



**Higher Education Services
Assessment Regulations:
Volumes & Choice
Policy**

July 2025

DOCUMENT INFORMATION AND VERSION CONTROL

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| Name of policy/procedure: | Higher Education Services Assessment Regulations: Volumes and Choice |
| Document owner: | Academic Registrar |
| Date of creation: | 28 th July 2025 |
| Equality Impact Assessment date and reference: | 28 th July 2025 |
| Date of last review: | 28 th July 2025 |
| Reviewed by: | Prof. Dr Alison Watson |
| Date of next review: | 28 th July 2028 |
| Related documents: | Brunel University (BU) Assessment Brunel University of London Roehampton University (RU) Quality and Standards: Academic Regulations University of Roehampton, London |

| Version | Author | Date | Brief summary of changes |
|----------------|---------------|-------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 | A. Watson | 28/07/25 | Original version |

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Higher Education Services Assessment Regulations: Volumes & Choice Policy

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This policy sets out the expected volume ranges of assessment for modules on credit-bearing programmes for FutureLearn’s validated provision, with emphasis on student effort and time. The policy also guides students on exceeding assessment limits. This policy does not include those students who are under an OPM sub-contractual arrangement, for example, Brunel University and Roehampton University.

1.2 The document should be read alongside the procedures for Brunel University and Roehampton University partner students:

- Brunel University (BU) [Assessment | Brunel University of London](#)
- Roehampton University (RU) [Quality and Standards: Academic Regulations | University of Roehampton, London](#)

2.0 Definitions

- 2.1**
- **Volume:** the length, duration, or quantity of assessment to be submitted.
 - **Range:** upper and lower volume limits that are acceptable for a module.
 - **Equivalence:** the concept that one type of assessment requires the same amount of time and effort as another format.

3.0 Governance

3.1 Oversight of this policy rests with the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee. The Head of Programmes leads the development, implementation, and routine evaluation of the policy, ensuring it remains effective and fit for purpose. Programme Leaders are expected to communicate the relevance and application of this policy to their teams, supporting consistent understanding and implementation. All Lecturers are expected to familiarise themselves with the policy and understand how it relates to their role.

4.0 Principles & Definitions

4.1 Alignment with Sector Norms: Assessment loads are designed to reflect broader higher education standards, ensuring comparability across the [sector](#).

4.2 Consistency Across Programmes: All validated FutureLearn programmes, regardless of subject area, follow a consistent approach to the volume and type of assessment.

4.3 Clear Communication: FutureLearn’s approach to setting assessments is open and clearly communicated to both students and staff.

4.4 Balanced Workload: Students should expect to spend 20–30% of their total module hours on assessment activities. For example, a 20-credit module (200 hours) would allocate 40–60 hours for assessments.

4.5 Assessment Equivalence: Guidelines define expected effort for different assessment types when used as a single, 100% weighted task in a 20-credit module. For assessments split into multiple components, the effort should scale appropriately, without exceeding the 30% notional study hours.

4.6 Flexibility and Variety: The framework supports diverse assessment methods and allows for student choice in how work is presented where learning outcomes permit while giving staff confidence in assessment design.

5.0 Assessment Equivalences

| Assessment Type | Level 3 | Level 4 | Level 5 | Level 6 | Level 7 |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Written assessment | 1500-2500 words | 2000-3000 words | 2500-3500 words | 3000-6000 words | 3500-4500 words |
| Non-written coursework (e.g. mathematical problems) | 5 pages maximum | 4-8 pages | 5-10 pages | 5-10 pages | 5-14 pages |
| Presentations/oral tasks | 8-12 minutes | 8-15 minutes | 10-20 minutes | 15-20 minutes | 15-20 minutes |
| Reports | 1500-2500 words | 2000-3000 words | 2500-3500 words | 3000-6000 words | 3500-4500 words |
| Reflective Pieces | 2000-2500 words | 2500-3500 words | 2500-3500 words | 3000-4000 words | 3000-4000 words |
| Posters with narration transcripts | 1500-2500 words | 1500-2500 words | 2500-3500 words | 2500-3500 words | 3000-3500 words |
| Posters without narration transcripts | 750-1500 words | 1000-2000 words | 1500-2500 words | 1500-2500 words | 2000-3000 words |
| Portfolios | 3-5 pieces of work | 3-5 pieces of work | 4-7 pieces of work | 5-9 pieces of work | 5-9 pieces of work |
| Audio-visual creative output (podcast, media production, animation, video, digital art) | 5 minutes | 5-7 minutes | 7-10 minutes | 10-15 minutes | 10-15 minutes |
| Exams (timed, practical, MCQs) | 1-2 hours | 1.5-2 hours | 1.5-2 hours | 2-3 hours | 2-3 hours |
| Dissertation/Capstone Project (40-60 credits) | | | | 6000-9000 words | 7000-10000 words |

6.0 Exceeding Limits

6.1 Each assessment will clearly state the maximum word or size limit, along with guidance on how to complete the task. While there is no set minimum, submissions far below the recommended length may lack the necessary depth and will likely receive lower marks. Students must accurately declare the word count on the front cover of their submission. If a declared word count appears incorrect, markers may request the work in an editable format for verification. Intentional misreporting of word count may be treated as academic misconduct and investigated under the Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy.

6.2 The word count includes everything in the main body of the assessment (including in text citations and references). Unless otherwise stated on the assessment brief, in conventional written assignments, the word count excludes:

- Numerical data in tables
- Figures
- Diagrams
- Footnotes
- Reference lists
- Appendices (these will not normally be marked)

6.3 Students should not exceed the word count by more than 10%. For example, a 3000-word essay can exceed the limit by up to 10% (3300 words), or a 10-minute presentation may run up to 11 minutes without penalty. Once the stated limit is reached, any content beyond that point will not be considered for marking. If penalties are applied for exceeding the maximum size, they will affect the overall grade for the assessment or the entire component in the case of multipart submissions, not individual sections.

6.4 If an assessment exceeds the word count by more than 10%, a 10% deduction will be applied to the overall mark. However, penalties cannot lower a student's grade below the passing threshold. If the deduction would result in a failing grade, the final mark will be capped at the minimum pass level, for example, 50% for postgraduate courses.

7.0 Monitoring

7.1 The policy will be kept under review and formally reviewed every three years by the Academic Registrar.