

What is assessment?

Assessment is also a vitally important part of your learning process. As well as giving you an opportunity to test your ideas and skills, assessment also provides a chance for you to receive feedback on how you are progressing, and suggestions on ways in which you can improve.

During your University career, you will experience a range of assessment exercises. Some of these will count towards the mark for the module. Others, while they do not generate a mark, are still compulsory, and failure to complete them may incur a penalty.

Likewise, the assessment itself may be completed by a range of people: yourself, perhaps as part of your personal reflection; your peers, for example in seminars; or by your lecturers, through for instance comments on written work.

The main areas of assessment are given below. More specific guidance for completing assessment exercises can be found by clicking on the buttons below.

Course-work Essays

Essays assess your ability to analyse texts or sources, to research a topic using the appropriate resources (for example, the library), to think about an issue carefully, to think creatively, to construct an argument, and to practice presenting your ideas in a written form. Course-work essays count toward the mark for the module, but they are also returned with full comments on content, analysis and presentation. You will also be given the opportunity to meet with the marker and discuss their comments on your work.

Essays also test your ability to do research, and to use the library effectively.

You will normally have three or four essays to write in a semester, so they also test you ability to organise your time.

You are also required to word-process essays, testing your ICT skills.

Oral Presentations

As with essays, oral presentations also test your ability to consider texts and sources, to research topics, and to construct arguments, but they provide practice in presenting your ideas orally rather than in a written form.

As it is common practice in the Department for oral presentations to be given by study-groups, they also test your ability to work in groups. You will generally be given feedback on how your presentation worked as a presentation, either by the lecturer or by your peers.

You will also be asked to answer questions on your presentations in order to assess the way you think under pressure. This also allows you to get immediate feedback on your ideas.

In some modules oral presentations are formally assessed and count towards your mark for the module.

Gobbets

'Gobbets' are passages from your set texts on which you are asked to comment. They may be set as a course-work assignment in place of essays, or as part of an exam.

While essays give you a question and ask you to respond on the basis of your knowledge and understanding of your set texts, gobbets invite you to identify issues and questions yourself, and respond to them with reference to the passage.

Learning Journals

For some modules you may be asked to complete a Learning Journal, which may be kept either electronically or in written form. The purpose of Journals is primarily to provide a 'space' in which to think, and to test your ability to reflect, to work through ideas, and to think independently. Journals can also form an important part of your preparation for essays and oral presentations.

You may be asked to submit your Journal, or parts of your Journal, with your essays as evidence of your reflection, and may receive feedback on this.

You may also be asked to complete exercises of various kinds, some of which may be based on the group work you have done, and be asked to record these exercises and your reflections on them in your Journal.

Translation

In language learning, translation is an important form of assessment. Translation from Greek or Latin into English tests your ability not only to make sense of the ancient languages, but also to practice the art of translation - that is, expressing in your own language and idiom (English), what was formerly the thoughts, linguistic structures and idiom of a different culture. Translation from English into Greek or Latin does the opposite: it tests whether you understand not only the grammatical structures, but also in some sense the culture of thought which produced the words, phrases and linguistic structures of the ancient languages.

Examinations

A number of different tasks may be set in an exam, depending on the type of module you are doing. In many modules you will be asked to answer essay questions and provide responses to gobbets. In language exams you may be

asked translate passages and analyse grammatical structures as well as analyse and interpret texts by answering questions based on essays or gobbets.

While course-work assignments are looking for a more considered response, exams test your ability to think creatively, quickly, and under pressure.

Exams also assess your ability to apply information and ideas considered in one context (for examples in seminars or study-groups) in another, and to formulate different responses based on material and questions you have thought about before.

Exam papers at Level 1 also are returned with comment, so provide another opportunity to receive feedback from your lecturer.