are permitted for subjects like Landscaping, Engineering, etc.
- An exam fee of £27.00 included (payable to 'ACS Distance Education') applies each time you sit an exam.

---

### APPLICATION FORM

Student's Name: .....

Subject/s in which you wish to sit an exam (name and code of course):  
.....

If sitting the exam externally: -

Adjudicator's Name: ..... Ph B/H (.....).....

Adjudicator's Address: .....  
.....

Postcode: .....

Adjudicator's Position/ Occupation: .....

Do you wish to sit at the school: .....

Exam Date: ..... Exam Time: .....

£27.00 (GST inclusive) Fee Enclosed      Student's Signature: .....

ACS Distance Education

P.O. Box 4171, Stourbridge DY8 2WZ, UK

**NB: NO PERSONAL CHEQUES, NO FOREIGN CURRENCY - SEE ABOVE**

# SAMPLE EXAM

## **CERTIFICATE IN GARDEN DESIGN –EXAM A (Sample) LESSONS 1-15**

---

Student Name:

Current Postal Address:

---

### **INSTRUCTIONS:**

You have 5 minutes to read this paper prior to commencing writing, after which you have **1 hour and 30 minutes** to answer all questions.

The space provided for each question will give you a guide as to how much you may be expected to write for each answer, but if you need more space, please use a separate sheet.

The exam is designed to test:

- what you know and can recall at the present time
- how well you apply what you have learnt through the course
- how well you can complete all questions within the time allowed

On completion of the exam, give the completed paper to your supervisor, for him/her to send to:

**ACS Distance Education**

P.O. Box 4171

Stourbridge DY8 2WZ

UNITED KINGDOM

**If overseas**, please return to us via email: [admin@acsedu.co.uk](mailto:admin@acsedu.co.uk)

### **EXAM CONDITIONS:**

- The student is not to have access to the exam papers outside of the examination
- No books or references are to be used in the exam
- No immediate access to mobile phones or other electronic devices during the exam
- Non-programmable calculators are permitted in selected exams
- Use black or blue pen only, no pencil

---

**To be completed by your exam adjudicator**

Print (or stamp) full name:

Signature:

Date:

---

1. Explain the principles of garden design as simply as possible.

.....

.....

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.....

2. Explain how you would plant out the plants in a landscape. You have a range of shrubs, groundcovers and deciduous fruit trees. The soil has already been delivered and spread. Discuss the planting of the three groups mentioned above. Give an example of each as though that was the plant you were intending to plant. Discuss details such as digging the hole, fertilising, staking, root pruning or foliage pruning, watering, etc.

*(Write up to **ONE** page)*

3. Do **THREE** of the following:

a) List the reasons for pruning.

.....

.....

.....

b) Explain various methods for weed control (give examples).

.....

.....

.....

c) Explain various methods for insect control (give examples).

.....

.....

.....

d) Briefly explain the differences between formal and natural gardens.

.....

.....

.....

.....

e) Define the following terms:

Salinity

.....

Web of life

.....

Cut and fill

.....

Pre-planning information

.....

f) Briefly explain the types and causes of erosion.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

4. Answer **ALL** the following questions:

a) Explain the importance of correct slopes and grades when constructing surfaces. What would happen if the gradient for a sports oval was incorrect?

.....

.....

.....

b) Explain the significance of plants in a landscape.

.....

.....  
.....  
a) Describe various trails that can be constructed in parks for interaction with the public.

.....  
.....  
.....  
b) How should the following tools be treated at the end of the day:

Mattock

.....  
Garden fork

.....  
Secateurs

.....  
Chainsaw

.....  
Wheelbarrow

.....  
5. Draw a rough sketch of a park that you know well.

Discuss this park in relation to good or bad design features. How can it be improved?

Use a single page for both drawings and explanations.

~END OF PAPER~



# PERSONAL CONDUCT

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- Students of this school are expected to conduct themselves in an ethical, moral and well-presented fashion.
- Students are obliged to support the reputation and standards of the school both while studying and after graduating.
- ACS does not tolerate discrimination or intolerance in any form.
- Students are expected to be good ambassadors for the school when dealing with colleagues, clients, customers, or peers.
- Students are expected to respect the property and reputation of the school, other students and the staff. Disciplinary action should be expected if a student damages or defaces the property or the reputation of ACS either in obvious, or subtle and implied ways.

## Feedback

The maintenance of course content depends upon feedback from students both during and following course completion. Students are requested to submit a course evaluation upon completing each module or course.

A smaller number of students are also selected at random to fill in feedback forms while undertaking study of a module. This feedback is important for ACS to review and update course content.

We trust you will take these feedback procedures seriously, in the knowledge that they are a significant component in the whole system of education in which you are enrolled.

## Academic Honesty

Students are expected to submit their own **original work** for assignments and examinations. Plagiarism, submission of non-original work, misrepresentation of qualification, misrepresentation of adjudicator details, and other forms of dishonesty, will attract disciplinary action. (See Plagiarism on pg. 17 of this manual). Even after graduation, it is possible that the award of a qualification may be withdrawn if academic dishonesty becomes evident.

## Appeals Procedure

1. If a student has a grievance and wishes to make an appeal, this should be done by writing a letter and submitting that letter to the Administration Manager.
2. Any submission will be dealt with in accordance with the school's code of practice.
3. A student may appeal against results of a course or module any time within the three month period after receiving the results of that course.
4. A response will be forwarded to the student within 10 days of receipt of a letter. This response will contain an explanation of the school's position on the issue, and where appropriate, an offer to settle the dispute.

5. The student will respond to the letter from the school within ten days of receiving the school's first letter.
6. If the matter is not resolved at this point, both parties will continue negotiations, in any way considered appropriate, for a further period of 1 month.
7. If a settlement has still not been reached, an arbitrator acceptable to both parties will be asked to rule on the matter. This arbitrator will be an appropriate professional body or their appointed representative (eg. The Australian Institute of Horticulture, the Australian Council of Private Education & Training).
8. Both parties will accept the ruling of the arbitrator, including any direction to pay costs incurred by the arbitrator.

### **Personal Property**

The school accepts no responsibility for personal property sent to or left at the school or at any function organised or endorsed by the school.

### **Copyright of Course Materials**

All course materials, including printed course notes, study guides, videos, CD's, books and electronic publishing are protected by international copyright and should not be reproduced, in breach of law, without expressed written approval from the owner of that copyright. Legal action may result for breach of copyright. Internal disciplinary action by the school may result for breach of copyright.

### **Student Records**

All student records are kept on a data base which is routinely updated and backed up.

Students may access a statement of their records, at one week's notice, at any time while studying, or after studying. Student records may only be purposefully disposed of, if the student either withdraws from a course or dies.

### **Scholarships and Financial Assistance**

Financial assistance has frequently been made available to students by employers (for employees) and by certain government and charitable organisations. These situations however are beyond the control of the school, and are of no concern to the school. Students receiving such financial assistance may have moral or legal responsibilities to the funding authority; and we strongly advise that the student understands and attends to those responsibilities.

Where a course is being funded externally, the student's enrolment will not be considered in-force until the funding has been paid to the school, unless an arrangement has been made to the contrary, and before receipt of the funding.

From time to time the school may offer a small number of partial scholarships. These programs may allow you to enrol and pay a fee lower than the normal fee rate. In general, such scholarships are only available to *outstanding* candidates who can substantiate difficult circumstances, where enrolment without funding assistance would be a significant burden.

## CODE OF PRACTICE

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### 1. Educational Standards

ACS will ensure that policies and management practices are adopted which maintain high professional standards in the marketing and delivery of education services, and which safeguard the educational interests and welfare of students.

### 2. Marketing

ACS will market the educational product with integrity, accuracy and professionalism.

### 3. Trainee Information

ACS will provide sufficient accurate information to students, which sets out the total costs/fees to students and the objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the students. This will include:

- Copy of the Code of Practice
- Admission Procedures & Criteria
- Copy of the Refund Policy
- Details of all Fees and Costs incurred in a course
- An explanation of Certification to be issued
- Aims to be achieved
- Arrangements for Recognition of Prior Learning
- Grievance/appeal procedure
- Support services including facilities available.

### 4. Recruitment

Recruitment of students will be conducted at all times in an ethical and responsible manner. Recruitment will rest on an assessment by the institution of the extent to which the stated competency standards and outcomes of the course are likely to be achieved by the applicant given his/her qualifications, proficiencies and aspirations. This assessment will be made by appropriately qualified staff. Acceptance into courses will comply with all equal opportunity legislation.

### 5. Refund Policy

ACS has a refund policy in place which is fair and equitable. Students notifying the school of their withdrawal from their course within 14 working days of enrolment qualify for a full refund of course fees

only (not including postage & handling & administration fees). The onus is on the student to ensure and confirm that written notification of withdrawal is lodged.

The school will not be responsible for messages going astray.

The school cannot accept responsibility for changes in students' personal circumstances.

**Details of this Refund Cancellation Policy are provided in this manual.**

## **6. Trainee Grievances/Appeals**

In the event of a grievance, the student is first required to submit details of the matter in writing. Every effort will be made to settle the grievance internally in a fair and equitable manner to the satisfaction of both parties. In the event that the matter cannot be settled, the student will be advised of an appropriate legal body where they can seek further assistance. A student may appeal against results anytime within a period of 3 months after receiving results.

## **7. Guarantee**

The school guarantees to honour any statement made in this code of practice, or in the current handbook.

## **8. All Students**

Anyone studying an external course, will be treated in a fair and equitable manner, and treated in accordance with this code of practice and all information provided in the current handbook.

# STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

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The school attempts to provide comments and support to students in ways that are practically possible, in an effort to develop skills and knowledge that are complementary to the subject enrolled in.

## Services include:

- Academic Officers marking assignments will attempt to make a few constructive comments and suggestions; and answer specific questions asked by the student when submitting their assignment.
- If needed, Academic Officers may provide additional notes from our data base on subjects which are relevant to and supportive of the goals of a subject or lesson being studied.
- Research and writing up to a paragraph of notes to attend to issues which a student raises as being needed in a course (in order to approve the course aims).
- Academic Officers will comment on resumes or job application letters submitted by students who have completed a course.
- Discussing any matters pertaining to the subject being studied on the telephone.

(Note: You may be limited to one phone call per assignment, in order to minimise administration costs, hence the fees we need to charge you).

## Services do not include:

- Editing manuscripts or business plans of more than one page in length unless they are specifically asked for in a study guide.
- Phone calls which are not important to the current lesson studied.
- Repeat phone calls from students who do not submit written assignments.
- Phone calls requesting additional printed notes on topics which the student was requested to either acquire through research or deduction

## Additional Assistance

For detailed assessments of Manuscripts, Business Plans and other more complex documentation, which involves more than one hour of work on the part of a Academic Officer, per assignment, Academic Officers will charge a discounted consultancy rate (Ask for a quote).

Given that it is the course fees that are covering the cost of providing these services, the student must appreciate that providing excessive services to individuals will detract from the ability of staff to service other students; and will only serve to cause fees to be increased for future enrolments.

All students are encouraged to ask questions, and actively seek assistance from Academic Officers; but also to be aware of the limitations as outlined above.