

## P306 Word Count Policy for Ulster University Validated Programmes

Issue	Date of Issue	Date of Next Review	Responsibility of	Date approved by CAFRE Education Management Team
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	CAFRE Quality Manual Index	CAFRE Website (Tick as appropriate)
Document available	√	√

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### Version History

Version	Description of Changes	Date
2	Update to new document template and revision to penalty boundaries	August 2023

## Contents

<b>Scope .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Procedures.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Penalties.....</b>	<b>5</b>

## Scope

A word limit is the number of words set by the module manager and stated in the assessment brief.

A word count is the actual number of words submitted and stated by the student excluding the list detailed below under additional information.

If a word limit, has been set, there should be a penalty for work which exceeds that limit.

## Procedures

The penalties for exceeding word count or other requirements in relation to the length of a piece of assessed work will be imposed where the following principles have been applied:

- There must be an obvious and transparent relationship between the assessment rubric for a module and the assessment brief.
- If a student has met the learning outcomes of a module the penalty imposed for exceeding the word, or other, limit cannot result in the student failing the module.
- Requirements in relation to the length of a piece of assessed work will be expressed in the unit most appropriate to the learning outcomes of the module: word count, number of pages, duration of recording/video etc.
- In all cases clear instructions in relation to requirements, including font size, spacing, margins, use of tables and appendices and what is included/excluded from calculations will be provided as part of the assessment brief issued to students and care should be taken to ensure these instructions are unambiguous and easily understood.
- A margin of +10% of the size limit will normally apply before a penalty is considered.
- A student will not receive a double penalty on any piece of work. If the marking scheme already has a specific reduction associated with assignment length, a separate additional penalty cannot be applied under this policy.
- **Students will be asked to self-declare word counts and any other specified measurements related to the assessment.**

### ***Additional Information***

The following will not be included in determining word count:

- Content pages
- In line references
- Appendices
- Footnotes
- Abstracts
- Bibliographies
- Reference lists
- Diagrams/graphs/images

### **Penalties**

The following penalties will be applied consistently to the overall assessment mark and will be included in the written feedback to the learner.

- Up to 10% – no penalty
- 11% - 20% – 5% penalty
- 21% - 30% – 10% penalty
- 31% - 40% – 15% penalty
- 41% - 50% – 20% penalty
- 51% or higher - maximum mark of 40%

Penalties must be applied consistently. Penalties represent an absolute figure to be deducted from the mark achieved when the latter is expressed as a percentage, rather than a proportional percentage reduction in the mark.