

Policy on Exceeding Word and Length Limits for Summative Assessments in SSL

All summative essays in your school will be subject to a word limit. This limit will be specified at the time that the assignment is set. Bibliographies will not count towards word limits but appendices, footnotes and endnotes may count (please contact your unit director if you are unsure). You are required to state the number of words that you have used either at the beginning or the end of your essay.

If you exceed the word limit, the whole essay will be marked to give an “intellectual” mark but a deduction will be made from this mark according to the extent of the breach. The following table summarises the penalties that will be applied.

Essay exceeds by up to (words)	Penalty deducted from intellectual mark
100	5 marks
200	10 marks
300	15 marks
400	20 marks
More than 400	30 marks

For example, if the word limit is 1500 words and you submit an essay of 1560 words (which is within 100 words excess) your mark will be reduced by 5 marks. Thus, if the essay achieves an intellectual mark of 65, your final mark will be 60.

If your school operates the 21 point marking scale, the mark for the essay will be converted to the 101 point scale first and the penalty will be applied to the converted score. The final mark awarded will not necessarily fit on the 21 point marking scale.

Exceptions

The nature of summative assessments in the Faculty varies between essays and technical/statistical projects containing a large number of tables or mathematical formulae. For this reason, for some (but not all) technical units the length limit may be stated in terms of pages. You will be informed through the unit handbook and/or Blackboard if your unit specifies length limits in this way. Where a page limit is specified, the following requirements are made:

1. All work shall be handed in on A4 paper size
2. A “page” means a side of text or other material
3. The font must not be smaller than 11 point and we recommend Calibri.
4. Top and bottom margins must be at least 2cm and left and right margins must be at least 3cm.
5. Line spacing must be at least 1.5.
6. Footnotes and endnotes and all appendices are counted in the page limits but bibliographies are not.

The following penalties will be applied. A “page” below means either a part or a whole page.

Excess is up to (pages)	Penalty deducted from intellectual mark
1	5 marks
2	12 marks
3	20 marks

More than 3	30 marks
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For example, if the page limit is 20 pages and you submit work of 20.5 pages, this is counted as a 1 page excess. Therefore, if you attain an intellectual mark of 70 you will be deducted 5 marks giving you a final mark of 65 for the assessment.