



SCHOOL OF BUSINESS & MANAGEMENT ASSESSMENT & FEEDBACK GLOSSARY

OCTOBER 2022

ROYAL HOLLOWAY, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON Dr. Lucy Gill-Simmen



GLOSSARY OF ASSESSMENT & FEEDBACK TERMS

SECTION 1. Assessment Task Terms

When you are reading the brief for your assessments and interpreting the rubric, some of the task terms you may come across are defined below. Make sure you think about what these mean. There are six levels of learning which you will encounter during your degree, these are remembering, understanding, applying, analysing, evaluating and creating.

Term	Definition
Account for	Explain, clarify, give the reasons for. This is quite different from "give an account of..." which is more like "describe in detail". Similar to "explain" but with a heavier focus on reasons why something is or is not the way it is.
Analyse	Break material into its constituent parts and examine how these relate to each other and to other ideas. See ideas and problems in different ways and provide evidence for those ways of seeing them.
Apply	Use information or skills in a new situation. Put a particular idea or perspective into operation or use; show how the idea can be used effectively in a [specific?] situation.
Argue	Make a case, based on appropriate evidence and logically structured [position?] for and/or against a particular point of view.
Articulate	Similar to "describe", express ideas and thoughts clearly in your own words.
Assess	Measure or evaluate one or more aspect of something (for example, the effectiveness, significance, or 'truth' of something). Show in detail the outcomes of these evaluations.
Comment on	This is a combination of the definition of "analyse" and "assess". Although it sounds as if it would be similar to "describe" or "summarise" it requires you to be critical and evaluative in your approach.
Compare	Identify and discuss the characteristics or qualities two or more things have in common. You may need to point out their differences as well. Requirements often ask you to "compare" and "contrast".
Compare and contrast	Show similarities and differences between two or more things.
Contrast	Show how two or more ideas or pieces of information are different.
Conceptualise	Form an idea or a theory in your mind, come up with something new.
Create	Put elements together to form a new coherent or functional whole; reorganise elements into a new pattern or structure.

Critically analyse	As with “analyse” but questioning and testing the strength of your and others’ analyses from different perspectives. This often means using the process of analysis to make the whole assessment an objective, reasoned argument for your overall case or position.
Critically assess	As with “assess”, but emphasising the judgments you make about your and others’ arguments and assessments from different perspectives. This often means making the whole assessment a reasoned argument for your overall case, based on your judgments.
Critically evaluate	As with “evaluate” but showing how judgments vary from different perspectives and how some judgments are stronger than others. This often means creating an objective, reasoned argument for your overall case, based on the evaluation from different perspectives.
Criticise	Spell out your judgement as to the value or truth of something, indicating the criteria on which you base your judgement and citing specific instances and arguments as to how the criteria apply in this case.
Critique	Examine and provide judgment on a set of ideas, information, or data.
Define	Make a statement as to the meaning or interpretation of something, giving sufficient detail as to allow it to be distinguished from other similar things.
Describe	Give a full account of the word, phrase, or idea. Spell out the default aspects of the idea or topic, or the sequence in which a series of things happened.
Discuss	Examine closely taking account of strengths and weaknesses in an argument; offer reasons for and against. Discussion often includes explaining which views or ideas seem stronger.
Distinguish	Identify the differences between two or more factors
Evaluate	Make and defend judgments based on internal evidence or external criteria. Similar to “assess”, this often has more emphasis on an overall judgment of something, explaining the extent to which it is, for example, effective, useful, or true. Evaluation is therefore sometimes more subjective and contestable than some kinds of pure assessment.
Examine	Look closely at something. Think about and [convey/communicate?] the detail and question it where appropriate.
Explain	Give a detailed response to make something clear or easy to understand by describing or providing information about it, detailing

	how things work or how they came to be the way they are, using some elements of "describe" and "analyse".
Explore	Consider an idea or topic broadly, searching out related and/or particularly relevant, interesting, or debatable points.
Identify	Sort through information and name the main point or points to show that you recognise one or more important piece of evidence, thing, idea, problem, fact, theory, or example.
Identify	Point out and describe something or a particular factor in a short and coherent way, picking out what you regard as the key features of something, making clear the criteria you use in doing so.
Illustrate	Give relevant examples of something to help describe or explain it or use diagrams or other visual aids to help describe or explain something.
Interpret	Clarify or explain the meaning of information, an action, or a perspective, perhaps indicating how the information or action relates to some other information, action, or perspective.
Justify	Explain the reasons, for something being done or believed, considering different possible views and ideas and, probably, arguing a case.
List	State the factors with no explanation or elaboration.
Outline	Provide the main features briefly, provide the main points or ideas, normally without going into detail, possibly setting them within a clear structure or framework to show how they interrelate.
Remember	Retrieve, recall or recognise relevant knowledge from long-term memory.
Review	Survey a topic with the emphasis on "assess" rather than "describe".
State	Present, say or write something clearly in brief form.
Suggest	State a possible reason or course of action (no development is required).
Summarise	This is similar to "outline". Concisely and precisely state, or re-state, the most important parts, facts, or ideas about something so that it is represented 'in miniature'.
Synthesise	Take information from multiple sources and combine them together to create one cohesive idea. Information should be compiled into a logical argument.

To what extent	Explore the case for a stated proposition or explanation, much in the manner of "assess" and "criticise", probably arguing for a less than total acceptance of the proposition.
Trace	Describe in narrative form the progress, development, or sequence of events from a particular point.
Understand	Demonstrate comprehension through one or more forms of explanation, constructing meaning from instructional messages, including oral, written, and graphic communication.

SECTION 2. Contextual Terms

Other terms you may come across in your learning.

Term	Definition
Abstract	A summary of an academic text, which appears at the beginning of the text.
Academic skills	These are skills which enable you to learn how to become a more effective learner and researcher and ensure you are able to demonstrate this within your academic work.
Academic writing	This is a style of writing which is quite formal. It is different from the style which you use to communicate with friends and different from that which you read in newspapers. Structure and referencing to academic sources are important components of academic writing which you may need to develop. Different types of academic writing tasks require different structures, such as: reports, essays or dissertations.
Acronym	A word which is composed of the first letters of the words it refers to, e.g. VAT = V alue A dded T ax.
Active reading	Marking the text with a pencil, pen or highlight pen as you read to identify important points.
Antonym	A word which has an opposite meaning to another word, e.g. careless is an antonym of careful.
Assessment criteria or marking criteria	This is a specific set of skills which you are required to demonstrate in order to achieve certain marks in a module.
Bibliography	A bibliography is a list of all of the sources you have used (whether referenced or not) in the process of researching a piece of work.
Brainstorm	To think of all the ideas related to a particular concept or topic by noting them down or saying them aloud in no particular order.
Cautious language	You can never state research as being absolute fact within an assignment (as other authors may find something different). Use terms such as: may be, tends to and it is suggested. This allows your writing to remain open to interpretation by the reader.
Colloquial	Informal use of language (e.g. the style of speech used socially among friends).
Concise writing	Writing, usually in an academic or formal context, which uses the minimum number of words to express a point for the meaning to be clear.

Context	Words surrounding an idea or situation giving it meaning.
Counter argument	An argument that opposes another argument by challenging it or giving a different view.
Critical thinking	The process of analysing information in order to make a logical decision about the extent to which you believe something to be true or false. It requires interacting with material, to make connections or to see relationships between ideas.
Feedback	A process through which learners make sense of information from various sources and use it to enhance their work or learning strategies. Through feedback, you are able to identify the areas that you are doing well in and others that you need to improve.
Formal language	An element of academic writing where jargon, slang, subjective language, colloquialisms, vague vocabulary and abbreviations are avoided.
Harvard Referencing	This style of referencing is used within most subject areas at the RHUL.
Highlight	To attract attention to something or emphasise its importance (e.g. to highlight the main points in an argument).
Impersonal	Avoiding personal pronouns, such as I, we, you, our and us by using the third person
Independent learner	As an independent learner, you should be: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. motivated to learn 2. able to manage your time 3. able to reflect on your learning. These attributes should provide you with the insight to become responsible for your own learning and enhance your ability and motivation to learn.
In-text citation	In academic writing, to name or refer to another writer as the source of information in your text.
Issue	An important topic for debate or discussion; something worth thinking and raising questions about.
Jargon	Words or expressions used by a profession which other people find difficult to understand.
Keyword	A significant word or phrase.
Learning outcomes	Are terms which express what the learner should know, understand and be able to demonstrate in order to complete a module/an assessment successfully. They are important and useful to be aware of because they are created in alignment with teaching and learning and assessment processes.
Metaphor	A word or phrase used to describe somebody or something in an imaginative way, in order to make ideas or descriptions more powerful or easier to understand. Metaphor consists of language that expresses parallels between things or concepts, e.g. The internet is a gateway to a vast amount of information.

Mindmap	A visual representation of the components or associations of a topic in the form of a diagram usually radiating from a central theme, concept or object.
Mnemonic	A memory device, or way of helping yourself to remember something.
Module	A unit or a subject area which forms part of the whole university course.
Objective	Not influenced by personal feelings or opinions.
Paraphrase	A statement in which you express what somebody has written or said using different words. Used for shorter pieces of text. Remember to reference your paraphrased text.
Precise writing	Writing, usually in an academic or formal context, which records all factual detail carefully and accurately.
Proofreading	The activity of reading a piece of written work in its final stages, e.g. an essay, in order to identify and mark errors for correction.
Quoting	Copying a short text word for word. Keep quotes to a minimum in your work. The text should be inserted within double quote marks and referenced.
Reading list	This is a list of books/articles that your lecturer thinks are important and relevant to your course. However, you may not necessarily be expected to access and read every text on your list.
Reference list	A comprehensive list of references should be included at the end of any piece of academic writing.
Reflection	Analysing a past experience to improve future performance.
Scan	To read quickly to locate specific information.
Signpost	A word or phrase used in speech or writing to highlight part of the text for the reader or audience; e.g. to introduce the different stages of a talk or lecture - to sum up, let's now consider; to clarify the writer's argument in writing – with regard to..., in conclusion.
Skim	To read a text quickly in order to get the gist or general idea.
Source (text)	Using information in your text which was taken from an academic resource (e.g. by using quotation or paraphrase). Remember to use an in-text citation and to add it to your reference list.
Strategy	A method or way of achieving a specific goal especially in language learning; for example: a listening strategy, reading strategies.
Study plan	A plan consisting of a list of your short and long term learning goals including the date by which you aim to achieve them, usually in the form of a grid.
Subjective	Influenced by personal feelings or opinions.
Synonym	This is a word which is similar in meaning to another word, e.g. authentic and real are synonyms.
Template	A document that has a fixed layout (e.g. headings and columns), but with blank spaces so that you can fill in your own content.
Topic sentence	A sentence in a paragraph that states the topic or subject of the paragraph and the idea(s) it focuses on.

SECTION 3. Feedback Terms

Other terms you may come across when interpreting your feedback.

Term	Meaning
Abstract	Being too vague about a point by not explaining it in specific language or by failing to ground it (back it up) in theory or to use examples.
Address the question	Make sure you're answering the question that is being asked, students sometimes write about topics that miss the point. Make sure your arguments and material are relevant and clearly linked to the question asked, and not just a written stream of all that you know about the topic.
Assess the limitations of the study	Weigh up aspects of the study and consider weaknesses that might undermine the validity of the study, and/or suggest ways the research could be improved. The weaknesses could be methodological, but may also be with how the authors interpret and present their own findings.
Balanced argument	While it is often valuable to take a stance, be sure to present evidence for the other sides of the argument.
Clarity	Make sure the reader can easily understand what points you have made by writing clearly, and explaining why you have made these points. Sometimes it's just a case of writing straightforwardly, and not assuming the reader will automatically know what you were thinking.
Concise	In your work you need to explain ideas clearly but with fewer words – if you have a word limit, make effective use of it! The marker may think you are waffling. Be succinct and avoid needlessly complicated words and phrases.
Concrete	Make sure you're using clear and specific language to talk about a defined situation or a certain finding, not just vague ideas (see also 'Abstract').
Critically Evaluate/ Critically Analyse	Show that you have actively thought about and questioned the claims you are describing or making. Even if the claims are completely valid, show that you haven't just accepted them at face value.
Depth/elaborate	Make sure you explain your arguments in detail, using examples where appropriate and working through your ideas rather than simply glossing over them.
Flair	Showing a sophisticated or elegant writing style, or presenting evidence in an original and insightful way.
Flow	Creating a coherent argument by connecting points in a logical order to ensure that the work is easy to follow.
Illustrate	Give examples to back up the points you make, ideally using evidence.

Originality	Demonstrating your own thinking, perhaps by drawing upon research beyond the ones you learned about in class, to make an argument that not every student would have thought of.
Proof-Read	Reading work back carefully, or getting another person to read it, to check for spelling and grammar mistakes. You should also check that your arguments make sense, and that everything is phrased clearly.
Range of Material	Try and use more than just the material provided by the lecturers, and avoid basing too much of your work on just one or two references.
Specific	Give a more precise and detailed account of what is being described, drawing on examples.
Structure	A way of presenting your work so the reader can follow the argument. Make sure your paragraphs are in a logical order, that you show the connections between different paragraphs, and that each section has good beginning and ending sentences.
Synthesis/Integration	Show how different sources and theories go together to make a good argument. A lack of synthesis could mean your essay reads more like a list of research than an argument.
Transparent	Making sure that the thought-process which underlies your argument is clearly expressed. Even if you have a good idea, it's not always easy for the marker to see your train of thought.
Unsubstantiated Claims	An unsubstantiated claim lacks evidence. Make sure you justify your argument by supporting each point with empirical evidence and references. This will create a more persuasive argument.

Sources: (NO LINKS)

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