

# 5 Assignments and assessment

## In this section:

- details of the weighting of each assignment for the assessment of the module
- why assignments are important
- ways of playing an active role in your assessment and making the most of feedback

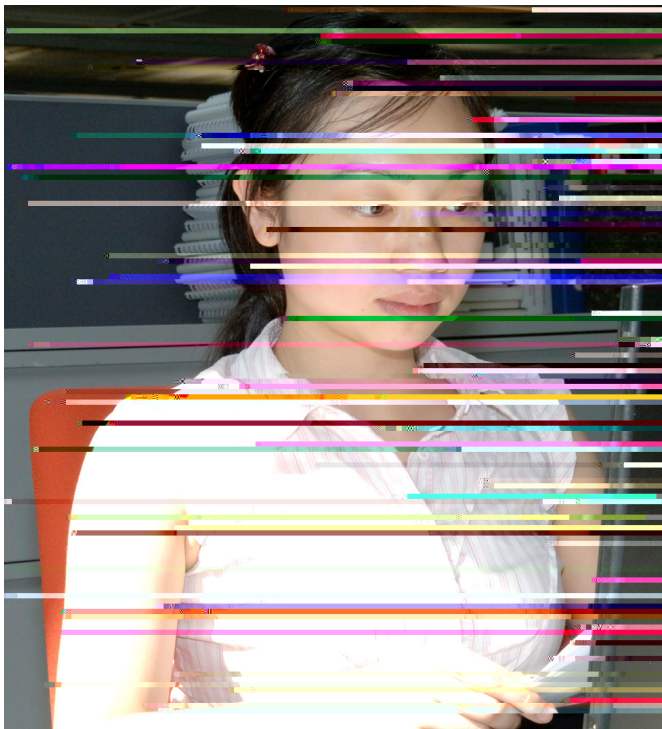
## Module assessment

Assessment is used in UK higher education for many different reasons, and each type of assessment — from formal to informal, from self-assessment to written examinations — caters for a different need.

If you are a WEDC distance learner, for the 15 credit modules



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### Implementation

This is the actual challenge or test of your ability; distilling information, structuring information, and applying understanding. The implementation stage requires you to perform to a given brief, focusing your learning through specific demands.

### Evaluation

Evaluation stems from your engagement in a process and the subsequent appraisal of your personal performance. You will be provided with feedback with which you can objectively assess your performance. The evaluation stage of the assessment cycle encourages you to reflect upon your work with a view to developing your ability. Reflecting upon how well you have done consolidates your learning, preparing you for the following units or a new module.

### Your role

Assessment is a process in which you play an active part and over which you have varying degrees of influence. There are many ways to take more control of your assessment, which will help you improve your performance and get the most out of the process.

### Establishing criteria

One of the most important aspects of assessment is to consider how your work will actually be assessed. Often there

are pre-arranged criteria, which establish the guidelines against which your work will be assessed. Your assessment criteria will be written into the assignment brief.

Criteria commonly reflect the following themes:

**Scope:** What is the broad subject range to be explored?

**Key details:** What actual information might you need to include?

**Presentation:** How should the information be presented?

**Skills demonstration:** How effectively have you developed and implemented skills?

**Use of methodology:** Can you apply complex methods of working to solve a problem?

**Understanding of concepts:** Have you understood and applied complex concepts?

**Accuracy of method:** Have you accurately undertaken the exercise?

**Drawing conclusions:** Have you clearly structured a balanced argument and effectively summated your thoughts?

**Length restriction:** Have you complied with any stated length restriction and formatting requirements?

If the assignment question or task is unclear to you, ask the responsible examiner (module tutor) to clarify what is expected.

### Your guarantor

You should nominate a local guarantor who occupies a position of authority, for example your sponsor, employer, manager or supervisor. The guarantor's responsibility is to countersign the submission sheet you send with each assignment (up to three per module) to indicate that they believe it to be your own work. If they feel able to provide other support such as advice or response to technical queries, then that too will be helpful though not essential. Your guarantor should know you well and be available before the submission deadline to countersign each assignment. S/he cannot be a member of your family.

Before nomination, you should discuss arrangements for counter-signature of assignments with your proposed guarantor.

We will contact your proposed guarantor to ask them to complete a more detailed form. If they need further information, please ask them to contact the Distance Learning Administration Team: (wedc-admissions@lboro.ac.uk).

## Assessment criteria and individuality

You may feel that you should display a certain amount of personal innovation when you are preparing work for assessment. This is important, as it can be tedious to produce work solely to a prescribed formula. In displaying personal innovation, however, you will still need to plan your work in the context of the assessment criteria.

Criteria also ensure that you are applying your learning in an appropriate manner, in a way that is useful to the particular subject area.

You should not necessarily tie your work down only to the assessment criteria. Your tutor may be looking for flexibility and imagination; factors which may be implicitly written into the assessment criteria.

Where you are aware of the criteria, however, make sure that you accommodate them in the planning and implementation of your work.

We know the value of discussing ideas and work with others who are of a like mind and/or who may have greater experience. Our campus-bashoothr0 -2 Td(Yw05/g1.333 )10.1 7a.



<b>Account for</b>	Explain the cause of.
<b>Analyse</b>	Separate down into its component parts and show how they interrelate with each other.
<b>Annotate</b>	Put notes on (usually a diagram).
<b>Assess</b>	Estimate the value of, looking at both the positive and negative attributes.
<b>Comment</b>	To make critical or explanatory notes/ observations.
<b>Compare</b>	Point out the differences and the similarities. This question needs to be carefully organized to produce a logical answer.
<b>Contrast</b>	Point out the differences only and present the results in an orderly fashion.
<b>Describe</b>	Tell the reader what something is like.
<b>Discuss</b>	Present arguments for and against the topic in question. In discussion questions, you may also give your opinion.
<b>Distinguish</b>	Identify the difference between.
<b>Evaluate</b>	Estimate the value of, looking at both the positive and negative attributes.
<b>Explain</b>	The word 'explain' means that you have to give reasons for your answer, rather than only a definition.
<b>Justify</b>	Here you will need to present a valid argument about why a specific theory or conclusion should be accepted.
<b>Outline</b>	Give the main features or general principles of a subject, omitting minor details and stressing structure.
<b>Relate</b>	Either: Show how ideas or events are linked into a sequence or: compare or contrast.
<b>Review</b>	To make a survey of, examining the subject critically.
<b>Suggest</b>	This question may not have a fixed answer Give a range of responses.
<b>Summarize</b>	State the main features of an argument, leaving out everything that is only partially relevant.
<b>To what extent</b>	Ask

Assignments are marked using the guide shown below. We show percentages on returned assignments.

These marks should always be regarded by students and staff as provisional, since marks may be subject to moderation before being fixed at a Review Board.

Numerical questions are normally marked for analytical method and accuracy using a marking scheme for specific





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Mark range	Description
80% or above	A mark 80% or above will be used on individual assignments which show exceptional merit.
75-79%	Upper end of range described. Very good grasp of material that displays thorough comprehension, informed criticism and analytical skill. The overall presentation is concise and well-expressed, without any major errors.
70-74%	Lower end of range described.
65-69%	Upper end of range described. A middle range answer which shows familiarity and comprehension of many of the salient issues and some critical dialogue with the material. Answers at the lower end of the range may contain a few errors, omissions and insufficiently well expressed ideas.
60-64%	Lower end of range described.
55-59%	Upper end of range described. An adequate answer which demonstrates an elementary understanding of the basic issues involved. Nevertheless is deficient in terms of material covered or level of comprehension. The answer is insufficiently researched and not well presented.
50-54%	Lower end of range described.
45-49%	Upper end of range described. Some major points are included, but lack of understanding is shown, together with use of irrelevant points.
40-44%	Lower end of range described.
Less than 40%	Very few or none of the major points present; many irrelevant or incorrect points included and the answer shows a serious lack of understanding.

### Submitting assignments

The phrase 'assessed submissions' relates to the *Research Dissertation (RD)* module. For general administrative information, where the word 'assignment(s)' is used, this includes assessed submissions.

#### Modules other than Research Dissertation

Use this checklist before submitting assignments:

- All pages of your assignment show your registration number but not your name (to facilitate anonymous marking, ensuring fair and impartial assessment).
- Any diagrams/tables etc. are included.
- Pages are numbered.
- A fully completed Submission Form is attached.
- A fully completed Declaration Form (part of the submission form) signed by yourself and your guarantor is attached (the form is detached prior to forwarding to the tutor for anonymous marking).
- Electronic versions of text pages of assignments, presented as '.doc' or '.docx' files (MSWord files), must be submitted through the module pages on LEARN in order that we may do word counts and/or run submissions through plagiarism-checking software. Non-text files may also need submitting if arrival of the hard-copy of your work will be after the submission date.

#### Research Dissertation (RD)

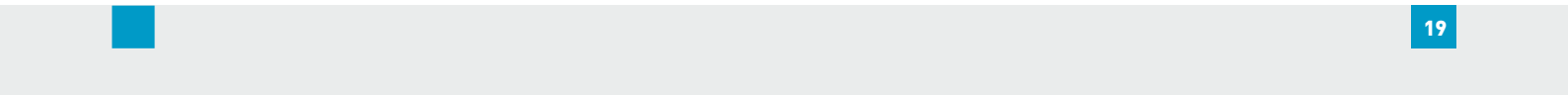
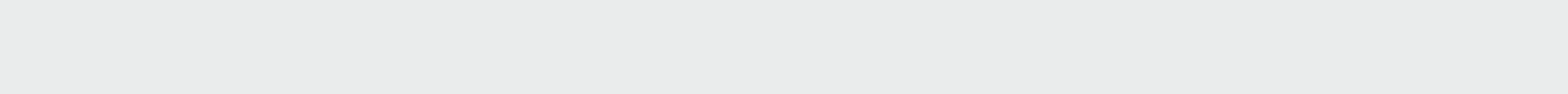
Use this checklist before returning your assessed submissions for the RD:

- Pages are numbered;
- You have submitted an electronic version.
- A fully completed Submission Form is attached.
- A fully completed Declaration Form (part of the submission form) signed by yourself and your guarantor is attached. (Since your Project Supervisor will recognise your dissertation, it cannot be assessed anonymously. A fully completed and signed Certificate of Authorship form and Access Form MUST be submitted within your final report (see RD Module Notes)).

#### Submitting on time

Submission deadlines are shown on the front of each assignment question paper. Please note that if you are studying two modules at the same time, the submission dates may be different for each module. Completed assignments, either the original or a copy, must arrive at WEDC on or before







## Collaboration

We know the value of discussing ideas and work with others who are of a like mind and/or who may have greater experience. Our campus-based programme participants benefit from exchanging ideas and experience, and we know they also discuss assignments prior to submission.





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- To achieve the Master of Science you must achieve a mark of 50% or more in seven modules including the Research Dissertation, but you can have a mark in the range 40 – 49% in the remaining two 15-credit modules.

If you obtain less than 50% the first time you study a module, then you have the right to reassessment (a 're-sit') in that module. (However, bear in mind that you can 'carry' some marks between 40 – 49%, as just explained, so you may not have to re-sit it). To attempt a re-sit you first need to pay the re-sit fee. Contact the Distance Learning Administration Team for the current cost of these.

After each Review Board the students' marks are validated. The Distance Learning Administration Team will then contact you to explain any re-sit options that you have and will provide the forms that you will need to complete to request a re-sit. If the forms and fee are not returned by a specified date and you fail to contact WEDC to provide an acceptable reason, you will be put on Leave of Absence for one year. However, if you do not register for modules in the academic year following two consecutive years of leave of absence, the University will terminate your studies in the programme, as per University Regulation IX, Paragraph 34 (ii) Termination is likely to result in you being unable to gain the award for which you are registered although, depending on the number of

credits obtained, and the specific modules in which you have achieved those credits, a lesser award may be made. It is your responsibility to be aware of your progress in a module and in the programme for which you are registered, and to seek advice from WEDC/the University if anything is unclear.

The module mark resulting from reassessment will be 'capped' at 50% for the purpose of determining the 'programme mark'. On a transcript of results, the actual mark obtained for the module will be shown. The programme mark is weighted based on the credit value of each module. This means that each mark obtained for the Research Dissertation module has four times the value of a mark from the other modules.

### Change of Guarantor

If you need to change your Guarantor, please ask the Distance Learning Administration Team for a form. Once details of the proposed new Guarantor have been provided, the Administration Team will contact them directly to complete an agreement form. The signature shown on the Declaration Forms you submit with your assignments is checked against the specimen signature provided by the Guarantor. Note that all signatures must be originals.

