Assessment Word Count Business Process

SCOPE

This process applies to all undergraduate and postgraduate coursework courses and units offered in the Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences (MNHS) as well as units in which the Faculty has a majority teaching responsibility.

PURPOSE

To outline the word limit used to indicate the scale expected for a specific piece of work, in terms of the length of the document, amount of detail required, and as a general indicator of the time to be spent on the task.

SETTING A WORD LIMIT

Word limits should be set in alignment with the weighting of the assessment task and the notional hours of effort required to complete the activity.

Word limits for each task must be indicated clearly and consistently in the relevant sections in any task descriptions and outlined on Moodle.

A tolerance of +/- 10% will be acceptable on all word limits unless there is an explicit statement to the contrary in any task descriptions and must be outlined on Moodle.

INTERPRETING THE WORD LIMIT

Table 1 indicates what content is included or excluded from a given word limit. Note that not all items listed will be present in a particular assessment task.

TABLE 1: INCLUSIONS AND EXCLUSIONS IN WORD COUNTS.

Included in word limit	Excluded from word limit	
Title	Cover page/Title page	Appendices*
All main-body text	Contents list	Footnotes*
Headings	Abstract/Executive summary	Statement of word count
Sub-headings	Content of tables*	Page numbers
Direct quotations**	Figure captions/legends*	Header/footer text
In-text citations	Reference list/Bibliography	

* When used appropriately.

** Direct quotations are not commonly accepted in work within the faculty. Students

should be encouraged to express ideas based on their own understanding, informed by the

original sources, rather than quoting authors directly. Citations are required whether ideas

are quoted directly or have informed the student's own understanding.

If students are entering text into a template, only the student's words should be counted. Indications should be given for either the total number of words required, or the number or words permitted in each section of the template. There should be a clear statement of whether the word limits are suggestions (i.e students can write more in one section if they write less in another) or hard limits (each section must have no more than the stated number of words in it).

There will be no explicit deductions (either within a rubric or separate from it) for deviating from the word count. Work which is under the word limit is likely to lose marks related to content, style and/or organisation.

For work which is over the word limit, markers will read up to the word limit + any tolerance. Work beyond that limit will not be marked.

If students state the number of words in their assignment, their word count is expected to be accurate. Minor deviations may be permitted due to differences in how software counts the number of words. Deviations greater than 1% of the word limit should be investigated.

Falsification of a word count (either in an explicit statement, or by using techniques to alter the number of words counted by electronic software) constitutes a breach of academic integrity and may result in further action.

WORD EQUIVALENCE

Word limits are inappropriate or inaccurate for certain tasks, such as concept maps, diagrams or flow charts. For these tasks, a word equivalence should be stated, accompanied by text informing the student:

"The word equivalence is provided as an indication of the weighting of this part of the task only. It is given to provide a rough guide to the level of detail required. You should allocate the same amount of time to this part of the task as you would for an essay with the same word limit. Your submission to this part of the task may include more or less words than the number indicated. Instead of focussing on the number of words used, you should concentrate on [conveying the relevant ideas concisely and accurately]." (The text in square brackets may be changed to indicate the skills required for the particular task.

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Related Documents	Assessment Regime Business Process