

C Module Case Report Writing General Advice

Grammar and spelling: The modules are not leading a certificate in the English language, but a professional ability to write is expected of you. You must proof read your work.

As a guideline: if a report is not good enough to go to VDS/court/fellow professionals....it is not good enough for high marks.

- Avoid first person "I".
- Keep to one tense, usually past tense for case reports, until you come to the discussion of current literature and evidence which, by being current, can be phrased as "XYZ suggests that treatment ABC....."
- Avoid slang/colloquialisms at all costs
- Avoid contractions ("will not", instead of "won't")
- Microbe names: capital letter for the genus, whole name in italics
- Avoid storytelling: "the cow was examined", not "After taking a history I entered the barn and clinically examined the cow"think of the word count as well as the difference in style! *Be ruthless when culling words*. In case you are wondering: the word count is imposed by the fact that modules worth 10 credits have an overall maximum word count allowed by the university.
- The whole report should read as a *scientific* report.

References: use the guidelines you have been given ; avoid textbooks where possible (unless no original source); in the text avoid double brackets:

(Oultram *et al.*, 2008) NOT (Oultram *et al.*, (2008))

Or: XYZ was found by Oultram *et al.*(2008)

Drug doses: **generic** name of drug plus **trade** name and **concentration** of active ingredients; **route** of admin and total **volume** given, plus estimated **weight** of the patient(s). Try seeing it this way...the reader has to have enough information to know the dose is correct and to be able to find the same product if, in a research project, they wanted to duplicate your work, or wanted to use exactly the same treatment of a clinical case. They should not have to look anything up. All lab results should be presented in SI units, which may require conversion in some cases.

Tables are a double edged sword: yes use them to summarise information, but if you find your table becoming large and cumbersome because you are writing paragraphs within it, have a rethink....it *might* be better as text. Remember the rule for papers is that the text should be able to be read and make sense even if the table has been missed out. If you *have* included reams of essential information in a table, it will be counted in the word count.

Problem and differentials lists

By the time you reach C modules the problem list should be a mental one, leading you to a considered list of differentials which encompasses all the problems (rather than you giving us a list of problems, then a list of differential diagnoses for each one).

Reflection or discussion

Try and see this section as a scientific review of the case, discuss it clinically, by all means suggest better approaches to the case, but try not to let it become too personalised (these are fictional examples):

“it would have been better to do XYZ, given the evidence of Oultram et al. (2008) who state that” reads so much better than “I feel I would /would like to do, XYZ next time because I have read that.....”

Keep everything brisk, succinct and scientific; you don't have the words to waste!

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