

Word Count Range and Marking of Over-length Coursework Policy			
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<p><i>Note: All policies must be read in conjunction with all other SOAS policy, procedure and guidance documents. Printed copies of policies may not be the most up to date, therefore please refer to the policy pages on the SOAS external website or intranet for the latest version.</i></p>			

## 1. Scope of the policy

- 1.1. The policy set out in this regulation covers modules assessed wholly or partly by coursework. It covers coursework of all sorts, including essays, extended essays, reports, independent study projects and dissertations.
- 1.2. This policy relates to taught students and regulations must be read in conjunction with the Taught Degree Regulations.

## 2. Word limits

- 2.1. The word limit prescribed for each piece of assessed coursework is a maximum. Assessments are designed to enable students to achieve excellent marks without writing to the limit. There is consequently no specific penalty for work that is under-length. By exception, under-length work is dealt with by the normal provisions of the marking scheme.

## 3. Provision of a word count

- 3.1. Students must provide an accurate word count on their assignment for all coursework submitted for assessment. As such, the recommendation is that Microsoft Word (or similar) is used to determine the word count. Assessors will normally give students the benefit of the doubt and will regard small undeclared over-runs as genuine errors of calculation, but significant inaccuracies in declared word counts will be treated as an offence under the *Academic Misconduct Policy*.

## 4. Definition of word count

- 4.1. Word count is defined as the number of words contained within the main body of the text which include: titles, headings, abstracts, summaries, in-text citations (regardless of the referencing style used), figure and table legends, quotations and footnotes.

- 4.2. Items excluded from the word count are as follows: acknowledgements, reference list, tables of contents, a list of acronyms, a glossary, a list of tables, or figures. Appendices will not normally be marked but they must not include material essential to the assessment.
- 4.3. Written assignments or assessments may be subject to a word count limit. The purpose of a word count is part of the assessment itself – to ensure students can produce a piece of academic writing that conforms to the specifications of the assessment task. This will be specified in a module’s assessment brief.
- 4.4. The word count is regulated and is the responsibility of the module convenor for the module undertaken. Module convenors are required to choose a word count of an assessment in line with the SOAS Assessment Load Policy. Any amendments to assessment elements relating to word counts, after the initial setting, must be agreed by a department’s Learning & Teaching meetings in line with the regular processes for module-level amendments and then noted by the Curriculum Quality Assurance Committee in line with other standard module amendments.
- 4.5. **Word counts**
- 4.6. A student will not exceed the given word count by a total of under or over 10% the given word count figure. Where a student exceeds the published word count for an assessment, the assessment will be subject to a
- 4.7. marks’ penalty detailed below. Feedback will be provided on the assessment up to the limit of the word count.

## 5. Special provisions

- 5.1. Where work is expected to include significant amounts of non-textual content (e.g. musical or mathematical notation or linguistic structure diagrams), specific word count guidance will be provided for each assessment. Where work is expected to include the presentation of foreign language material with significant use of interlinear glosses and idiomatic translations, specific word count guidance will be provided for each assessment.

## 6. Penalties for over-length coursework.

- 6.1. Marks will be deducted for work that exceeds the prescribed word limit. The reduced mark will be entered onto the record of results on the student database. The deductions for over-length work are as follows:

Excess Length	Mark deduction
More than 10% up to and including 20%	10 percentage points
More than 20% up to and including 30%	15 percentage points
More than 30%	The work will be assigned a grade of 0.

## 7. Resubmission of coursework that has been subject to a penalty for being overlength and late

- 7.1. Over-length coursework for which the mark after penalty is the minimum pass mark (40 undergraduate; 50 postgraduate) or more may not be revised and resubmitted.
- 7.2. Over-length coursework for which the mark after penalty is less than the minimum pass mark (39 or less for undergraduate; 49 or less for postgraduate) may not be revised and resubmitted if the module for which it forms a part has been passed.
- 7.3. Normal resit requirements apply to over-length coursework for which the mark after penalty is less than the minimum pass mark (39 or less for undergraduate; 49 or less for postgraduate) and the module of which it forms a part has been failed overall.
- 7.4. Resubmission will be at the next available opportunity as outlined in the Taught Degree Regulations.
- 7.5. Capping of the overall mark for the module at the minimum pass mark will apply as appropriate.