



CIH Accredited qualification

Study skills support pack

This guide aims to provide you with helpful tips, hints and links to many resources which will help as you progress your studies on a Chartered Institute of Housing qualification.

Good luck with your studies and enjoy the course you are studying which is your route into a successful and rewarding career in housing.



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Finding space and time to study

Starting to study again should be considered as an adventure. You will explore things which are familiar but also discover new information, hearing about many new ideas and reflecting on your learning to make you an even better housing professional.

You need to be clear about where, when and how you will study. You need some space for studying, for quiet reading and research, to complete activities and to prepare your assignments.

Where can you do this?

- Do you have a room at home?
- Do you have space in your office where you can work sometimes?
- Do you work better somewhere else - such as the local library?

The 'right' place is what is right for you. The environment is important as well.

- Do you work better without interruptions from family or colleagues or can you manage with things going on around you?
- Do you work better with music playing in the background, with the TV on in the background or do you work best with a quiet space?
- Do you work best either in the early morning or later in the evening?
- Do you have some time every day or could you plan for set evenings which are your study time?
- Do you need to allocate a whole day at the weekend?
- Do you have space in your working day to do some reading or research or does most of your studying need to be done outside work?

It is about selecting what works best for you. What is important is to consider these points and make some plans for how, when and where you will study. And don't forget, your course will be more enjoyable if you also allow space for family time and/or for relaxation. Think about giving yourself 'rewards' as you complete each stage - things to look forward to.

It is challenging to start studying again. You'll have to manage work, home and study, but keep your goals in mind and remember the course has an end date to work towards, with quite an adventure along the way.



Study Skills

Learning Styles

Making the Most of your Learning Style – for more detailed information on this go to the [Open University site](#)

Reading Styles

This link will lead you to resources on how you can read efficiently and intelligently: [Reading Efficiently by Reading Intelligently](#)

Taking Notes

Taking notes as you work through materials, listen to a session or a speaker or as you read is important in developing your understanding and appreciation of the material. Taking good notes is a key to being able to select information, revisit it later and prompt you to recall key information which could be useful. Below are a series of links to useful materials coming from a range of academic sources. These could be helpful as you work through your materials for your course.

[Making useful notes](#)

This resource is from the University of Reading

[Taking notes in lectures](#)

This is from a free site called Study Guides and Strategies.

[Effective note taking techniques](#)

For more detailed information on this go to the [Open University site](#)

Mind mapping is a technique for developing images or pictures which help us to make connections between topics, between ideas and to link these into a logical order or framework. This is particularly useful in helping make sense and plan assignments.

[More on mind mapping](#)

Summarising Skills

Having been selective in your reading and taking notes from what you read, you will have noted that you won't want to use everything you have read or discovered. Instead you need to be able to summarise your thinking, picking out what was key to



your needs and considering what the impact of what you have read might be, according to each author.

As you work, you can't capture every point, but need the ability to point to what was the key message or a couple of important points.

You need to be able to capture, in a few words, the essence of what other writers are saying. They have taken a long, detailed look at their topic, but you need to consider the value of their thinking and how it complements, confirms, contrasts or challenges your own thinking as you address your assignment questions.

You use the ideas of others to demonstrate that you have considered and been informed by the work of other, more authoritative voices and that you can evidence this by referencing your sources.



Referencing your work – using the Harvard Reference Style

It is important to show where you found your information. If you do this, you will always get credit. If you avoid referencing what and where you found your information - your sources, it is as if you are claiming that the work of others is your own. This is called plagiarism.

When you study, you may have to submit your assignments to an online originality checking tool, which can detect the sources you have used. So, it is a good idea to learn how to credit and demonstrate your wider reading in your assignments.

As you work you should make a note of all your sources. There are various ways to do this. The Harvard style is the most commonly used form of referencing for social science disciplines in universities.

[De Montfort University's Harvard Referencing Guide](#)



Writing your assignments

In this section we examine some key pointers as you begin to write your assignment. We focus here on reports and essays, although you may also be asked to write articles or to draft briefing papers.

[Writing effective reports and essays](#)

[Tips for clear writing](#)

[Structuring your work](#)

A word or two about punctuation

Some students find punctuating their work difficult. Tutors spend quite a lot of feedback time correcting this. For example, where does the apostrophe go? How do you punctuate plurals (clue - you don't usually).

This short guide may be helpful in improving your [punctuation skills](#).

Proof reading your work

When you have completed your assignment you should spend some time proof reading your work. You are checking for spelling errors, for grammatical errors and for correct punctuation. You should remember that if you use the wrong word but spell this correctly, the spell checking facility on your computer isn't enough - although it is a good starting point.



Prioritising and managing your time effectively

It is worth spending some time, reflecting on the way you use your time, considering how this might improve and looking at some techniques for doing this.

Interestingly we are all really good at managing some of our time and it is about being much more aware of what we do when we are doing this well, so it then works for managing your studies.

This link provides some helpful advice and guidance on [managing your time](#) as you study.



Presentation Skills

What does it take to give a good presentation? As part of your course you may have to do this - or at the very least you are asked to plan and prepare the materials you will use. Read a [simple guide](#) to what PowerPoint can do, how you can use this and examine some of the pitfalls to avoid.

This link into the Leeds University Library website has some useful material to help you [plan and prepare for presentations](#).

The [CIH Career support modules](#) may also help you with developing your presentation skills.



Being a reflective practitioner

One of the aims of all the CIH accredited courses is for you to develop the skill of being a reflective practitioner.

The five key factors required for the reflective practitioner are self awareness, description, critical analysis, synthesis and evaluation. These are all important skills for reflection.

You should always consider and use your workplace and your experiences as a source of learning, to bring new understandings to your own and the organisation's practice. Should you use the article to reference your own thinking about reflections do ensure you credit the original authors as shown at the end of the article.

Reflective practitioners are also lifelong learners - so this is about going beyond your programme of study and ensuring this becomes a part of who you are. It will assist you to contribute to your own lifelong learning, to the Chartered Institute of Housing as a member and to your chosen profession and future career path.