

Essential Skills Wales

Communication

Portfolio assessment guidance

Using Contractions in Written Documents

Summary:

The use of contractions in formal written documents can be acceptable, depending on circumstance. General agreement between Awarding Organisations is that formal writing is in general flux - the purpose of the writing and its audience should be clear and then the appropriateness of language can be gauged. In some instances learners use contractions inappropriately in formal documents.

Example: *An example of a letter of application where contractions have been used incorrectly; and an extract from an essay which includes correct use of language in a formal document.*

'I'm' as the shortened form of 'I am' being used incorrectly.

'I'd' as the shortened form of 'I would' being used incorrectly

Correct use of language in a formal document.

Incorrect contractions for a letter of application:

I'm writing to ask for the job of junior apprentice. I saw your advert in the local paper and **I'd** like to gain experience in your salon.

I'm currently attending the local College of Further Education on an E2E course working towards a hair and beauty qualification.

I'm reliable and honest and a good time keeper. **I'd** like the chance of working in your salon.

Example of the correct use of language within an essay:

It is important to see to a distressed child so that you know the problem and you are able to deal with it straight away. It is also important that the child knows they have got someone to talk to.