

South African Theological Seminary

Academic Writing Guide

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How to Write a Good Assignment

1. General planning

One of the main reasons why students submit unsatisfactory assignments is that they don't plan in advance and they don't use their time effectively. The most common mistake is to allow too little time to complete assignments, with the result that the final product is put together without much thought.

Phase 1: 60 percent of your available time:

Preparation for writing your assignment, that is planning the basic structure, preparatory reading following from your planning, making summaries, etc.

Phase 2: 30 percent of your available time:

Writing your assignment in a rough form and making the necessary adjustments.

Phase 3: 2 percent of your available time:

Rumination; this means you put your assignment aside for a while, and continue with other work. The reason for this is that you can get too involved with a topic with the result that you overlook your mistakes. The brain tends to take for granted certain relationships that are not made completely clear in the written work. If you give yourself a rest period, you'll approach the assignment with a new, fresh perspective and you can then make adjustments based on logic or insight, as necessary.

Phase 4: 8 percent of your available time:

Make final adjustments and write the assignment in its final form for submission.

With these guidelines in mind you should draw up a schedule to ensure that you allow yourself enough time for completing the assignment.

2. Understanding the question

Understanding the question is extremely important. You need to

- read the question carefully
- identify the key words in the question
- draw up an outline

2.1. Read the question carefully

It is very important to **read the question** carefully and to determine what is expected of you. Read the question several times to make sure that you have not misinterpreted it. As you read the question, you will need to work out what facts are required.

Remember that your assignment has to focus on the question and it is therefore important to **understand the question**. If the question is difficult to understand, read it through a few times. Rewrite the key words in the question. Since questions tell you exactly what is expected of you, **analyse the action words** to determine what type of answer you need to give. Here is a very short list of some of the action words that you might come across in assignment questions.

- **Analyse:** Divide the material into sections or elements and discuss these in full.
- **Compare:** Identify the similarities and/or differences between ideas, facts, viewpoints, etc.
- **Contrast:** Point out the differences between certain objects or characteristics.
- **Criticise:** Point out good and bad characteristics, and give your own opinion after taking all the facts into account.

You could add more action words to this list when you see them in an assignment question. Make sure that you know exactly what each one requires you to do. Once you have analysed the action word/s, you should pay attention to the key words in the question.

2.2. Identify the key words in the question

To understand the question clearly, you have to **find the key words** in the question. After you have read the question carefully, underline the **major key words**. Remember that the key words are there to help you to organise your answer logically. From these key words, you can identify the theme of the question.

The next step is to draw up an outline by using key words you have identified as a guide.

2.3. Draw up an outline

You should focus on the key words in the question to help you to draw up an outline. An outline helps you to:

- identify the main points which you will develop in your assignment
- organise your writing
- identify specific facts that you have omitted
- identify irrelevant material which does not fit in your outline. Once you have written down the broad outline, you should order the information to enable you to answer the question clearly and logically.

You have now read the question, identified the key words and drawn up an outline. The next step is to begin **researching the topic**.

3. Researching the topic

Collecting information for your assignment can be divided into three steps:

- finding information
- selecting relevant material
- critically assessing your sources

3.1. Finding information

- Consult the specific sections of your study guide to determine the broad outline of your assignment.
- Look for these sections in your recommended books to broaden your knowledge base of the topic.
- Now that you have a general idea about the topic, consult your recommended books.
- Also consult the **index** at the back of each book to guide you to the relevant subject matter.

3.2. Selecting relevant material

Once you have determined that a source will be useful for your assignment, start selecting this material from your sources as follows:

- Write down only the material that is relevant to the topic of your assignment.
- Use separate pieces of paper for notes on the different aspects of the question.
- Make a heading on each sheet of paper and then note down the facts and arguments that refer specifically to that aspect.
- Ensure that you write down all the details of the source used: the author, title and page numbers.

Harris and Southey (1989:12), add the following two:

- Use quotation marks to indicate when you copy a passage directly from a source.
- Remember that we are interested in your views and interpretations. Note these down as they come to mind during your reading.

3.3. Critically assessing your sources

It is important to assess your sources critically. The following guidelines are important:

- Don't accept everything you read.

- Differentiate between a fact, which is a statement of information, which is generally accepted as the truth, and an opinion, which is a point of view or a belief of the authors.
- Bear in mind that authors often hold different opinions about specific topics. Don't be confused by this.
- Decide which author's point of view is the most valid and state your reasons for supporting this view.
- You have now read the question carefully and determined what is expected of you. You have also selected the information and can now begin writing your assignment.

4. Planning and writing your assignment

Your assignment should consist of three main sections:

- an introduction
- a body
- a conclusion

Before you start writing, here are some hints on sentence construction:

- Write short sentences.
- Avoid long rambling sentences, as they seldom express your ideas clearly.
- Make short sentences clearer by placing important words at the beginning and at the end of the sentence.

4.1 The introduction

An introduction is a short statement at the beginning of your assignment, which shows how you understand the question and how you plan to solve the problem. Using the notes you have made as a basis, decide how you are going to approach the question before you write your introduction.

Start by telling the reader what the question requires. This shows that you understand the question, and know exactly what the problem involves. Supply your own personal thoughts on the subject, but save the details for the body of the assignment.

According to Harris and Southey (1989:18), a good introduction

- is short
- outlines the main argument
- focuses directly on the question

Now refer to your outline again, and determine the main reasons for your point of view and write them down in point form. These reasons will form **the body** of your assignment.

4.2 The body

The body is the main part of your assignment and will be the longest part of your essay. Here you should:

- develop your main argument
- supply details and examples
- support your claims stating the relevant facts

Use the main points, as arranged in your outline, and write your paragraphs. Remember, for each main point you should have one paragraph. When you write the supporting sentences that flow from the topic sentence, use signpost words to guide the reader through the paragraph. You will use different kinds of signpost words depending on what your purpose is.

The following table, taken from a Practical English Study Guide, lists the different types of signpost words and various examples for each type:

Types of signpost words (examples), according to Goedhals et al. (1990:343-348):

Chronological:	now; then; first(ly); afterwards; meanwhile; later; subsequently; finally; next; second(ly); before; ultimately; at the same time; while
Cause and effect:	because; since; consequently; thus; as a result; so; for this reason; therefore
Comparison:	likewise; also; equally; just as; like; both; similarly; as well as; correspondingly; in the same way
Contrast:	but; conversely; however; yet; unlike; although; on the contrary; on the other hand; in contrast to; whereas; as opposed to; contrary to

Use these signpost words when you write; they make your writing clear and logical.

Finally, summarise the main arguments of your assignment in a conclusion.

4.3 The conclusion

The conclusion is the last paragraph of your assignment. Here you give your final opinion on the question. Show how all the points mentioned in the body of the assignment have led to your conclusion. Don't introduce new ideas, don't use direct quotations and don't give detailed explanations.

A good conclusion:

- summarises the main argument and content of your essay
- focuses on the question
- is brief

5. Revision and final rounding off

You have now written a rough draft of your assignment. The rough draft is the first version of your assignment, and you would never, of course, submit it to your lecturer. As mentioned before, once you have written a rough draft, put it aside for some time - perhaps a day or two. After this rest period, you can return to your writing with a fresh approach.

Now, re-read your rough draft. Revise your assignment and evaluate what you have written and corrected. Now complete the following checklist (which you will also find on the assignment Cover Sheet), which must be handed in with your assignment:

5.1. Assignment Checklist

Students please note that this must be filled in every time an assignment is sent in for marking:

	Question	Yes	No
1	Is my introduction stimulating and does it start off well?		
2	Does the introduction state clearly what the aim of the assignment is?		
3	Does each paragraph link logically with the previous and subsequent paragraphs?		
4	Have I refrained from quoting one source repeatedly?		
5	Did I use my own words?		
6	Have I avoided repetitions and padding?		
7	Does my conclusion rest on facts mentioned in the assignment?		
8	Are all my findings the result of my own insight and research?		
9	Is my assignment clear and does it make sense?		
10	Have I checked for spelling and punctuation mistakes?		
11	Have I quoted my direct quotations correctly?		
12	Is each use of source material properly referenced?		
13	Did I indent longer quotations and are they typed in single spacing?		
14	Is my bibliography correctly compiled?		
15	Did I number my pages correctly?		
16	Did I receive a Reader for the subject? (from second year)		
17	Did I receive 'How to write a Good Assignment'?		

5.3. Assessment criteria

The following are the generic assessment criteria the South African Theological Seminary uses when assessing students assignments.

1) Bible

- Perspective is sound and comprehensive
- Adequate evidence of Biblical referencing
- Interpretation of text in accordance with sound exegetical principles
- Major contents based on Biblical evidence

2) Content

- Reading material appropriate and adequate?
- Identified central issues?
- Adequate research on topic?
- Analysed and assessed source material critically?
- Logical argument is clear and simple?
- Interaction with other scholarly works?
- Shown evidence of in-depth research with respect to level of education?

3) Ministry Application

- Demonstrated a link between theory and practice
- Demonstrated an application of ministry issues to context
- Shown reflection and appropriateness to spiritual life and service

4) Organisation/Style/Format

- Assignment format (e.g. title page, headings, numbering, margins, font spacing etc.)
- Organisation: (e.g. length, balance of parts, introduction, conclusion, bridging between sections)
- Referencing and Bibliography (e.g. correct style, accuracy)
- Effectiveness of expression and communication (e.g. style, language, clarity, etc.)
- Spelling and grammar.

5) Accuracy

- Does the student comply with the marker's memo in accuracy and correctness of information?
- Were the questions answered correctly?

Citations, Bibliographies and Plagiarism

1. Guide for citing resources

SATS uses the in-text style of citation, which is also known as the author-date system of reference. In this system, you do not use footnotes to cite your sources. Instead, you provide the author, date and page number in the text.

1.1. General Rules

An in-text citation should contain (1) the surname of the author/s, (2) the year of publication and (3) the page number/s being cited. There are two standard formats.

- If the author is named in the sentence, then the date and pages are placed in parentheses.

Black (2001:244) claims “there is no evidence to indicate that Jesus claimed to be the Messiah.”

- If the author is not named in the sentence, then the name, date and pages are placed in parentheses after the quote.

“There is no evidence to indicate that Jesus claimed to be the Messiah” (Black 2001:244).

- The date and page number are separated by a colon; no space is inserted between the date, colon or page.
- When the citation or part of the citation follows the quotation, the punctuation mark goes *after the citation*, not before the closing quotation marks.

Not: “There is no evidence to indicate that Jesus claimed to be the Messiah.” (Black 2001:244)

But: “There is no evidence to indicate that Jesus claimed to be the Messiah” (Black 2001:244).

1.2. Special Situations

- *What if there is no publication date?*

If you are citing a book that has no publication date, use the abbreviation for “no date” (n.d.)

Citation: Jones (n.d.:32)

Bibliography: Jones JR n.d. *Romans*. Pretoria: SATS Press.

If you are citing an electronic source that has no publication date: (1) in the case of a book on a CD-ROM or a software package, you can substitute the date the electronic version was published; (2) in the case of a web page, you can substitute the date you accessed the document. In such cases, insert the date in square brackets in the bibliography.

Citation: Brown (2003:26)

Bibliography: Brown J [2003]. *The Holy Spirit*. Online article: www.holyspirit.org, 2003-10-24.

- *What if there is no page number?*

Many electronic books and articles do not indicate page numbers. Try to find some other way of helping your reader to locate the cited material in the source. This can be done by indicating the chapter, section or paragraph of the document you are citing.

Chapter: Smith 2004:ch 6

Section: Smith 2004:§4.6

Paragraph: Smith 2004:¶4

Combination: Smith 2004:ch 6, §4

- *What if there is neither date nor page number?*

Electronic resources often lack both date and page numbers. In such a cases, use a combination of the methods described above.

Citation: Brown (2000:§1B)

Bibliography: Brown, J [2000]. *The Holy Spirit*. Online article: www.holyspirit.org, 2000-06-17.

- *What if there is no author?*

If a work has no named author, substitute the title for the author's name. If the title is long, use an abbreviated title.

Citation: (*Tithes and Offerings*, 2000:33)

Bibliography: *Tithes and offerings in South African Pentecostal churches*. 2000. Pretoria: SATS Press.

- *What if there are many authors or editors?*

If 1-2 authors, use full names throughout. If 3-5 authors, use all names in the first citation, but thereafter use only the first name followed by "et al." If 6+ authors, cite only the first name followed by "et al" in all references.

1-2 authors all citations (Smith and Jones 2004)

3-5 authors first citation (Jones, Ndlovu, Smit and Fouche 2001)

 later citations (Jones et al. 2001)

6+ authors all citations (Mahlangu et al. 1992)

- *What if you are referring to a work as a whole, not to specific pages?*

(a) If you are referring to a whole work, just give the author and date.
 (b) If you are referring to a whole chapter, give the chapter number.

Whole book	(Mason 2002)
Whole chapter	(Mason 2002:ch 4)
Multiple chapters	(Mason 2002:chs 4-6)

2. Guide for compiling a bibliography

2.1. General Rules

- Include only the works you cited in-text in your bibliography. Do not list works that were not cited. For this reason, you may prefer to label it 'works cited' or 'reference list'.
- The purpose of the bibliography is to help interested parties to locate your sources. Therefore, certain information is vital:
 - (1) author/s or editor/s
 - (2) date
 - (3) title
 - (4) location where it can be obtained, whether a physical place or an internet site.
- The key to formatting your bibliography is *consistency*. SATS will not penalise you on minor matters (e.g., use of punctuation marks) as long as you are consistent.

2.2. Printed Sources

The general style for citing books is as follows:

Surname Initials Date. *Title of book*. Place of publication: Name of publisher.

Please note that the majority of the examples listed below are fictional publications, not real books.

Books by Authors

1 author	Williams JH 1985. <i>The biblical role of elders in church government</i> . Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
2 authors	Smith KG and Pretorius M 2004. <i>The roles of the Holy Spirit in the New</i>

3+ authors	<p><i>Testament</i>. Pretoria, South Africa: SATS Publishers.</p> <p>Smith KG, Pretorius MP and Van Rensburg R 2005. <i>Systematic theology in the 21st century</i>. Pretoria, South Africa: SATS Publishers.</p>
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Books by Editors

If a book has editors or compilers instead of authors, the abbreviation (ed) for one editor or (eds) for more than one editor appears before the date.

1 editor	<p>Williams JH (ed.) 1985. <i>The biblical role of elders in church government</i>. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.</p>
2 editors	<p>Smith KG and Pretorius M (eds) 2004. <i>The roles of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament</i>. Pretoria, South Africa: SATS Publishers.</p>
3+ editors	<p>Smith KG, Pretorius MP and Van Rensburg R (eds) 2005. <i>Systematic theology in the 21st century</i>. Pretoria, South Africa: SATS Publishers.</p>

Variations on Authorship

Sometimes you will encounter books with (a) no author, (b) pseudonymous author or (c) institution as author.

- (a) No author: list the title first, followed by the date.
if you know the author, put it in square brackets
- (b) Pseudonymous: list pen-name first and put real name in square brackets after it.
- (c) Institution: use the name of the institution as the author.

No Author	<p><i>The names of God in the Pentateuch</i> 1996. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.</p> <p>[Brooks LA] 1996. <i>The names of God in the Pentateuch</i>. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.</p>
Pseudonym	<p>Dr Doctrine [Peppler CL] 1999. <i>The doctrine of the Trinity</i>. Pretoria, South Africa: SATS Press.</p>
Institution	<p>South African Theological Seminary, 2005. <i>Systematic theology in the 21st century</i>. Pretoria, South Africa: SATS Publishers.</p>

Edition of a Book

If the book is an edition other than the first edition, whether a second or third edition or a revised or updated edition, this must be indicated in parentheses after the title.

Second edition	<p>Smith KG 2002. <i>Relevance theory and Bible translation</i> (2nd ed.) Leicester: Intervarsity Press.</p>
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Revised edition	Jenkins MR 1987. <i>Christ in the Old Testament</i> (rev. ed.). Leicester: Intervarsity Press.
Updated edition	Pretorius M 2002. <i>The authority of the Lord Jesus Christ</i> (updated ed.). Pretoria, South Africa: SATS Press.

Translated, Revised or Edited Book

If an original author's work has been altered by another, such as translating, revising, editing or updating it, then the entry falls under the original author and the person who updated it is listed after the title.

Revised and edited	Pretorius M 2003. <i>The evidence of salvation</i> . Revised and edited by LD Honiball. Cape Town, South Africa: Africa Christian Press.
Translated and updated	Pretorius M 2003. <i>The evidence of salvation</i> . Translated and updated by KG Smith. Cape Town, South Africa: Africa Christian Press.

Book in a Collection

If a book is part of a multivolume work or if it is one title in a series (such as one a commentary series), you need to indicate which volume or which series it belongs to.

Multivolume: one volume	Peppler CL (ed.) 1996. <i>Dictionary of systematic theology</i> (vol. 3). London: Word Books.
Multivolume: all volumes	Peppler CL (ed.) 1996. <i>Dictionary of systematic theology</i> (5 vols). London: Word Books.
Volume in a series	Smith KG 2005. <i>Psalms</i> . SATS Old Testament Commentary (vol. 19). Pretoria: SATS Publishers.

In the final entry, there is a commentary series on the Old Testament called the *SATS Old Testament Commentary*, each volume written by an individual author. The one on Psalms is number 19 in the series.

Articles and Chapters

Journals are collections of articles by a variety of authors on a variety of topics that are published together in a single journal. They are amongst the most important resources for research because they are short and up-to-date.

Edited books are similar to journals. In an edited book, a number of experts are asked to write articles (chapters) on topics they specialise in. These are collected by an editor, who compiles the final book.

Journal Article	Thomas RL 1990. Bible translations: the link between exegesis and expository preaching. <i>Masters Seminary Journal</i> 1:53-74.
Chapter in a book	Hutton MM 2002. Exegesis and preaching: a case study. In Compton J J (ed.), <i>Essays on expository preaching</i> . Grand Rapids, MI: Baker.

NB: For a journal article, the pattern is: (1) author, (2) date, (3) title of article – not italicised, (4) name of journal – italicised, (5) volume of journal, (6) pages.

You may also need to cite **magazine articles** or **newspaper articles**. Here are some examples:

Magazine Article	Van Niekerk J 2005 (Feb). A forever home. <i>Today Magazine</i> , 24-26.
Newspaper Article	Schwartz J 1993 (30 Sep). Obesity affects economic, social status. <i>The Washington Post</i> , 1-2.
Newsletter Article	Brown L S 1993 (Spring). Antidomination training as a central component of diversity. <i>The Clinical Psychologist</i> 46, 83-87.

Electronic Resources

Online Resources

The bibliographic entry for a resource accessed from the internet includes:

- Author (if available)
- Date (if available)
- Title (if available)
- URL
- Date accessed

Online book Bandstra BL 1999. *Reading the Old Testament* (elec. ed.). Accessed from <http://www.hope.edu/academic/religion/bandstra/rtot/rtot.htm>, 2005-03-02.

Online Journal Turner DL 2004. Matthew 23 as prophetic critique. *Journal of Biblical Studies* 4:23-42. Accessed from <http://journalofbiblicalstudies.org/issue9.html>, 2005-03-02.

Electronic Article Johnson WS 2001. *Barth and beyond*. <http://www.religion-online.org>, 2005-03-02.

In the case of the online article above, this is how the entry would look if certain key information was unavailable: (1) no author, (2) no date and (3) no title.

- (1) Barth and beyond, 2001. Online article: <http://www.religion-online.org>, 2005-03-02.
- (2) Johnson W S [2005].¹ Barth and beyond. Online article: <http://www.religion-online.org>, 2005-03-02.
- (3) Johnson W S 2001. Online article: <http://www.religion-online.org>, 2005-03-02.

Software Packages

Electronic library packages such as Logos, Libronix, e-Sword, PC Bible and Bible Works have become major resources for theological studies. When citing from these

¹ The square brackets indicate that the date given is not the original publication date.

software packages, you should give the *full details of the book or journal* (as for paper editions) *as well as where the electronic version can be obtained* (either a physical address or a cyber address). The additional information is:

- Source (e.g., CD-Rom, Electronic edition)
- Name of the package
- Physical address:
 - Place of publication
 - Name of publisher
 - Date of publication (of the package)
- Cyber address:
 - URL
 - Date (of publication; if not available, date accessed)

Examples from Logos Software

Physical Address	Freedman DN (ed.) 1992. <i>The anchor Bible dictionary</i> . New York: Doubleday. Electronic edition: <i>Logos Library System</i> (Oak Harbour, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1996).
Cyber Address	Freedman DN (ed.) 1992. <i>The anchor Bible dictionary</i> . New York: Doubleday. Electronic edition: <i>Logos Library System</i> (http://www.logos.com , 1996).

Examples from e-Sword

No physical publisher	Easton M G 1897. <i>Illustrated Bible dictionary</i> . Electronic ed: <i>e-Sword</i> (http://www.e-sword.net/dictionaries.html , 2005-05-27).
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The publishing information for the paper edition is not available, so it is omitted. The date of the electronic version is the date it was published on the website (see <http://www.e-sword.net/dictionaries.html>)

No physical date	Clark A [2002]. <i>Adam Clark's commentary on the Bible</i> . Electronic edition: <i>e-Sword</i> (http://www.e-sword.net/commentaries.html , 2004-06-24).
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There is no indication of when the original paper edition was published, but the website tells us the electronic edition was published 2002-03-04. Therefore, we use 2002 as the publication date, but we put it in square brackets to show that it is not the original date.

3. Plagiarism

Listed below are questions and answers to help students understand what plagiarism is and why it violates the ethical standards of SATS.

3.1. What is plagiarism?

According to *The Penguin English Dictionary* (1972:535), the act of plagiarism is:

Wrongful attempt to pass off another's literary or musical work as one's own; act of copying without permission or acknowledgement.

Plagiarism is a serious offence. It is not merely an academic technicality such as failing to comply with rules for margins or footnote style. It is a violation of both the eighth and ninth commandments (Exod 20:15, 16). Using the published work of an author without giving due credit to that writer is stealing the information or ideas of that person. Moreover, it is deceptive because it passes that information on as if it were one's own.

Plagiarism without the intent to deceive may be a result of carelessness; deliberate plagiarism, however, is a flagrant offence of deception. It is a serious breach of trust.

3.2. Questions and answers concerning plagiarism

Am I plagiarising when I use the author's exact words without quotation marks, but I cite the original source in a footnote?

- Yes, you plagiarise any time you use the author's exact words without using quotation marks, because you are communicating to your assessor that these words are an expression of your personal understanding and thought process resulting from your study.

Am I plagiarising when I merely exchange the author's words with synonyms as long as I cite a source at the end of the sentence?

- Yes, you are plagiarising when you use the same sentence structure as the original source, because once again the thought and expression of the thought is not original with you. You have not paraphrased the original thought and therefore cannot treat it as though you had done so. You are committing deception, for your marker assumes that all content in your paper without quotation marks is your mental digestion of the facts.

Am I plagiarising when I take the content of the original source and then I put it in my own words, but do not cite the original source?

- Yes, you have plagiarised, because the content of what you have written did not originate with you. You merely put it into your own words. You must cite the original source after the sentence or paragraph of information that you have paraphrased.

What about using Internet sources that are not copyrighted? Is it plagiarism to use them without citing the source?

- Yes it is, because once again it consists of passing on someone else's research as though it was your own. The Seminary standard code forbids students to hand in work that has been wholly or partially done by another.

What information in my research paper does NOT need to be cited?

- Personal thoughts, opinions, or your evaluation of the thoughts of others are not to be cited. Students should also not cite a source for information that is considered common knowledge, such as, Table Mountain is in Cape Town or Pretoria is the capital of S.A., etc.
- If in the course of your research, you discover that virtually all your sources assume certain information as common knowledge, it is not essential to cite a source for that information. For instance, if you are doing a paper on the Dead Sea Scrolls, you do not need to cite a source to support the fact that they were found in 1947 in a region near the Dead Sea.

3.3. Research and its purpose

The purpose of conducting research for assignments is to enhance a student's understanding of the subject.

1. Students should be able to say honestly that they have gained greater understanding of the subject through the research that they have conducted.
2. The student is also learning a methodology that emphasises personal discovery, which is the way all the courses at SATS are designed, i.e., discovery-based learning experience for the student.

The idea behind research is:

- to improve students' ability to think and process information accurately.
- to portray to the assessor that students are developing in their ability to analyse information, to compare information with information learned elsewhere, and to then summarise this information in their own words.
- to help students develop improved techniques for a research strategy. The students are expected to find the best sources available that would answer the questions being investigated.
- to enhance students' ability to communicate in writing.

When students commit plagiarism, they violate each one of these objectives. Consequently, the student who does so is in fact undermining the efforts of the Seminary faculty.

3.4. Questions for students who plagiarise

1. What learning can take place when a student merely “cuts and pastes”? There is no evidence that the student understands the material until the student explains the information he/she is researching in his own words.
2. What learning takes place when the focus is to cut and paste pieces of information that the student believes would deceive the assessor into thinking these are his/her own words?
3. What thinking skills have been developed when someone else’s words are used as one’s own?
4. Often, students who deliberately plagiarise are not interested in developing a research strategy that assures them they have access to quality research material.
5. Naturally, students who merely cut and paste the thoughts of others are not developing their own ability to communicate in writing.