



## CHECKLIST FOR SCHOLARLY WRITING

© 2003 The Writing Center at GULC. All rights reserved.

### I. PURPOSE

- A. Is the purpose clear?
- B. Is the thesis statement precisely stated?
- C. Does the Introduction make the purpose clear?
- D. Is the document primarily persuasive? informative? objective?

### II. AUDIENCE

- A. Does the paper take into account all audiences?
- B. Is it geared properly to the primary audience, e.g., the expert, the layperson, the general public, etc.?
- C. How much of the law does your audience need to know? How much do they already know? How much do you need to explain?
- D. Is it "layered" where appropriate, so that the expert can skip basic information, but the layperson will have it?
- E. Is it internally consistent so that any reader, at any point, can follow the argument?

### III. CONTENT

- A. Is the research complete? What is your list of sources?
- B. Does the thesis statement hold up throughout the paper?
- C. Are legal materials complete?
- D. Have they been accurately synthesized?
- E. Are all points of view accurately presented and responded to?
- F. Are all points accurately connected to the thesis?
- G. Is the paper analytical and creative, rather than just descriptive?
- H. Do footnotes function properly?
  - 1. Do they give accurate citations to authority?
  - 2. Do they give the detail that is necessary, but that, if placed in the text, would disrupt creative and analytical flow?
  - 3. Do they collect together authority that supports a point?
  - 4. Do they adequately explain the authority so that it is useful to the reader?
- I. Is the paper original and interesting?

#### IV. ORGANIZATION

- A. Is the structure obvious to any reader?
- B. Does the structure flow from substance?
- C. Does the Introduction present a blueprint for the paper?
- D. Does each section relate to the thesis statement?
- E. Is each section internally organized?
- F. Do paragraphs connect to each other?
- G. Is each paragraph logically structured? Deductively? Inductively? Other?
- H. Are sentences organized logically, e.g., subordinate ideas are subordinated, main ideas appear in main clauses, and parallel structure is used to present like ideas?
- I. Is there effective use of transition sentences?

#### V. STYLE

- A. Are the terms of art presented in the thesis statement echoed throughout the document?
- B. Is there no more than one point per sentence?
- C. Is repetition used effectively where appropriate?
- D. Are rhetorical devices used for persuasion?
- E. Is word choice precise, using less legalese and more plain English?
- F. Are subjects and verbs generally concrete? Close together?
- G. Did you use active and passive voice appropriately and intentionally?
- H. Are nominalizations avoided?

#### VI. MECHANICS

- A. Is the grammar correct?
- B. Is the punctuation correct?
- C. Are the citations correct?
- D. Are all typos eliminated?