Microsoft Word for Essay Writing

Some formatting techniques you need to know to prepare an academic essay

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Setting up your document

Margins: Select the *Page Layout* ribbon > Margins. A wider right margin leaves more room for the marker to write comments. Custom options are at the base of the drop-down menu.

Headers and footers: Good things to put in the header are the course code and your student usercode, in case the cover pages become detached. Both can be found as buttons on the *Insert* ribbon.

Page numbers: These usually go in the footer at the bottom right of each page: Insert ribbon > Page Number is better than editing the footer.

Page breaks: If you need to push something on to the next page, *Insert* ribbon > Page Break is far better than just hitting Enter repeatedly.

Paragraphs

Line spacing: Click on the Paragraph Dialogue Box button () on the Home ribbon > under Spacing select Line spacing of either 1.5 or double.

Indenting vs. paragraph spacing: Word now automatically creates gaps between paragraphs so do not hit the enter key twice after each paragraph.

It is more space-efficient, however, to us a first-line indent (Use the TAB key and adjust the indent size in the *Home* ribbon). Word makes default indents too big; they only need to be 0.5 cm or so (around 5 6 spaces).

Hanging indents are necessary for your reference list. Select the text and click on the Paragraph Dialogue Box button () on the *Home* ribbon > under *Special*, select *Hanging*. Adjust size as necessary.

Block quotes: Some quotations are too large to leave in-text and need their own paragraph; left-

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