

Assessment descriptors and weightings guide

Standard assessment descriptors

Type 1 (Secure) assessment types				
Secure Assessment type*	Definition	Standard Handbook descriptors*		
In-class test	A supervised, unique time-bound test conducted during a scheduled tutorial or workshop to evaluate understanding of specific content areas. Where tests are repeated across multiple sessions, they must be sufficiently different to avoid sharing with subsequent tutorial/workshop cohorts.	<i>Description</i> In-class test (XX minutes)	<i>Timing</i> Week X or Week X-Y	<i>Percent</i> XX%
Mid-semester test	A supervised, time-bound test conducted during the semester to assess progress and guide learning.	Mid-semester test (XX minutes)	Week X or Week X-Y	XX%
Final examination	A formal, time-limited, invigilated assessment, often used in summative assessment, to evaluate comprehensive knowledge and critical reasoning.	Final examination (XX hours)	End of semester examination period	XX%
Oral assessment – individual presentations	An individual oral presentation (may be supported by a written report and/or visual communication of knowledge, findings, or argument), typically against a set question, challenge or problem to be addressed. For this form of assessment task to be considered secure, an individual presentation needs to include an oral defence, in which the student is asked to respond to questions intended to verify their understanding of ideas and arguments included as their own work. The oral defence will usually be made against pre-defined assessment criteria.	Individual presentation and oral defence (XX minutes including oral defence)	Week X or Week X-Y	XX%

Type 1 (Secure) assessment types				
Oral assessment – case analysis	Scenario-based conversations to demonstrate, synthesise, and extend knowledge and skills. This is a practical application of what has been learned, often with a real-world scenario or case study analysis where students have been asked to interpret the situation, address questions, propose solutions. To be considered secure, this form of assessment task needs to include an oral defence of that case analysis, in which the student is asked to respond to questions intended to verify their understanding of ideas and arguments included as their own work. The oral defence will usually be made against pre-defined assessment criteria.	Individual case presentation and oral defence (XX minutes including oral defence)	Week X or Week X-Y	XX%
Oral assessment - Interview/Review	Live question and answer session, typically following a presentation, placement or in response to a written submission of an assignment.	Oral assessment – interview (XX minutes)	Week X or Week X-Y	XX%
Oral assessment (viva) – research project defence	Students present their work (often a significant research project or a thesis) and are questioned by a panel on the content of this and its relationship to other work in the field.	Oral assessment – research project [or thesis] presentation and defence (XX minutes/hours)	Week X or Week X-Y	XX%
OSCE (Objective Structured Clinical Examination)	Standardised practical examination used to evaluate discrete practical skills and application of knowledge in problem solving, where students rotate through (timed) stations to demonstrate learning through simulated tasks and oral assessment of learning against SILOs or pre-defined assessment criteria.	Simulated practical examination (XX hours)	End of semester examination period	XX%
Simulation	Completion of unique in-place assessment tasks (in class or supervised examination condition) where students complete a simulation or exercise (e.g., in class experiment, negotiation exercise, problem-based case analysis and decision making), which may also involve an oral interview or defence. If	In-place simulation OR In class simulation/ exercise/ experiment (XX minutes)	Week X or End of semester examination period	XX%

Type 1 (Secure) assessment types				
	simulations are repeated across multiple tutorials or workshops, they must be sufficiently different to avoid sharing with subsequent tutorial/workshop cohorts.			
Observed internship or placement	Work-integrated learning experiences where students are supervised in the workplace and assessed on the basis of their demonstration of skills and understanding in the workplace context.	Workplace observational assessment	Week X or Week X-Y	XX%
In-class participation	Evaluation of student involvement in learning activities, discussions, and group work. Often combined with criteria such as quality of contribution, not just presence.	In-class participation	Throughout the semester	XX%

Unsecured Assessment types				
Assessment type	Definition	Standard Handbook descriptors* <i>Description</i>	<i>Timing</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Folio	A curated collection of work (e.g., data visualisations, pitch decks, plans, draft artefacts) demonstrating learning progress, reflective practice, and achievement of learning outcomes. Common in creative disciplines to show iterative and developmental work.		Week X or Week X-Y	
Group assignment /project	Collaborative task where students jointly produce a shared output (e.g., report). Group assessments provide an opportunity for students to develop and demonstrate generic skills and graduate attributes acquired across the degree (teamwork, communication, co-design skills, perspective-taking, engaging with diverse views). Often includes individual accountability mechanisms (e.g., peer assessment, group 'contract').	Group assignment [project] (X-X students per group, XX words)	Week X or Week X-Y	XX%
Group presentation	Co-delivered oral presentation of a research project, case analysis, etc. This form of assessment is often coupled with a written group assignment.	Group presentation (XX minutes)	Week X or Week X-Y	XX%
Reflective Journal	A reflective, often formative, assessment where students document their learning journey, observations, and personal insights over time.	Individual Reflective Journal (Up to XX words)	Completed over the semester OR Due in Week X	XX%

Unsecured Assessment types				
Written thesis/research project	A research project completed by an individual student that involves the design of a research project, execution (e.g., data collection, data analysis, hypothesis testing, etc.) and written report of the research and its findings.	Individual research project/thesis (XX words)	Week X or Week X-Y	XX%
Group research project	A research project completed by a group of students that involves the design of a research project, execution (e.g., data collection, data analysis, hypothesis testing, etc.) and written report of the research and its findings.	Group research project (X-X students per group; XX words equivalent)	Week X or Week X-Y	XX%
Project proposal	A written or oral submission outlining a planned project's aims, methods, and rationale, assessed for clarity, feasibility, and critical engagement with the topic.	Individual [or Group (X-X students per group)], XX words)	Week X or Week X-Y	XX%
Quiz	Unsupervised (typically completed online) short assessments, often used at regular intervals for checking understanding and providing formative feedback. May include multiple choice, true/false, and short answer questions.	Quiz (completed weekly/fortnightly/other), XX minutes	Week X or Week X-Y	
Take-home examination	An assessment completed outside class time over a defined period. Designed to evaluate analytical and applied skills rather than recall.	Take-home examination (equivalent of X hours to complete)	Week X or Week X-Y	XX%
Individual assignment	Extended tasks such as essays, reports, case studies and/or applications of technology/software, including process-based tasks demonstrating end-to-end workflow execution in a designated system, designed to assess research, writing, argumentation, and/or critical analysis.	Individual written assignment (XX words)	Week X or Week X-Y	XX%

Unsecured Assessment types				
Participation	Evaluation of student involvement in learning activities, discussions, and/or group work. Often combined with criteria such as quality of contribution, not just presence.	Participation	Throughout the semester	XX%

* Wording to appear in the University Handbook entry describing assessment

Assessment weightings

Weightings for assessments should reflect three things:

- length
- amount of work expected to complete (time commitment)
- importance in assessing mastery

Undergraduate word count and equivalences

Undergraduate 12.5 point subjects have a total assessment of **4000 words (or equivalent)**.

Accepted equivalences

It is generally accepted that the following are equivalent to **1000 words**:

- A one-hour test or exam
- A 10-minute individual oral presentation (excluding oral defence)
- A 20-minute presentation by a 3-person group (excluding oral defence)

Using time commitment as a guide for weighting

Some assessment types are difficult to quantify in terms of the guide above. For instance, a 10-minute oral exam¹ will likely require more preparation than a 10-minute oral presentation if its purpose is to examine the entire semester of work (i.e., if students must put in the time commitment to be prepared to answer questions related to any aspect of the subject).

A 12.5 point subject (total time commitment 170 hours) will have approximately 36 contact hours, approximately 34 hours of time spent on learning activities (not directly related to assessment), leaving 100 hours for assessment activities.

Therefore, a 10-hour time commitment for an assessment item should require that assessment to be worth approximately 10%. Similarly, a two-hour exam would have a 50-hour time commitment and be weighted at 50%.

Weightings guide²

Weighting	Test/exam length	Written assignment	Individual oral presentation	Group presentation³ (3 people)
10%	24-min test/exam	400 words	4 minutes	8 minutes
25%	1 hour test/exam	1000 words	10 minutes	20 minutes
50%	2 hour test/exam	2000 words	20 minutes	40 minutes

¹Oral assessments should be weighted according to the expected preparation time commitment and purpose of the assessment (rather than the length of time performing the actual assessment).

As a simple measure, if an oral assessment is used to assess a students' knowledge and understanding of the entire semester of work, it should be weighted equivalent to a written exam that serves the same purpose.

Similarly, if the purpose of the oral assessment is to assure learning demonstrated via an unobserved assessment, it should be weighted accordingly.

²This is a guide only. A tolerance of +/- 12.5% can be applied to each assessment's weighting.

³Group presentations and assignments are difficult to quantify. The size of the group should be taken into account. It is generally accepted that the word limit should be higher for a group than for an individual task of equivalent weighting.

Example undergraduate assessment schedule

Type of Assessment (e.g. essay, report, oral presentation)	Extent/ Duration (hours, minutes, word counts or other equivalence)	Timing of Assessment (e.g. Week 2, from Week 3–6)	Assessment %	Meets subject intended learning outcome (SILO) no.(s)	Hurdle requirement (Y/N and description) (e.g. examination must be passed)
Review/critique (Individual)	400 words	Week 3	10%		
Group report (in groups of 4)	1000 words	Week 7	20%		
Group presentation (Part A) + Interview/Review (Part B) (Parts A & B in groups of 4)	15 minutes	Weeks 8–11	20%		
Written examination	2 hours	Examination period	50%		

Graduate word count and equivalences

Graduate 12.5 point subjects have a total assessment of **5000 words** (or equivalent).

Accepted equivalences

It is generally accepted that the following are equivalent to **1250 words**:

- A one-hour test or exam
- A 13-minute individual oral presentation

- A 25-minute presentation by a 3-person group

Using time commitment as a guide for weighting

Some assessment types are difficult to quantify in terms of the guide above. For instance, a 10-minute oral exam¹ will likely require more preparation than a 10-minute oral presentation if its purpose is to examine the entire semester of work (i.e., if students must put in the time commitment to be prepared to answer questions related to any aspect of the subject).

A 12.5 point subject (total time commitment approx 170 hours +/- 20%) will have approximately 36 contact hours, 34 hours of time spent on learning activities (not directly related to assessment), leaving 100 hours for assessment activities.

Weightings guide²

Weighting	Test/exam length	Written assignment	Individual oral presentation	Group presentation³ (3 people)
10%	30-min test/exam	500 words	5 minutes	10 minutes
20%	1 hour test/exam	1000 words	10 minutes	20 minutes
60%	3 hour test/exam	3000 words	30 minutes	60 minutes

¹Oral assessments should be weighted according to the expected preparation time commitment and purpose of the assessment (rather than the length of time performing the actual assessment).

As a simple measure, if an oral assessment will be used to assess a students' knowledge and understanding of the entire semester of work, it should be weighted equivalent to a written exam that serves the same purpose.

Similarly, if the purpose of the oral assessment is to assure learning demonstrated via an unobserved assessment, it should be weighted accordingly.

²This is a guide only. A tolerance of +/- 20% can be applied to each assessment's weighting.

³Group presentations and assignments are difficult to quantify. The size of the group should be taken into account. It is generally accepted that the word limit should be higher for a group than for an individual task of equivalent weighting.