

Course Design Guidelines - Subject Workload

Total Workload

The total combined contact and non-contact study workload for full time study should not exceed 55 hours per week for a full-time student, including all expected learning activities and assessment. The actual time expended in non-contact hours will differ between students. Professional judgement is therefore required in setting the workload, taking into account level of study and subject complexity.

An indicative student workload combining contact and non-contact study is 10 hours per credit point over the period in which the subject is taught. Particular consideration should also be given to the distribution of workload and activities across a study period, particularly during peak assessment periods.

Assessment

Assessment workload is calibrated by both length and complexity. Professional judgement is required to establish the most appropriate number and size of tasks, and their cumulative impact on student workload.

In setting assessment workload, careful consideration should be given to:

- a. the complexity of the assignment;
- b. whether the intent is to achieve a succinct summary of complex ideas, meaning that word count is less relevant than the intellectual work to complete the task;
- c. the estimated amount of time required to prepare, think about, sort and structure the work,
- d. whether there are additional materials (such as diagrams, workings or other appendices) to be developed,
- e. the proportion of the response that will require creative, reflective, analytical thought and evidence of deep learning that is not able to be routinely drawn from texts and lecture notes; and
- f. professional accreditation requirements.

These variables will have considerable impact on the word count expected in each assessment task.

An indicative guide to equivalence for some assessment types is provided below. These are not intended to be used for compliance purposes and do not preclude other forms of assessment such as peer review, practicals, performances, portfolios, or iterative assessment of developing work. All study workload should be defined within the considerations set out above, as well as further consideration of the learning activities associated with any outcomes.

Assessment type	Approximate equivalencies for 1,000 words
Written/Examination	1 hour
Essay in foreign language	500 words
Group essay or report	750 words/member
Unstructured reflective journal	1500 words
Verbal presentation	20 minutes

Assessment type	Approximate equivalencies for 1,000 words
Group presentation	10 minutes/member
Clinical practicum assessment	20 minutes

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	12th October 2020
Review Date	12th October 2023
Approval Authority	Executive Director, Quality and Standards
Approval Date	12th October 2020
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Responsible Policy Officer	Nicolette Lee Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) +61 3 9479 6480
Author	David Morgan Senior Advisor, Policy and Standards
Enquiries Contact	Quality and Standards