Liverpool Screen School

Guidelines for applying
Written Word Counts and Production Lengths
within assignment tasks

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This document is not a policy but provides guidance for Liverpool Screen School academic staff in the planning, delivery and assessment of modules where written word counts and production lengths are a factor.

1. Definitions

Written Word: indicative of dissertations, essays, personal reflections, learning journal annotations, blogs and the like.

Production: indicative of audio/visual artefacts such as films and radio programmes, live performances, musical/soundscape compositions and the like.

2. Clarifying the Written Word Count and Production Length

It is the responsibility of a Module Leader to:

Clarify whether a written word count and/or production length needs to be stated for an assignment task within their module. This should be done in relation to the module's learning outcomes and assessment criteria, in keeping with the module's Pro-Forma and the guidance given in LJMU's Curriculum Design Guide (See Appendix 1).

3. Context

Two contexts may apply to written word counts and/or production lengths:

Context A: where written word counts and production lengths are provided as indicative guidance for the student.
Context B: where the student's ability to produce an artefact to a specified word count or production length is an assessment criteria.

Assignment Briefs should clearly state which context applies and students should be made aware of this in the module induction session and in the setting of an assignment task.

Context A: Written word counts and/or production lengths are provided as indicative guidance. In this context, students may produce work of varying lengths. However, students should be made aware they must address the assignment task's assessment criteria within the indicative written word count or production length.

Context B: Producing work to specified written word counts and/or production lengths is a specific requirement, written into the assignment task's assessment criteria. This context would be appropriate where the module's learning outcomes require students to evidence their ability to produce artefacts to fit specific space and time formats; for example, an editorial column or a radio/television scheduled slot.

The following is suggested:

Learning Outcome	1st 100-70	2:1 69-60	2:2 59-50	3rd 49-40	Fail 39-0
Produce a creative output to a specified length appropriate to a given context.*	Clear evidence of an ability to produce complex work that meets the specified length through highly efficient editing.	Clear evidence of an ability to produce appropriate work that meets the specified length.	Clear evidence of an ability to meet the specified length, but work is repetitive and uses filler words or audio visual material.	Some limited evidence of an attempt to meet the specified length, but work is repetitive and uses filler words or audio visual material, or is significantly under-length or over-length.	Little or no evidence of an attempt to meet the specified length and work is excessively under-length or over-length and therefore fails to meet the brief.

*This is a suggested learning outcome appropriate for written word count and production lengths. Learning outcomes can only be changed or added to a module through the formal process. However, assessment criteria can be reshaped by the module leader as long as their relevance to an existing learning outcome is clear and obvious. The learning outcome and assessment criteria suggested here should be used in combination with other learning outcomes and assessment criteria focused on the quality of the work produced, and not simply its length. Weightings may be applied.

Appendix 1

LJMU Curriculum Design Guide 2016
Point 2 (Pages 6/7)

Written Coursework

Credit value	Weighting of assessment	Typical length
20	100%	4,500 words
20	80-99%	3,500 words
20	50-80%	2,500 words
20	under 50%	2,000 words
10	100%	2,500 words

Exceptions: Level 6 40 credit dissertation module: typical word length 10,000 excluding references, appendices, figures and tables.
Level 7 60 credit dissertation module: typical word length 15,000 excluding references, appendices, figures and tables.

Presentations/artefacts/performance

Credit value	Weighting of assessment	Typical number
20	100%	1
20	50-99%	2
10	100%	1

Academic staff should use their professional judgement in determining an 'essay-equivalent workload' for non-essay coursework activities, for example laboratory and field reports. Professional judgement should also be used when using multiple assessment types in a module.

Portfolios
Where a portfolio is included as an assessment component it is expected that the word count of all the separate items included within the portfolio would not exceed the word count of an identically weighted coursework item. Where all, or some, of the separate items are not comparable to a written coursework item programme teams are expected to carefully consider the assessment load of the portfolio for students so that the portfolio does not become out of line with the guidance for other assessment components; that is the portfolio should not be used to assess students several times within the one 'official' assessment component.