

# Academic Writing – An overview

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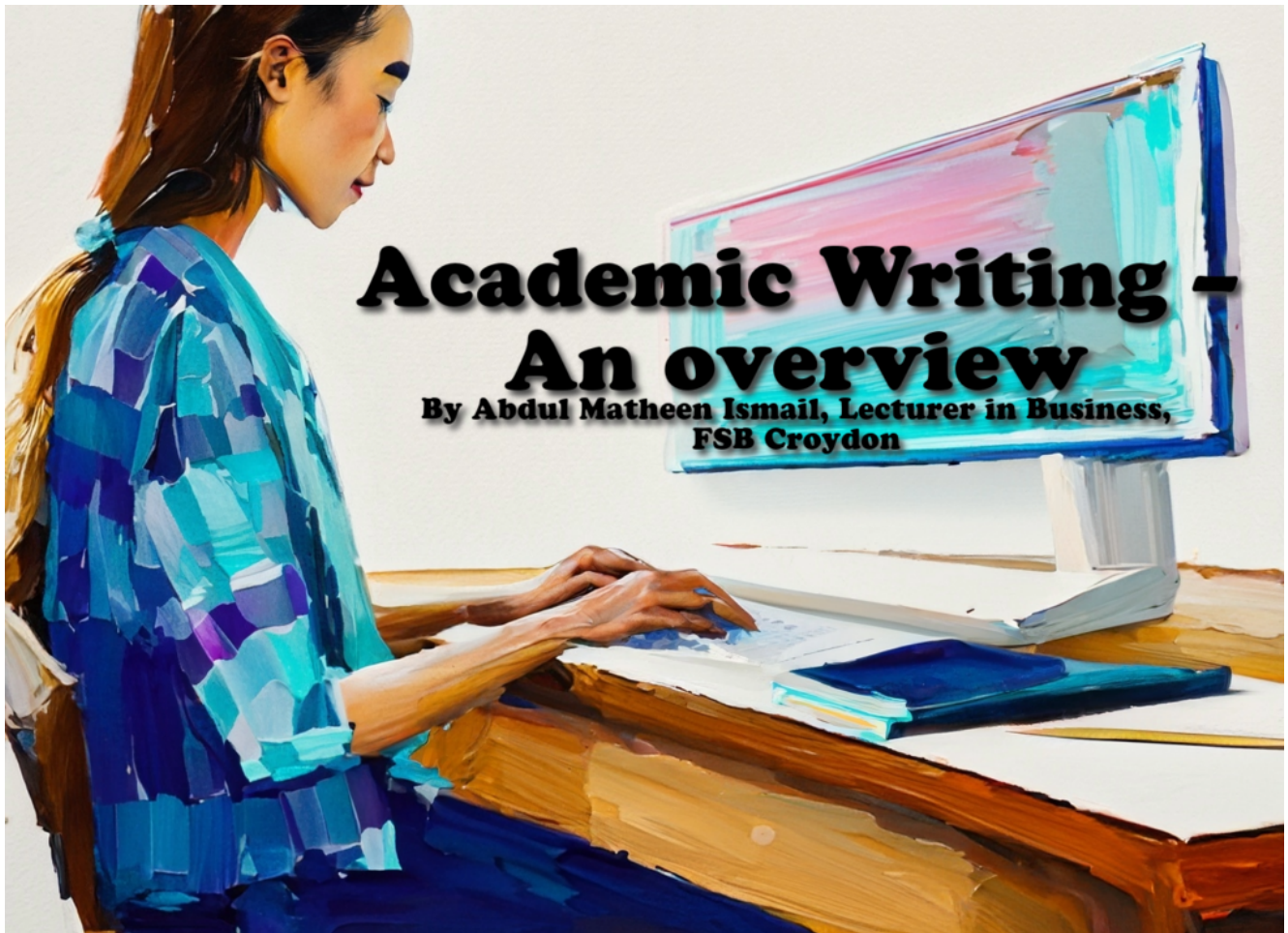


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A large part of your academic journey is about gaining new knowledge, skills, and experience. In this journey, you can go much further by learning to write academically. Academic writing is a unique genre of writing, which is significantly different from descriptive, imaginative, or creative

## writing.

The primary purpose of it is to communicate ideas, views, and opinions to an academic community. For many students, academic writing can be challenging as it is dissimilar to how you may normally write; however, all students are encouraged to enhance their academic writing proficiency, as it is essential for producing scholarly essays and reports as part of your assessments, showcasing your comprehensive grasp of the subject matter.

What characteristics must good academic writing have? One of the most significant characteristics of an academic piece of writing is its **structure**, which is the focus of this article. Often the format of the essay or report is provided to you; however, structuring needs more careful thoughts about how to organise information. To have a good structure, two important concepts need to be understood. Firstly, the whole essay or report must be **coherent**. A coherent piece of writing will have a logical progression of ideas throughout. The piece of writing should form a unified whole rather than presenting unrelated ideas and information. The paragraphs need to link to one another starting from the introduction to the conclusion. To achieve this, the following equation might work:

*Coherent writing = logically ordered + ideas connected*

**You can ask yourself whether what you have written is clear, consistent, and understandable to others.** If they understand it and say the ideas stick together then, you must have achieved coherence in your text. Hence, coherence is a macro-

level organisation of your writing with each part of the writing connected to one another rather than at the paragraph level (micro level).

Secondly, **cohesion**, by contrast, is grammatical and lexical connections at the sentence and paragraph level. It is about how words, phrases, clauses, and sentences form paragraphs to create a unified whole. Broadly speaking, a text that achieves cohesion will give a semantically meaningful whole. To achieve, a cohesive text, you may consider both lexical and grammatical cohesion. Lexical cohesion can be achieved through the repletion of words, and the use of synonymy and antonymy. Grammatical cohesion, on the other hand, is reached through ways such as ellipsis, substitutions, conjunctions, and transition words.

Academic writing, as pointed out above, is highly technical and requires a lot of knowledge, skills, and experience to be an expert in academic writing. With commitment, you can confidently create a compelling, well-structured piece of work for your academic pursuits. That said, it is important to learn the basics of academic writing to be successful in your academic career. This article is just an overview giving you an idea of what an academic text might look like.

***My next article will provide you with further guidance on developing your academic writing skills.***

Please contact [Abdul Matheen Ismail](#), Lecturer in Business, FSB Croydon, for further information about this blog.

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