

# Assessment that is student-centred, learning-oriented

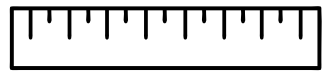
## Student workloads - how long does an activity take?



We have access to almost unlimited, great material on our course topics which students will benefit from ....



.... but we may end up with 'content obesity' requiring students to spend more than the allocated learning and assessment hours, dealing with all the good content.



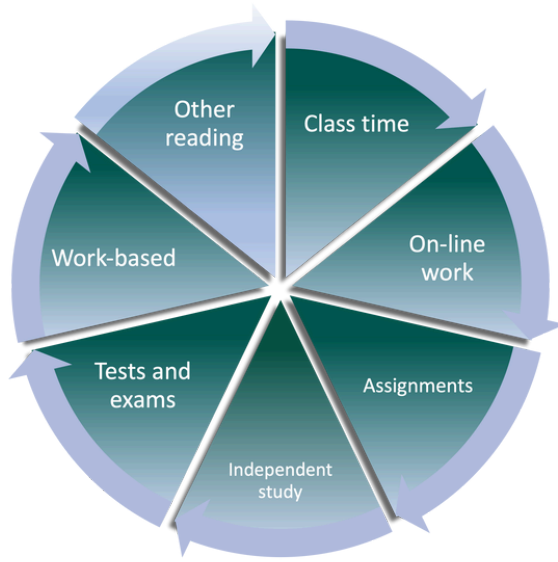
With assessment the golden (if hard to define) measurement is 'sufficiency'. How much evidence do you need to be assured a student has met a learning outcome?

### How to use this one page guide

- Calculating workloads is a bit of science and a bit of art. It's difficult to pin down measurements for workload and effort and how these translate to the measuring units we have available - hours, word counts and percentages.
- In this resource we've opted for the base currency of 'researched words' with conversions to other assessment methods. We acknowledge that you may need to use another 'base currency'.
- We also acknowledge that for Student A to get a B+ might require less effort than for Student B.
- Internal and external moderation are a great way to get a handle on comparative workloads for a programme

### As we design activities for learning, do we know how much time they'll take?

A 15 credit course has a *notional* 150 hours of learning and assessment



"**Researched words**" - we are using this as our standard unit of measurement for assessment length. By researched we mean going through an enquiry process -

- starting with a question or hypothesis
- deconstructing the question
- finding data and information to answer the question
- evaluating the source of the information
- organising and synthesising the information
- presenting or applying this work



### Warning signs of overload

Success and retention issues.  
 Comments in course evaluations.  
 Comments in class.  
 Absenteeism in the days before assessment is due.  
 Requests for late submission.  
 Issues identified in the marking process and post-moderation.  
 If there is a workload issue in marking it may indicate a workload issue for learners.

### Tasks equivalent to 1000 'researched words'

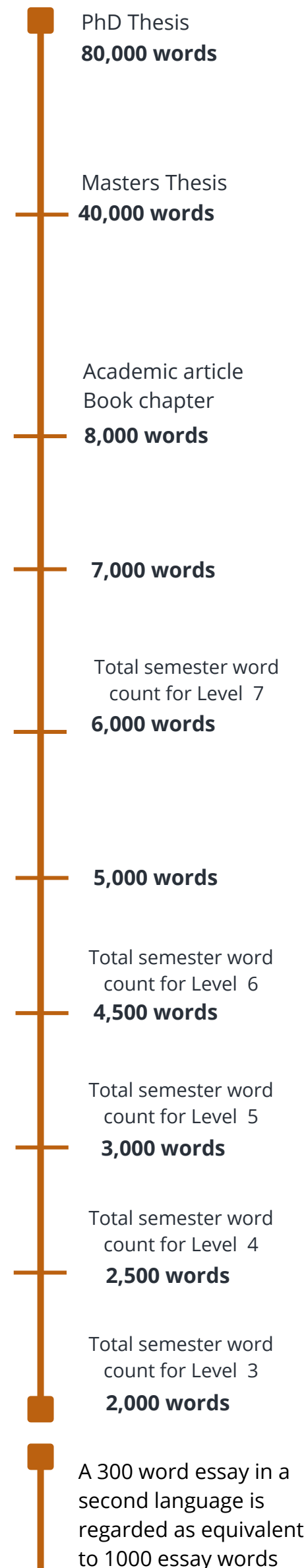
- = 1 hour exam
- = 10 minute presentation
- = 10 minute clinical exam
- = 10-20 minute practical exam
- = 20 minute, 3 person presentation
- = 2000 words reflective journal/ learning log

Northumbria University recommends 20% of course time be allocated to assessment (if you think the % should be higher simply adjust the maths below) - so for 150 hours learning and assessment, 30 hours to be spent on assessment.

This means :  
 10% assessment takes 3 hours  
 30% assessment takes 9 hours  
 50% assessment takes 15 hours

If a 10 minute presentation takes 5 hours to prepare, it should be worth 15-20%.  
 If a one hour test is worth 30%, tell students to spend 8 hours preparing.

### Total suggested assessment 'researched' word count ( for 15 credit course) at different levels



### WHAT ADDS TO STUDENT WORK LOADS?

- Reading - think about the amount of reading, how you want your learners to read (skim, look for specific information, take notes...) and the degree of difficulty of the reading. Details of calculating reading loads are on the right.
- Novelty/specialised factor of the subject
- Novelty factor of the assessment Literacies required - academic, digital, information, work-place
- Time required for information search
- Assessment pinch points - check assessment due dates across courses

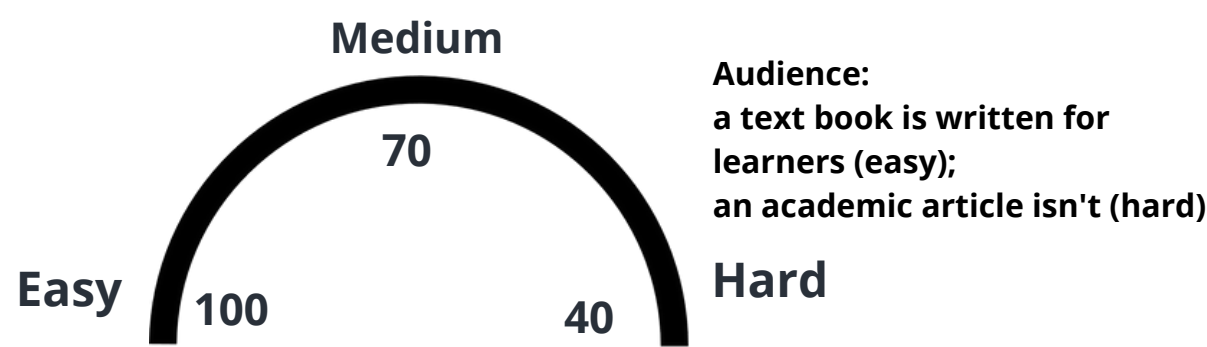


### CALCULATING READING LOADS

There are three factors that influence reading speed:

- the newness of the material - no new concepts to many new concepts
- the demands of the task - are learners asked to survey, understand or engage with the reading?
- language: who is the intended audience of the reading?

### Words read per minute depending on the difficulty of the reading



Worked examples for two different texts for L1 (English as first language) and L2 (additional language) learners

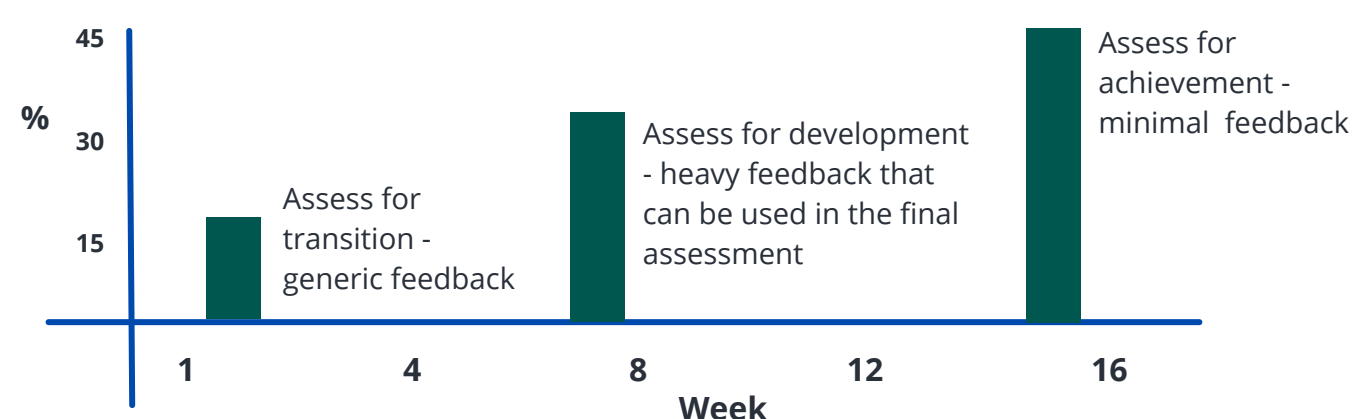
**Example 1**  
**An academic journal article 8000 words**  
*Intended audience: Academics*  
*Difficulty level - hard for NZQA L7, L1 learners*  
*Time: 3+ hours to read 'academically'*

**Example 2**  
**Text book chapter 8000 words**  
*Intended audience: Learners*  
*Difficulty level - easy for NZQA L7, L1 learners*  
*Time: 1.3 hours to read 'academically'*  
*Difficulty level - medium for NZQA L7, L2 learners*  
*Time: 2 hours to read 'academically'*

[A tool for calculating reading loads](#)

### WHAT ABOUT FEEDBACK ON ASSESSMENTS?

If we believe assessment is for learning then the number of assessments we have, how we space them, the way they build on each other and the opportunity for students to use our feedback are important design considerations.



### CALCULATING WRITING LOADS

There are two factors that influence writing demand

- The writing genre: eg. narrative/reflective; argument; research
- Drafting required: None; minimal, extensive

A 1000 word reflective piece with minimal drafting may take 6-8 hours

A 1000 word research piece with extensive drafting may take 20+ hours

[A tool for calculating writing loads](#)



### TIME DEMANDS

Students may need to be made aware that class time and assignments/assessments are not the entire workload. What expectations do you have for other activities?

Australian research indicates that a full-time student should take on a maximum of 15 hours of paid work per week during the semester



### Doing the calculations for your course

Massey University has developed a detailed online calculator which allows for calculation of assessment and other course requirements

<https://cohss-swe.massey.ac.nz/>



### What about Generative AI - how does that impact workload?

That elephant in the room is best explained through the resources on [this moodle site](#).