

School of Medicine Word Count Policy for MBChB, BSc, ScotGEM and Postgraduate Taught Programmes

Written coursework assessments have a specified length in terms of word count, typically with a plus or minus (+/-) 10% allowance. Word count limits test ability to write succinctly or develop sufficient depth and scope required of the assignment. Failure to adhere to a required word length will invoke one of the University's approved penalty schemes.

The word count penalty will be applied to all summative pieces of written coursework, receiving a numerical mark.

Individual assignment instructions will specify which penalty scheme will be used, depending on nature of the module and the assignment. For example, some assignments are marked directly to the University's 20-point scale, others as a percentage. Coursework instructions will also provide details of which parts of a written assignment are included in the word count, method for counting words and process for dealing with disputes to actual word length.

Penalty Schemes

Where work is marked directly on the 20-point scale (typically MD4002 dissertations and postgraduate taught programme assignments), the following penalty will apply for either under or over the word count:

- 1 mark for work that is 10% under/over-length, then a further 1 mark per additional 10% under/over (see example penalty table 1)

Table 1

Word count for a 2000 word assignment marked on 20-point scale	1200 to 1399	1400 to 1599	1600 to 1799	1800	2000	2200	2201 to 2400	2401 to 2600	2601 to 2800
Penalty: 1 mark for work that is 10% under/over-length, then a further 1 mark per additional 10% under/over	3	2	1	0	0	0	1	2	3

Where work is marked to some other scale (typically ScotGEM and MBChB Phase 2 portfolio assignments), the following penalty will apply for either under or over the word count:

- 5% of the maximum available mark for work that is 10% under/over-length, then a further 5% of the maximum available mark per additional 10% under/over (see example penalty table 2)

Table 2

Word count for a 2000 word assignment marked out of 100	1200 to 1399	1400 to 1599	1600 to 1799	1800	2000	2200	2201 to 2400	2401 to 2600	2601 to 2800
Penalty: 5% of the maximum available mark for work that is 10% under/over-length, then a further 5% per additional 10% under/over	15%	10%	5%	0	0	0	5%	10%	15%

