

Should assessment criteria look like a job specification?

ASSESSMENT SPECIFICATION

Question: **Discuss...**

Due date: **Monday, xx November 2009**

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
Knowledge and understanding	1. Awareness of key events. 2. Awareness of key literature.	1. Evidence of reading beyond the key texts.
Analysis	1. Events placed in context.	1. Comparisons made with other related events.
Argument	1. Appropriate use of quotations and reference in body of essay. 2. Flow of argument logical.	1. Counter argument made and dispelled.
Spelling and grammar	1. Evidence of attention to spelling and correct use of grammar.	1. No spelling mistakes. 2. Flow of argument not disrupted by poor sentence structure or poor construction of paragraphs.
Originality	(Not essential for this assessment).	1. Ability to draw new conclusions from available literature. 2. Ability to find new line of enquiry or pose questions for future work.

Listing the criteria helps students to identify the skills they need or have developed.

Being explicit in what is essential helps teachers to set work of an appropriate level and helps students to identify what is required to achieve competency (pass).

Being explicit in what is desirable helps students to identify valuable scholarly activity which will be rewarded with higher marks.

Overall benefits of making students familiar with the typical style they will encounter when applying for jobs and "training" them to respond with high quality written applications.

Issues with assessment

- Assessment tasks need to be clearly stated to target learning and skills development.
- Marking criteria need to be understood so that assessment is valued by students.
- Feedback needs to be meaningful (including timely) and understood by students.
- Levels and assessment tasks are closely linked.
- A measure of the performance of a university is the employability of its graduates. Making assessment criteria more like a job specification has the potential to increase the employability of graduates and simultaneously address other issues with assessment.

Would you like to trial the use of assessment specifications? Please register your interest with the project officer for the review of assessment on x3270 or eva.roberts@uea.ac.uk