

## Ghent University – Academic writing checklist

Content		Desirable features	
1. Information is complete and accurate	<input type="checkbox"/>	1.1 Well-focussed subject 1.2 In-depth and sophisticated/multi-perspective explanation 1.3 Relevant details only	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
2. Clear and credible argumentation	<input type="checkbox"/>	2.1 All steps in reasoning are included. 2.2 Good and sufficient argumentation is included.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Structure		Desirable features	
3. The paper is complete	<input type="checkbox"/>	The paper contains: foreword, abstract, table of contents, introduction, corpus, conclusions, list of abbreviations, appendices, reference list, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. The text has a logical structure	<input type="checkbox"/>	4.1 The text takes the reader from one clear idea to the next. 4.2 Repetition is used for emphasis and clarity only.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
5. The introduction is well structured	<input type="checkbox"/>	Introduction includes: context, scientific motivation, (clear) research question, survey of what will follow	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. The main body of the text is well structured	<input type="checkbox"/>	Chapters/sections are of similar length.	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. The conclusion is well structured	<input type="checkbox"/>	7.1 There is no new information in the conclusion. 7.2 Research question is effectively answered.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
8. Titles are clear and well-chosen	<input type="checkbox"/>	8.1 Labelling of sections is clear and well-defined. 8.2 Sufficient /clear section titles 8.3 Section titles are concise. 8.4 Consistent wording in section titles (either questions or statements or terms or quotes etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
9. Correct and useful appendices. Relevant and clear visual support (tables, graphs, photos, illustrations...).	<input type="checkbox"/>	9.1 Reference(s) to the appendix/ces in core text 9.2 Essential information is in the core text; non-essential (illustrative) material in the appendix/ces. 9.3 Visual support leads to better understanding of the text and is sufficiently explained in the text.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
10. The structure of chapter sections and paragraphs is sound.	<input type="checkbox"/>	10.1 Information is distributed in a balanced manner in chapter sections and paragraphs. 10.2 Each paragraph has only one core idea. 10.3 Each paragraph has a topic sentence. 10.4 Structuring paragraphs are used at the beginning and end of larger units of text (section, chapter).	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
11. The internal structure of the text is marked by structure indicators (= signposts, signal	<input type="checkbox"/>	11.1 Strong cohesion between sentences/paragraphs 11.2 Good signposting and referring words	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

words, referring words, linking sentences and linking paragraphs).			
<b>Style</b>		<b>Desirable features</b>	
12. The text strikes a balance between difficult and simplistic language use.	<input type="checkbox"/>	12.1 Language is formal without employing stiff, archaic or officialese phrases. 12.2 Sentences are of appropriate length with finite verb forms. 12.3 No words are missing. 12.4 Sentences strike a balance between too short and too long. 12.5 Sentences strike a balance between difficult and simplistic. 12.6 Passives can be used and so can impersonal constructions. 12.7 The style strikes a balance between too cumbersome and too simplistic.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
13. Ideas are expressed clearly with precise wording.	<input type="checkbox"/>	13.1 Technical terms are explained and used appropriately. 13.2 Vocabulary is appropriate, avoiding vague words. 13.3 Language is academic, avoiding inappropriate tentativeness.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
14. The information density is distributed evenly over the text.	<input type="checkbox"/>	14.1 Complex ideas are expressed clearly. 14.2 The text strikes a balance between unwieldy and too concise.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
15. The style is elegant yet academic.	<input type="checkbox"/>	15.1 The style is varied with a rich vocabulary and a variety of sentence constructions. 15.2 The style is appropriate, avoiding storytelling and inappropriate imagery/expressions.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
16. The text addresses the reader impersonally and consistently.	<input type="checkbox"/>	16.1 The text avoids conversational language. 16.2 The tone is objective and nuanced. 16.3 The style is consistent.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Mechanics</b>		<b>Desirable features</b>	
17. The text is correct and follows the rules of spelling and grammar.	<input type="checkbox"/>	17.1 All words are correctly spelled 17.2 Appropriate punctuation, correct and consistent capitalization 17.3 Consistent and correct use of tenses 17.4 Correct concord, correct reference words, correct word order etc. (grammar) 17.5 Idiomatic collocations, expressions, prepositions etc.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Reference</b>		<b>Desirable features</b>	
18. The content of the text is well-supported by academic literature.	<input type="checkbox"/>	18.1 Sufficient sources, recent sources, relevant sources 18.2 Academic sources 18.3 Sources appropriately incorporated into the text, adequate and acceptable translations from sources (citations vs paraphrases)	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

		18.4 Critical attitude towards sources 18.5 No plagiarism	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Layout</b>		<b>Desirable features</b>	
19. The layout is attractive and consistent.	<input type="checkbox"/>	19.1 Correct and consistent in-text referencing 19.2 Correct and consistent lay-out of the bibliography 19.3 Consistent use of (interlinear) spacing, italics, quotation marks, abbreviations etc. 19.4 Lay-out conform to the style sheet used by the university programme. 19.5 Figures have captions and in-text references.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>