

Coventry University Assignment Guide: Referencing, Deadlines & Marking Explained

A practical guide to how assignments actually work at Coventry University — referencing style, word counts, submission, extenuating circumstances, and marking.

□ Reading time: 19–23 minutes

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□ **Featured Snippet Answer:** Coventry University students submit assignments through Aula (which integrates with Turnitin), with a 24-hour grace period after the deadline before work goes unmarked. Most students now reference in APA 7th edition (CU Harvard applies only to students who started before September 2020, and Law students use OSCOLA). Standard coursework is marked and returned within 15 working days, and extenuating

circumstances must be applied for before the deadline with independent evidence.

AI Overview Summary: Coventry University's assignment system is built around a small number of specific platforms and policies: Aula for submission, Turnitin for similarity checking, the Extenuating Circumstances portal for deadline problems, and the Centre for Academic Writing for free writing support. Understanding these specific systems — rather than assuming they work like a generic UK university — prevents most avoidable procedural mistakes.

Quick Answer

At Coventry University, assignments are submitted via Aula (which uses Turnitin for similarity checking), with a strict 24-hour grace period after the deadline. Most students reference in APA 7th edition, standard coursework word count carries a 10% tolerance before a penalty applies, and extenuating circumstances must be requested before the deadline with independent evidence — not afterwards. This guide walks through each system in detail, using Coventry's own published policies.

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Why Coventry-Specific Guidance Matters

Generic academic writing advice is useful, but it misses the specific systems, policies, and terminology that actually determine what happens to a Coventry University assignment — which platform it's submitted through, which referencing style applies to which students, how a late submission is actually treated, and what evidence an extenuating circumstances claim genuinely requires. Getting these specifics wrong causes entirely avoidable problems that have nothing to do with the quality of the work itself.

This guide draws directly on Coventry University's own published policies — Student Central, the Centre for Academic Writing, and the university's Academic Regulations — to explain how these systems actually work in practice.

❑ **Expert Tip:** Bookmark Coventry's Student Central handbook and your course's Academic Regulations early in your studies — most procedural mistakes happen because a policy exists but was never read until after something went wrong.

Coventry's Assignment Support System at a Glance

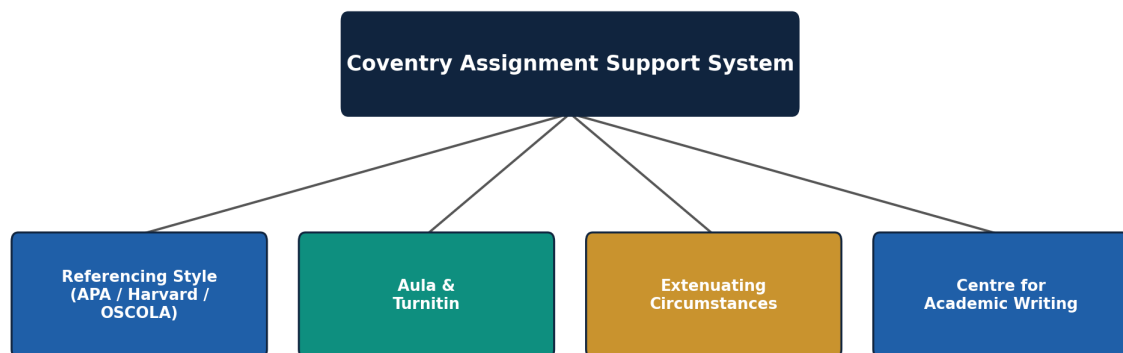


Figure 1: The core Coventry University systems that govern how assignments are referenced, submitted, supported, and resolved when problems arise.

System	What It Handles
Referencing style (APA 7th / CU Harvard / OSCOLA)	How sources are cited and listed
Aula and Turnitin	Assignment submission and similarity checking
Extenuating Circumstances (EC) portal	Deadline extensions and deferrals
Centre for Academic Writing (CAW)	Free academic writing support and tutorials

❑ **Worked Example:** A student unsure which referencing style applies to them, how to submit through Aula, or what evidence an EC claim needs is not lacking ability — they simply haven't yet located Coventry's specific guidance for each system, which this guide brings together in one place.

Which Referencing Style Applies to You?

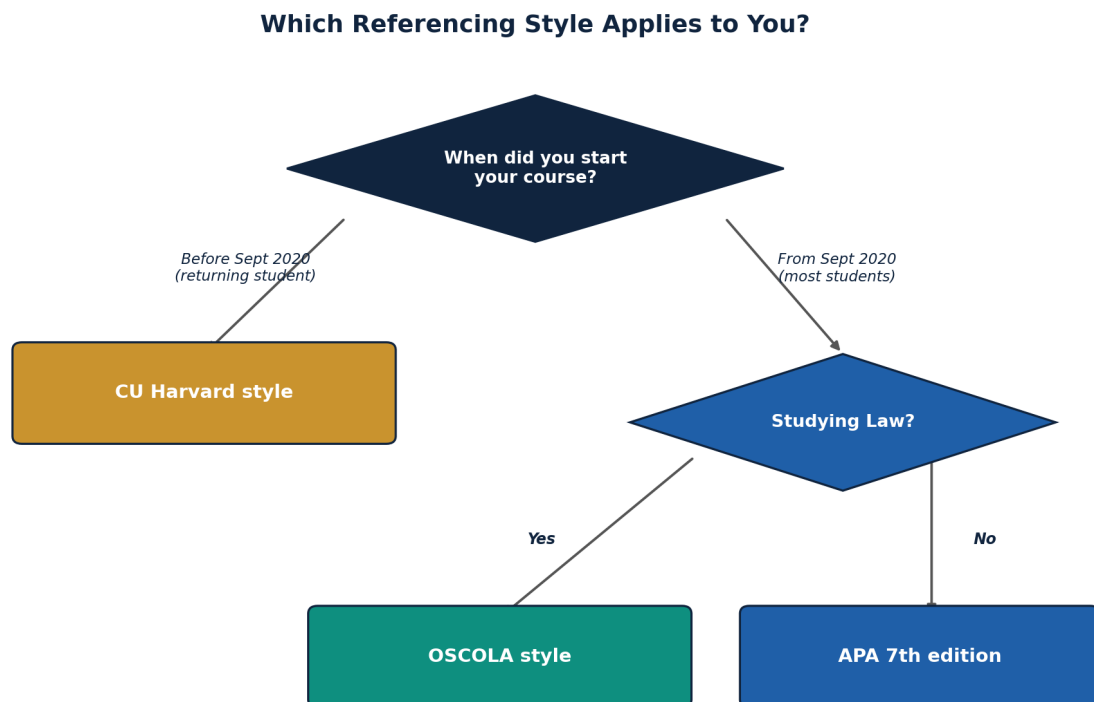


Figure 2: A decision guide for identifying which Coventry referencing style applies to your course and circumstances.

Referencing style at Coventry depends on your course and when you started, not simply on personal preference. Getting this wrong across a whole assignment is an easily avoidable but surprisingly common mistake.

Your Situation	Referencing Style That Applies
Started your course from September 2020 onwards (most students)	APA 7th edition
Returning student who started your course before September 2020	Coventry University Harvard (CU Harvard) style
Studying Law	OSCOLA

⚠ **Common Mistake:** Assuming CU Harvard is still the current default style, based on older guides, forum posts, or advice from students on earlier course intakes — most current students should be using APA 7th edition instead.

The fix: Check your specific module handbook and assignment brief for the referencing style required, and use the Centre for Academic Writing's LibGuides for the confirmed, current version of that style — rather than relying on older shared documents or general Harvard-style guides that don't reflect Coventry's specific conventions.

❏ **Lecturer Advice:** If you're at all unsure which style applies to you, ask your module leader directly and confirm in writing — this avoids restructuring a whole reference list after submission using the wrong convention.

The reason the style differs by intake is straightforward: Coventry updated its default referencing convention from CU Harvard to APA 7th edition from September 2020 onwards, but chose not to force returning students partway through a course to switch styles mid-way. This is a sensible transitional policy, but it does mean that guides, forum threads, and even documents shared between students of different years can easily reference the wrong style for your specific situation.

Word Counts and Word Count Penalties

Coventry's faculties are required to state a maximum word count for written assignments, along with explicit inclusions or exclusions — for example, whether the reference list or appendices count toward the limit.

Situation	What Happens
Work is within the stated word count	No word count penalty applies

Situation	What Happens
Work exceeds the maximum by more than 10%, or falls more than 10% under the minimum	A 10% penalty is applied to the mark for that assessment
Reference list, appendices, or similar	Typically excluded from the count, but always confirm in your specific assignment brief

❑ **Expert Tip:** Word count tolerance and any inclusions or exclusions can vary by module and assignment brief — always check the specific brief rather than assuming a university-wide default applies uniformly.

The fix: Track your word count throughout drafting, not just at the end, and confirm with your assignment brief or module leader exactly what counts toward the limit before you finalise your final edit.

Submitting Through Aula and Turnitin

Coventry uses Aula as its primary virtual learning environment, and assignments are submitted through Aula's integration with Turnitin — not by submitting directly to Turnitin itself.

❑ **How to Submit an Assignment Through Aula**

- ❑ Open the Assignments tile in your module on Aula
- ❑ Locate your assignment, ordered by due date
- ❑ Select Upload Submission, then Choose File (maximum 100MB)
- ❑ Type in the title for your submission
- ❑ Select Upload and Review to check your file

☐ Confirm with Submit to Turnitin once you're ready

⚠ **Common Mistake:** Submitting a file directly to Turnitin rather than through Aula — submissions made this way will not sync with Aula, meaning your work may not be recorded as submitted at all.

The fix: Always submit through Aula's Assignments tile, and take a screenshot or note the confirmation once "Submit to Turnitin" is complete, as evidence the submission genuinely went through.

The 24-Hour Grace Period and Late Submission

Coventry provides a 24-hour grace period after a coursework deadline, intended to cover last-minute technical problems — not as an informal extension to rely on as standard practice.

Timing	What Happens
Submitted by the original deadline	Marked normally
Submitted within the 24-hour grace period	Accepted, intended for genuine last-minute technical issues
Submitted after the 24-hour grace period, without approved EC	Not marked — receives a 0 for that assessment

⚠ **Common Mistake:** Treating the 24-hour grace period as a routine buffer to plan around, rather than a safety margin for genuine technical problems — relying on it as standard practice removes your own safety margin entirely.

The fix: Treat the actual deadline, not the end of the grace period, as your real target — and if a genuine unforeseen problem arises before the deadline, apply for an extension through the Extenuating Circumstances process rather than relying on the grace period.

Extenuating Circumstances (EC) at Coventry

If illness or another genuinely unforeseen situation prevents you from meeting a deadline, Coventry's Extenuating Circumstances (EC) process is the correct route — but it has specific requirements that are easy to miss.

Requirement	What It Means in Practice
Apply before the deadline	Retrospective claims made after submission or the exam date are not accepted
Independent third-party evidence	For example, a letter from a doctor or other appropriate professional
Genuinely unforeseen circumstances only	Poor time management, routine IT issues, and family events are explicitly not covered
Outcome options	A single 5-working-day extension, or deferral of the assessment to the next opportunity

⚠ **Common Mistake:** Submitting your work or attending an exam and only afterwards deciding to raise an extenuating circumstance — doing so counts as declaring yourself fit to complete the assessment, and no later claims will be accepted.

The fix: Apply through the Extenuating Circumstances portal on the Student Portal as soon as a genuine problem arises, and gather independent, dated evidence that specifically covers the relevant time period before your deadline passes.

❑ **Lecturer Advice:** Requests are considered by your Local Registry team — contact them directly if you're unsure whether your situation qualifies before assuming either that it does or doesn't.

Choosing between an extension and a deferral: These two outcomes suit different situations. A 5-working-day extension is generally appropriate when the disruption is short and you expect to be able to complete the work shortly after the original deadline. A deferral to the next submission opportunity is more appropriate when the disruption is longer-lasting or ongoing, and a short extension genuinely wouldn't be enough time to produce your best work. Since you generally cannot request a second extension on top of a first one, it's worth being realistic about which option actually matches your situation before you apply.

Feedback Turnaround Times

Coventry publishes specific feedback turnaround times, and these differ depending on your year of study and level.

Student Group	Feedback Turnaround
Standard undergraduate coursework	3 teaching weeks (15 working days)
Final-year undergraduate coursework	2 teaching weeks (10 working days)
Taught postgraduate coursework	2 teaching weeks (10 working days)

❑ **Expert Tip:** If feedback is delayed beyond the published turnaround time, your Course Director is expected to communicate a revised date — it's

reasonable to follow up if you haven't heard anything once the standard window has passed.

Academic Integrity and Misconduct at Coventry

Coventry treats both intentional and unintentional plagiarism as academic misconduct — meaning genuine carelessness, not just deliberate copying, can still result in a penalty.

Stage	What Happens
Suspected misconduct identified	Investigated at faculty level by an Academic Conduct Officer (ACO)
Serious or contested cases	Referred to an Academic Conduct Panel (ACP) for a decision
Penalties	Range up to expulsion; proven breaches remain on your record permanently
Post-graduation discovery	Can result in withdrawal of your award, even after you've graduated

⚠ **Common Mistake:** Assuming that because plagiarism was accidental — for example, through patchwriting under time pressure — it won't be treated as misconduct. Coventry explicitly treats unintentional plagiarism as misconduct too.

The fix: Use the Centre for Academic Writing's support proactively, particularly its workshops on referencing and using sources, rather than only seeking help after a Turnitin similarity report raises a concern.

It's also worth understanding that a Turnitin similarity score on its own is not proof of misconduct — a high percentage can result from correctly quoted and referenced material, and a low percentage doesn't guarantee correct paraphrasing. The similarity report is a starting point for an ACO's judgement, not an automatic verdict, which is exactly why genuine paraphrasing skill matters more than simply chasing a lower percentage.

Understanding Coventry's Module and Credit Structure

Coventry modules are structured in credit units, and understanding this structure helps you gauge how much a given module — and its assignments — should weigh in your overall workload and planning.

Concept	What It Means
1 credit	Represents 10 hours of total notional student effort (teaching plus independent study)
Common module sizes	10, 15, 20, 30, 40, 50, or 60 credits
Full-time annual study load	120 credits per year, typically 60 credits per semester
Level 4	Modules on stage 1 (year 1) of a three-year honours degree
Level 5	Modules on stage 2 (year 2)
Level 6	Modules on the final stage (year 3)

❑ **Worked Example:** A 20-credit module represents roughly 200 hours of total effort across a semester — using this to estimate a realistic weekly time

commitment helps with the kind of backward, deadline-based planning covered in our companion Assignment Planning Guide.

Degree Classification at Coventry

Coventry calculates undergraduate honours classification using the best result from more than one calculation method, which is worth understanding so you're not relying on a single simplified average.

Classification / Award	Typical Threshold
First-class honours	Best calculated result of 70% or above
Standard honours degree requirement	Passing all modules, with 360 credits across three levels of study
Postgraduate Merit	Normally an overall mean mark of around 60%
Postgraduate Distinction	Normally an overall mean mark of around 70%

❑ **Expert Tip:** Because Coventry takes the best of multiple calculation methods, a single lower-scoring module doesn't necessarily determine your final classification the way a simple flat average might suggest — but always check your own Course Specification and Academic Regulations section 6 for course-specific detail.

The Centre for Academic Writing (CAW)

The Centre for Academic Writing has supported Coventry students' writing since 2004, and its services are free, extensive, and significantly underused relative to how many students could benefit from them.

CAW Service	What It Offers
LibGuides	Online and downloadable resources on academic writing topics
Online workshops	Scheduled sessions on popular writing topics, run multiple times per semester
Drop-in sessions	No appointment needed, up to 10 minutes with an Academic Writing Tutor
Facilitated Writing Time	Quiet writing space in the Academic Writing Studio, with a tutor available for quick guidance
Academic Writing Tutorials	Appointment-based sessions to build specific writing strategies over time

❑ **Lecturer Advice:** CAW is located on the ground floor of Lanchester Library, and can be contacted at writing.caw@coventry.ac.uk — booking a session before a deadline crisis, rather than during one, gets the most value from it.

Want structured, one-to-one support alongside university services like CAW? Our UK academic tutors can provide additional feedback, proofreading, and referencing guidance tailored to your course.

A Coventry Assignment Timeline

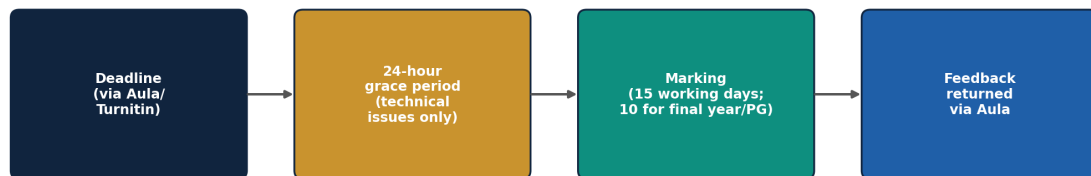


Figure 3: How a Coventry assignment typically moves from deadline through to marked feedback, including the grace period and standard turnaround times.

Stage	What Happens
Deadline	Assignment due via Aula/Turnitin
24-hour grace period	Covers only genuine last-minute technical issues
Marking	Standard coursework marked within 15 working days (10 for final year/PG)
Feedback returned	Available through Aula, with grades and marker comments

❑ **Worked Example:** Planning backward from a Coventry deadline should treat the grace period as a safety margin only, and should build in time before the deadline for a final Aula submission check, not after it.

Common Coventry-Specific Mistakes to Avoid

Mistake	Why It Happens	The Fix
Using CU Harvard when APA 7th applies	Following outdated guides or advice from earlier-intake students	Confirm your style in your current module handbook
Submitting directly to Turnitin	Misunderstanding the Aula-Turnitin relationship	Always submit through Aula's Assignments tile
Relying on the 24-hour grace period as routine	Treating it as an informal extension	Treat the real deadline as your actual target
Raising extenuating circumstances after submitting	Believing it can be requested retrospectively	Apply before the deadline, with evidence, every time
Assuming accidental plagiarism won't count as misconduct	Not realising unintentional plagiarism is still covered	Use CAW proactively for paraphrasing and referencing support

⚠ **Common Mistake:** Treating Coventry's policies as similar enough to a previous university or a generic UK standard — several of the specifics above (particularly the EC evidence rules and Aula/Turnitin submission process) are genuinely Coventry-specific.

A Coventry Assignment Self-Audit Checklist

☐ Coventry-Specific Self-Audit

☐ I have confirmed which referencing style applies to my course and intake

- ☐ I know exactly what counts toward my word limit, per my assignment brief
- ☐ I have submitted (or plan to submit) through Aula, not directly to Turnitin
- ☐ I am treating the 24-hour grace period as an emergency margin, not a plan
- ☐ I know how to raise an Extenuating Circumstances claim before a deadline, if needed
- ☐ I know my feedback turnaround time and when to follow up if it's delayed
- ☐ I have used or booked a Centre for Academic Writing service this term

Want feedback on a Coventry assignment before you submit? Our UK academic tutors can review your structure, referencing, and final draft.

Practice Exercise

☐ **Exercise — Confirm your own Coventry specifics**

- ☐ Check your current module handbook for your required referencing style
 - ☐ Locate the word count and its inclusions/exclusions in your next assignment brief
 - ☐ Find the Extenuating Circumstances portal on the Student Portal, even if you don't need it yet
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Frequently Asked Questions

1. Which referencing style should I use at Coventry University? Most current students use APA 7th edition; CU Harvard applies only to returning students who started before September 2020, and Law students use OSCOLA.

2. How do I submit an assignment at Coventry? Through Aula's Assignments tile, which integrates with Turnitin — not by submitting directly to Turnitin.

3. What happens if I submit within the 24-hour grace period? It's accepted, but the grace period is intended for genuine last-minute technical issues, not as a routine extension.

4. What happens if I submit after the grace period without approved extenuating circumstances? The work will not be marked and will receive a 0 for that assessment.

5. Can I request an extenuating circumstance after I've already submitted my work? No — submitting your work counts as declaring yourself fit to do so, and retrospective claims are not accepted.

6. What evidence do I need for an extenuating circumstances claim?

Independent, third-party evidence — such as a letter from a doctor or other appropriate professional — covering the relevant time period.

7. Do IT problems count as valid extenuating circumstances? Generally no — routine IT issues are explicitly listed as not qualifying, alongside poor time management and family events.

8. How much word count tolerance does Coventry allow? Being more than 10% over the maximum or 10% under the minimum results in a 10% penalty on the mark for that assessment.

9. Does the reference list count toward my word limit? Typically not, but this can vary by assignment brief, so always confirm with your specific module.

10. How long does it take to get feedback on standard coursework? Three teaching weeks, equivalent to 15 working days.

11. Is feedback turnaround faster for final-year or postgraduate students? Yes — both groups typically receive feedback within 2 teaching weeks (10 working days).

12. Is accidental plagiarism still treated as misconduct at Coventry? Yes — Coventry treats both intentional and unintentional plagiarism as academic misconduct.

13. Who investigates suspected academic misconduct? An Academic Conduct Officer (ACO) at faculty level, with serious or contested cases referred to an Academic Conduct Panel (ACP).

14. Can academic misconduct affect me after I've already graduated? Yes — if misconduct is discovered after graduation, your award can be withdrawn.

15. What is Aula? Coventry's primary virtual learning environment, used for all academic modules and assignment submission.

16. Why did my assignment not appear as submitted even though I used Turnitin? You likely submitted directly to Turnitin rather than through Aula — direct Turnitin submissions do not sync with Aula.

17. What is the Centre for Academic Writing (CAW)? A free Coventry service offering writing workshops, drop-in sessions, tutorials, and a dedicated writing space to support academic writing skills.

18. Where is CAW located? On the ground floor of Lanchester Library.

19. Do I need an appointment for a CAW drop-in session? No — drop-in sessions don't require booking, though they're limited to around 10 minutes with a tutor.

20. What does a module credit actually represent? Each credit represents roughly 10 hours of total notional student effort, including teaching and independent study.

21. What's the difference between Level 4, 5, and 6 modules? They correspond to years 1, 2, and 3 respectively of a standard three-year full-time honours degree.

22. How many credits does a full-time student typically study per year? 120 credits per year, usually 60 credits per semester.

23. How is undergraduate honours classification calculated at Coventry? Using the best result from more than one calculation method, rather than a single simple average.

24. What mark is typically needed for first-class honours? A best-calculated result of 70% or above.

25. What marks are typically needed for postgraduate Merit and Distinction? Normally an overall mean mark of around 60% for Merit and 70% for Distinction.

26. Should I check my Course Specification for classification details? Yes — classification rules can vary by course and enrolment date, so your specific Course Specification and Academic Regulations section 6 should always be checked.

27. Who should I contact if I'm unsure whether my situation qualifies for extenuating circumstances? Your Local Registry team, who consider all EC requests submitted through the Student Portal.

28. Can late feedback be followed up on? Yes — if feedback is delayed beyond the published turnaround time, your Course Director is expected to provide a revised date.

29. Is CU Harvard style still valid for any current students? Yes, but only for returning students who started their course before September 2020.

30. What's the best way to avoid Coventry-specific procedural mistakes? Check your current module handbook and assignment brief directly for each policy, rather than relying on general UK university assumptions or outdated shared guidance.

Key Takeaways

- Most current Coventry students should use APA 7th edition for referencing, not CU Harvard, which now applies only to pre-September 2020 returning students.
- Assignments must be submitted through Aula, not directly to Turnitin, or the submission may not be recorded.

- The 24-hour grace period is a safety margin for technical issues, not a routine extension to plan around.
- Extenuating circumstances must be requested before a deadline with independent evidence — retrospective claims are not accepted.
- Standard coursework feedback is returned within 15 working days; final-year and postgraduate coursework within 10.
- Both intentional and unintentional plagiarism are treated as academic misconduct at Coventry.
- The Centre for Academic Writing offers extensive free support that is often underused relative to its value.

Conclusion

Understanding how Coventry University's specific systems actually work — referencing style by intake and course, Aula and Turnitin submission, the 24-hour grace period, extenuating circumstances evidence requirements, feedback turnaround times, and academic misconduct policy — prevents a whole category of avoidable, entirely procedural problems that have nothing to do with the quality of your work. Treat this guide as a working reference throughout your course, and confirm the specifics against your own current module handbook and assignment brief, since some details can vary by course and intake.

Want feedback on a Coventry assignment before you submit? Our UK academic tutors can review your structure, referencing, and final draft.

This guide is provided for educational purposes to help Coventry University students understand and navigate their university's assignment policies. AssignPro Solution offers tutoring, feedback, proofreading and referencing guidance only, and does not write or complete assignments on behalf of students. Policies referenced are drawn from Coventry University's published

guidance and are subject to change — always confirm current requirements directly with the university.

Sources and Further Reading

Topic	Coventry University Resource
Referencing styles	libguides.coventry.ac.uk/cuharvard (CU Harvard, legacy students)
Academic regulations	coventry.ac.uk/the-university/key-information/registry/academic-regulations
Extenuating circumstances	coventry.ac.uk/student-central/coventry/handbook/academic-regs/extenuating-circumstances
Coursework and assessment	coventry.ac.uk/student-central/coventry/handbook/assessment-and-awards/coursework-assignments
Academic integrity	coventry.ac.uk/student-central/coventry/handbook/assessment-and-awards/academic-integrity
Centre for Academic Writing	coventry.ac.uk/study-at-coventry/student-support/academic-support/centre-for-academic-writing
Awards and classifications	coventry.ac.uk/student-central/coventry/handbook/assessment-and-awards/awards-classifications