

Assessment form for the Individual Essay assignment

Student name: Anon 2

Mark out of 50 (subject to moderation): 43

Marker name: AS

Date: 29/6/2015

Comments

This is a very good piece of work - well done!

You have clearly put the course themes into practice, read well (and beyond the reading list) and achieved a university standard piece of work as a result.

For example:

- you stuck to the topic throughout and there is a good structure to the essay
- the use of examples and readings give weight to your points and make it a convincing argument
- you demonstrate that you have critically reflected and understood the topic in the main, and have gone beyond description with what turns out to be a nuanced argument (in particular, your argument that programmes that are academic in nature and focus have the by-product of helping the other factors that can affect retention, namely isolation - this was a nice demonstration of critical thinking).

Finally, you have a clear academic voice and writing style which is consistent throughout making it easy for the reader to follow your points and ideas.

For the future:

- be careful of throw away comments - these can weaken your points and almost undermines all your good work up to that point (e.g. your final sentence in the conclusion when you say 'therefore...does prevent the majority of first years from dropping out' - this isn't quite what your argument is and almost ruins all your good work previous to this.)
- you cited sources and then didn't put them in your bibliography - this is very frustrating as the reader cannot follow them up, nor as a marker can I tell if they are of good academic quality. Be very careful of this in the future.
- your introduction would have been stronger if you had defined what 'academic skills' are. Also you mention LEAPS but don't mention them again in the main body of the essay...
- finally, more discussion of other factors that contribute to poor retention would have helped the balance of your essay e.g. what roles do finance, and choosing the wrong course have in retention etc.

Overall, though, this was a very good effort.

Note: the marks allocated represent the 'best fit' in the view of the marking team. Where required, markers will provide additional comments.

1. CRITICAL THINKING AND EVIDENCE

1.1 RELEVANCE

We want to see that you have addressed the question. We are looking for content to be directly relevant to the question (within the short word count there is little room for wandering off topic). We are looking for you to make regular and explicit connections to the essay question.

- (5) The impression given is that the topic question remained at the forefront of your mind throughout the preparation of the essay. The question is clearly addressed and content was relevant throughout.
- (3) Although the essay drifts off topic or lacks explicit connection to the question at times, content is generally relevant.
- (1) Large sections of the essay drift away from the topic or fail to make explicit the relevance of what is being discussed. This might be due to misinterpretation of the question, or perhaps you lost sight of the essay question.
- (0) You have not answered the question (or have addressed an alternative question).

1.2 CRITICAL REFLECTION

We want to see that you have critically reflected on the question, that you have spent time giving careful thought to the subject and have taken a position in response to the question.

- (5) It is clear that you have critically considered the question. You have made an effort to get to grips with the topic and have achieved depth in your response. This is convincing and impressive work.
- (3) You have evidently spent time reflecting on the subject although could have gone into more depth. Perhaps there is a tendency towards description rather than analysis. More analysis or interpretation would have provided a more convincing answer.
- (1) It is unclear that you have spent very much time reflecting on the question. Your response lacks depth and analysis (it skims the surface). There might be some description however your response lacks interpretation and thought.
- (0) You have not attempted to critically reflect on the topic. You have written the essay without reflecting on the subject.

1.3 UNDERSTANDING AND INTERPRETATION

We want to see that you have grasped the key themes from the literature and the topic.

- (5) It is clear that you have read widely and this contributes to an impressive understanding of the topic.
- (3) You have demonstrated an understanding of some themes although perhaps there was some misinterpretation or an overly narrow focus.
- (1) It is not clear that you have grasped the main themes of the topic or have read sufficiently widely and critically.
- (0) You have not demonstrated any understanding of the topic.

1.4 SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

We want to see that you have used appropriate evidence effectively, which in turn makes for a convincing discussion of the topic.

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some were missing!

- (5) Content is supported by evidence wherever appropriate with regular reference to the literature; you have clearly grasped how to draw on evidence to support ideas. This is impressive work.
- (3) There is regular use of supporting evidence, however it is lacking on a number of occasions where it was needed to support an argument. Nevertheless, this is a decent first effort.
- (1) Your essay includes some limited supporting evidence although it is generally lacking. This feels like a token effort.
- (0) Your essay does not include any evidence of appropriate quality or relevance to the topic.

1.5 QUALITY OF SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

We want to see that you have used evidence that is relevant and appropriate for academic study.

not all sources in bibliography – as a result can't tell if all are of good quality

- (5) Your essay demonstrates a broad range of evidence that is consistently relevant and of sufficient quality for academic work.
- (3) The range of evidence in your essay is mostly relevant and of sufficient academic quality.
- (1) With a few exceptions, your essay lacks reference to appropriate supporting evidence.
- (0) Your essay does not include any evidence of appropriate quality or relevance to the topic.

2. STRUCTURE AND PRESENTATION

2.1 INTRODUCTION

We want to see that your essay includes a clear introductory section that 'sets the scene' and demonstrates your interpretation of the question by providing: key background information to the topic; definitions of key terms where appropriate; and a clear demonstration of intent for the essay.

- (3) Your introduction provides all of the stipulated characteristics and 'sets the scene' effectively.
- (2) Your introduction includes most, but not all of the stipulated characteristics.
- (1) You have included an introduction but it lacks many of the stipulated characteristics.
- (0) No introduction has been offered – you have simply 'launched into' discussion.

2.2 MAIN BODY

We want to see that your essay includes a clear main body including: the key ideas you have chosen to explore; logical progression of content; paragraphs; consistency with what is outlined in the introduction.

- (3) The main body matches all of the expected characteristics.
- (2) The main body includes most, but not all of the characteristics above.
- (1) The main body lacks many of the characteristics stipulated above.
- (0) No distinct main body was offered – for instance, it is hard to see where the introduction ends and the conclusion begins. Your essay is a disorganised collection of information that lacks cohesion.

2.3 CONCLUSION

We want your essay to include a clearly identified conclusion that: summarises the key arguments covered within your essay; does not introduce new material; makes a concluding statement that links back to the original question; is consistent with the introduction and draws the essay to a natural close.

- (3) Your conclusion fulfils all the criteria listed above, drawing the essay to a natural close.
- (2) Your conclusion matches most, but not all of the characteristics above.
- (1) You have offered a conclusion but it lacks many of the characteristics stipulated above.
- (0) You have not offered a conclusion, or it is difficult to determine when the main body ends and the conclusion begins.

2.4 BIBLIOGRAPHY

The bibliographical information should be prepared using the Harvard referencing style, as per guidance in Week 3 of the course. This should include references presented in the appropriate format (with particular attention to the accuracy of web-based resources) and listed alphabetically.

references
missing from
bibliography

- (3) References are prepared exactly as stipulated (or very close to the ideal). You have clearly spent some time constructing the references and have grasped the function of a bibliography.
- (2) Despite some errors, you have made a reasonable effort to correctly prepare references have grasped the function of a bibliography.
- (1) The bibliography looks to be a token effort, possibly a hastily prepared list. Alternatively, the bibliography might be correctly prepared but very short or is inconsistent with citations in the text.
- (0) The essay does not include a bibliography.

2.5 CITATION STYLE

We want to see that sources of evidence are acknowledged in the text, using Harvard citation style as per guidance in Week 3 of the course.

- (3) You have grasped when and how to cite sources and, with only one or two exceptions, have used the Harvard citation style effectively.
- (2) Overall, you have made a good effort to cite sources, even if it has not always been done successfully or when required.
- (1) You have attempted to cite sources from time-to-time and with variable success.
- (0) You have not made any effort to cite evidence within the text.

2.6 GRAMMAR

We want to read an essay with good grammar, including spelling and punctuation, which helps the articulation of your ideas.

- (3) There are few grammatical errors and your essay seems to have been carefully proof-read thoroughly before submission, which makes it easy for the reader to understand your ideas.
- (2) Your essay generally shows good use of grammar with some occasional mistakes.
- (1) The frequency of basic mistakes suggests that you did not proof read the essay carefully prior to submission.
- (0) Your essay is littered with grammatical errors and you have paid little attention to grammar, spelling or punctuation. At times it is difficult to understand your ideas.

2.7 LANGUAGE

We want to see that the language used in your essay is neutral, non-emotive, passive and contributes to a positive 'reader experience'.

- (3)** Your essay matches all of the criteria.
- (2)** Although not consistently the case, your essay generally matches the criteria.
- (1)** Your essay is let down by regular examples of writing that does not meet the above criteria and as such is not in an academic style.
- (0)** You seem to have ignored the guidance offered – this is not academic writing.

2.8 CONTINUOUS PROSE AND CLARITY

We want your essay to be easy to read. The use of continuous prose and short, clear, succinct sentences demonstrates clarity of thought.

- (3)** Your use of continuous prose helps the essay to flow. The use of short sentences helps the reader to follow the different arguments that you make.
- (2)** You have made a good effort to write with clarity, even if at times it becomes disjointed or long-winded. Nevertheless, it is generally possible to follow your ideas.
- (1)** Your essay is let down by a lack of continuous prose or long rambling sentences that are hard to follow. The impression is that you are unclear of the point you wish to make.
- (0)** Your writing in this essay is disjointed and contributes towards a poor reader experience. It is difficult to understand your ideas. Guidance offered in class has been ignored.

2.9 STYLESHEET

We want to see that your essay matches the stylesheet in the Brief:

- (1)** Your essay is consistent with every stipulated criterion on the stylesheet.
- (0)** Your essay does not match all of the guidelines in the stylesheet.