



GUIDANCE
CRITERIA
INSTRUCTION

ASSESSMENT HANDBOOK



Introduction

As suggested on the module website (MW) the assessment for this module is divided into two parts reflecting the two sections of the module. The first assessment is an exam where the emphasis is on demonstrating your understanding of the lecture and the reading. The second assessment is a critical essay where the emphasis is on engaging with course material in a deep and critical fashion. The aim of this Assessment Handbook is to do two things. First it is to provide guidance on both assessments. The guidance sections will clarify the structure of the assessment and provide general guidance on how to prepare and address the task. Specific information such as question release dates, exam/submission dates and feedback dates can be found on the Key Information sheet at the bottom of the homepage on the MW. The second section is marking guidance. While the Department has standard marking criteria we use to assess your work, the guidance section clarifies what constitutes a first, second class and third class for each assessment. Please use this guidance as you prepare for your assessment and to judge your own work.

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Assessment 1

Short answer seen-exam

Aims and objectives

Assessment 1 is designed to test your knowledge of Islamic civilisation, history and culture. Its primary focus is on the material presented in lecture and the reading in part 1. By doing the assessment students will develop the appropriate background knowledge needed to have a broad understanding of the history and culture of Islam and to engage with the material we will encounter in part 2.

Format

I will release 8 short answer questions of which you must answer 5. These questions will be live on Blackboard under the Assignment folder approximately two weeks before the exam (see the Key Information Sheet on the module website for the exact date). The maximum word count for the assessment is 1600 words and I ask students to aim for a target word count of 300 words per question.

The exam will be an e-exam, meaning it will take place in a computer cluster on campus and you will complete and submit the exam on-line. The exam will be released on Blackboard as a template which you will download, fill in and then submit via *Turnitin*. Please pay attention to the Key Information sheet for the exact time and room number.

Guidance

The exam questions will be simple and straightforward questions about key specific figures, events and concepts from reading and lecture. Some potential examples are: ‘what is the Jahaliya’ or ‘who is Uthman’? Again, these will be released to you before-hand so you will have time to prepare your answer.

While I say the assessment focuses on understanding this does not mean that I want you to list facts. I am **not looking for** a ‘Wikipedia’ style answer, i.e., an answer that simply lists dates, names and details. The target word count for each answer is 300 words so you need to provide more than a one-line answer.

The aim of the assessment is to make sure you know and understand some of the key people and events of Islamic history as well as some of the central elements of Islamic culture and religion in an ‘idea-based’ way rather than a ‘fact-based’ way. Thus, I am expecting students to reflect upon the *significance* of the people, groups and events being queried in relation to the wider cultural and historical context. Keep in mind that the questions are thoughtfully chosen. Thus, you should presume there is a reason I am asking about Uthman rather than Abu-Bakr and perhaps contemplate why I have made that decision (why would Uthman be particularly relevant to the history of Islam?)

Criteria

As you can see from the marking guidance, what distinguishes a 2.1 from a 2.2 is your ability to discern not simply the ‘what’ and ‘who’ of the question **but the significance** of the figures, concepts and events queried. The issue of significance should not be pulled just from lecture but also from the reading. Indeed, the authors have different ideas about significance and it would behove you to be familiar with their differing perspectives. In sum, I am looking for three things: the ability to (1) answer the question with a succinct response (2) understand the significance of the term and (3) illustrate a familiarity with the reading and the different perspectives of the assigned authors.

For example, here is some guidance given the question ‘what is the Jahaliya?’ I would expect the following:

1. **Do** answer the question
 - a. For example you could say: “the Jahaliya is an Arabic term that refers to the period before the prophecy of Muhammad” and/or “the terms means ‘ignorance’ in Arabic” and/or “the Jahaliya refers to the period of paganism” etc.
2. **Do use** the reading: Do not just summarise lecture notes but use the reading to illustrate a full understanding of the term and its significance. If you examine the marking criteria below, you will see a distinctive emphasis on how you understand and use the reading. I allow you to bring in notes specifically so you can add citations and quotes from the reading.
3. **Do not** ‘fill out’ this answer with details and facts. For example, do not develop an extended discussion of the various pagan gods of Arabia and/or the history of the Kaba and/or pre-Islamic tribal relations. While these things can be mentioned (you will not be marked down by virtue of the fact that you are bringing them up), they should not constitute the heart of your discussion.
4. **Do not** ‘stuff’ answers with everything you have read. You do not have much space so choose your readings selectively. The readings should augment your points – not simply add detail.
5. **Do** discuss the significance of the term
 - a. For example, it was important for Islamic scholars in the 8th century to demarcate certain traditional Arab practices as un-Islamic and to relegate them to the period before Islam. Hence the Jahaliya (as a term) was devised hundreds of years after the death of Muhammad in order to distinguish acceptable from unacceptable forms of Arab tradition (sunnah).
6. **Do** discuss the different interpretations or approaches to the Jahaliya represented by the different authors
 - a. For example, discuss how Berkey approaches the Jahaliya versus the way the topic is addressed by Armstrong.

Further tips

The word counts are provided as guidance only. You will not be marked down for going over them. I believe it is possible to answer each question sufficiently within 250-300 words. If you are going massively over than you may be marked down for padding your answer. If you are well under you may be marked down for lack of detail.

In terms of marking, I will mark *each answer separately* according to the marking criteria. An average of the five marks will then be compiled to provide a final mark.

Finally, I strongly discourage you from using websites (like *Wikipedia*) for preparing your answer. Such material will almost certainly lead you towards a ‘fact based’ answer that will also be in danger of plagiarism. The reading list will be the most profitable resource for answering the question effectively.

Marking Criteria

Assessment 1: Exam

First Class

Superior (80-100)

A superior answer shows a sophisticated understanding and engagement with course material and the reading. While there is excellence across the standard criteria, independent and original insight into the reading distinguishes this paper from a standard first.

Standard Criteria	Distinguishing criteria
Explanations are clear and precise Ideas flow logically A powerful understanding of main ideas, issues and concepts Answer indicative of a wide-range of reading and impressive intellectual engagement with the material Sentence structure, grammar, spelling, and citations are excellent. Writing style is active and precise – minimal use of passive voice.	Answer shows original insight into the reading Nuanced and sophisticated understanding of the material Develops novel understandings of the significance of the term

Excellent (70-79)

An excellent answer is one that answers the question in a sound and effective manner. Thus, the student not only answers the question succinctly, but demonstrates a firm understanding of the significance of the term and the various ideas in the reading. There will be fewer mistakes and confusions than a second class essay and less focus on detail and facts. The standard criteria will be fulfilled to an excellent level, meaning everything will be mostly right. I am forgiving of minor inaccuracies and misunderstandings, as well as some looseness in cogency.

Standard criteria	Distinguishing Criteria
Explanations are clear but not necessarily tight knit Most the ideas flow logically. You understand the question, the key concepts and the central issues Demonstrates a wide range of reading and very good use of the material Sentence structure, grammar, spelling and citations are very good but writing can be imprecise. You mostly use active voice but sentences can be wordy, redundant and/or vague.	Clear evidence that you understand the term and its relation to wider issues, concepts and events Clear evidence that you understand the reading and the main ideas presented by the authors Answers the question effectively and uses the reading convincingly

Second Class

Good (60-69)

The defining characteristic of a good answer is the student's attempt to use the reading in order to show insight into the issue. While the student might not understand the full significance of the person, event or term, the difference perspectives the authors have and/or there may be mistakes and misunderstandings along the way, if the answer makes a competent attempt to use the reading to address significance, it will often receive a 2.1. What separates these answers from those below is their ability to speak about the issue in a manner that is not 'fact based' but 'reading based'. This means they will think about the wider significance of the question and understand the different perspectives put forth in the reading. These answers are written by students who have read the main readings and attempt to incorporate the ideas into their answer. You do not get a 2.1 essay by virtue of simply quoting the reading or otherwise 'flagging' to me that you have read. On the contrary, you must demonstrate a willingness to use the material. Answers that rely on lecture material to consider the significance of the term may receive a low 2.1 if their insights are particularly well observed. Some reading, however, will still need to be in evidence.

Standard criteria	Distinguishing Criteria
Answer is clear but organisation loose and discussion sometimes wanders into detail or irrelevancies Ideas flow logically the majority of the time Points are explained but not always explained well Ideas from reading are mostly understood but may be some confusion Sentence structure, grammar, spelling and citations are good but writing can be vague You mostly use active voice but sentences are sometimes wordy, redundant and/or generally unclear	You understand the question and mostly understand its significance You understand many of the ideas presented in the reading You attempt to use the readings when answering the question. Your understanding of the material is good but your application is not always convincing.

Adequate (50-59)

An adequate answer illustrates a basic understanding of the question, but does not fully understand its significance or use the reading effectively. These answers usually do one of two things. At the high end, they provide some understanding of the term's significance but it is primarily garnered from lecture rather than the reading (even though there may be passing reference to the reading). At the lower end, these answers review lecture material and their understanding of the term's significance is implicit. 2.2 answers are distinguished from 3rd class answers by an adequate grasp of the concept, but they are distinguished from a 2.1 by there being little evidence that they have engaged with the material in a deep fashion. On the contrary, these essays tend to be descriptive and often prone to superfluous detail.

Standard criteria	Distinguishing Criteria
Answer is present but understanding is weak and/or vague There is little overall structure and answer wanders Your logic may fail and/or your ideas do not flow Points are often vague and suggestive A number of confusions, inaccuracies and mistakes in your interpretation and/or understanding of material Problems in sentence structure, grammar, punctuation, citation style, or spelling. Your writing style is often not clear, active, or precise	A broad but not a deep understanding of question and some of the main issues Evidence of some reading but may be simply presented rather than analysed or used. Basic job synthesizing material presented in lectures/reading Answers the question but no or very little analysis or insight from reading

Third Class

Poor (40-49)

A poor answer demonstrates a poor understanding of the question and main issues. They are often riddled with misunderstandings and confusions; they are often repetitive because they have very little to say; and they often suffer from poor grammar and sentence structure. They are similar to 2.2 because they are descriptive, but garner a worse mark because the descriptions are often inaccurate and/or confused. These answers do not fail because they evidence a broad (though basic and not always correct) understanding of the question.

Standard criteria	Distinguishing Criteria
Understanding is difficult to identify. Structure is unclear and discussion is often rambling Ideas often do not flow Answer is a loose collection of poorly explained ideas and statements Reading and lecture material may be confused, out of context or misunderstood Maybe evidence of reading but is often poorly understood and/or inappropriately used. Your writing has serious problems in sentence structure, grammar, and diction.	Poor review of lecture material and/or reading with a number of confusions A poor understanding of question but some understanding of main issues to be addressed May attempt to illustrate understanding, but does so in an incoherent and often confused manner. Content of answer is only tangentially relevant to question No evidence of intellectual engagement with main issues.

Fail

High fail (35-39)

What distinguishes a high fail from a low fail is some evidence that you understand the question and some of the issues to be addressed. The answer is a high fail when it seems to understand what the question asks. Such answers illustrate little understanding of main issues and are riddled with confusions and inaccuracies. They also have no apparent structure and are often a rambling list of disconnected points. Often the line a high from a low fail is very thin, and I find myself searching for evidence of a basic and/or abbreviated understanding of the central issues.

Standard criteria	Distinguishing Criteria
No evidence of understanding of main issues Structure is unclear and discussion is rambling Paper is a loose collection of poorly explained and/or irrelevant statements Maybe evidence of reading but it is misunderstood and/or inappropriately used. Narrative is a list of obvious points, confused concepts and/or misunderstood ideas Your writing has serious problems in sentence structure, grammar, and diction.	Content of essay bears some relevance to question Some understanding of main issues involved Question is understood but in simplistic terms

Low Fails and Non-Attempts

Low fail (15-34)

Answers at this level are indicative of a failed search on my part that the author has some understanding of the question. Such answers are usually 'off-the-cuff' rambles submitted only to prevent the author from getting a 0. The discussion is free-flowing and directionless. There is rarely an attempt to make a substantive point. They fail all the standard criteria since there is no attempt to put forth a coherent response.. For the most part they are defined by the following characteristics

Minimal comprehension of question

Minimal knowledge of main issues

A collection of irrelevant statements

Discussion may be free-flowing and directionless

Points may often be irrelevant

May be major problems with grammar, sentence structure, mechanics and organisation.

Little evidence of understanding of basic issues discussed in module or the reading

Non attempts (0-14)

Non-attempts are papers that are either not submitted or papers that are submitted with minimal text (a virtual non-attempt). Such papers are rare and usually indicative of 'mitigating circumstances', a withdrawal or a planned fail.

Assessment 2

Critical Essay (3000 words)

Aims and objectives

The next phase of assessment is a critical essay. While assessment 1 tested your broad understanding of events, characters and processes in the history of Islamic civilisation, assessments 2 invites you to develop a deeper and critical perspective on the significance of these events. By completing this assessment, you will develop a more profound understanding of a particular issue or debate in Islamic thought and foster your skills in critical argumentation.

Format

The final assessment is a 3000 word final essay. Sometime after the exam you will be given access to a list of potential essay questions of which you are required to answer 1. The key to completing this assessment successfully is developing your own argument. This means you need to recognise how the questions invite you to argue for a particular position or perspective. If you would like to devise your own question on a topic that is more relevant to your interests, you are welcome to do so as long as we discuss it first and come to a clear agreement on your essay topic.

Guidance

As previously suggested, the key to completing the final essay successfully hinges on your ability to put forth and defend a substantive argument. In other words, you must write an essay that does not simply ‘collect and relay’ material but takes a critical stance. This means taking a position, side or perspective on a particular issue, question or theme.

For example, let’s say one of the questions is ‘what is the justification for the veil in Islamic law?’ I would not be in favour of an essay that is simply about the veil or about Islamic law. I would not want you to research the history of the veil, the geographic patterns of veil use, or the varying beliefs that encourage or discourage veiling. Rather, I would want an answer that looks at some of the various justifications for the veil in Islamic law and argues for or against them. The distinction here is not simply one of specificity, but about the kind of answer you provide. While the former invites a generic discussion of the veil, the latter invites the student to make an argument about how the veil has been justified by different schools of Islamic law. The point is that the essay must argue for a particular position or perspective on the topic, and cannot *just* review or synthesize material. While the essay will (no doubt) involve reviewing literature, it must also go beyond that literature to come to your own conclusions, determinations and/or position.

Training

Knowing what a substantive argument is and how to defend it should be familiar to most third-year students. However, for guidance I would look at Alistair Bonnett’s book *How to argue: a student’s guide*, copies of which are in the library. I would also look at my Essay Writing Handbook which is listed on the MW for further guidance. While the former give a broad understanding of what a critical essay should do, my Handbook gives specific recommendations on how to write in an argument driven manner.

Marking guidance

The marking guidance below is different from the exam guidance. As you can see there is far more emphasis on independent thought, originality, and your ability to evidence your points. As in the previous assessment, pay attention to the distinguishing criteria, as these highlight the key things your essay needs to do to be considered for a given mark.

Marking Criteria: Critical Essay

First Class Essays

Superior (80-100)

A superior paper brings creativity and originality to the question or topic. While there is excellence across the standard criteria, depth of analysis, independent insight and far-reaching conclusions distinguishes this paper from a standard first.

Standard Criteria	Distinguishing criteria
Argument and organisation is clear Effective use of empirical evidence Structure of the essay as a whole makes sense given the argument. Paragraphs are clear and precise Transitions from one idea to the next make sense Ideas flow logically Points are clear and well-argued A powerful understanding of main ideas, issues and key concepts Introduction clearly states argument, context for argument, and evidence you will use to support Argument indicative of a wide-range of reading and an intellectual engagement Support your points with convincing examples Quotes are well chosen and used correctly, appropriately and effectively Sentence structure, grammar, spelling, and citations are excellent. Writing style is active and precise – minimal use of passive voice.	Narrative and arguments show independent thought and creative use of the material Conclusions are convincing, insightful and even original Main issues understood and clearly presented Demonstrates an insight into the issue that goes well beyond course material.

Excellent (70-79)

An excellent paper is one that effectively answers the question. Thus, the author not only puts forth an argument, but demonstrates that argument with clarity and precision. There will be fewer mistakes and confusions than a second class essay and fewer tangents and redundancies. The standard criteria will be fulfilled to an excellent level, meaning everything will be mostly right. I am forgiving of minor inaccuracies and misunderstandings, as well as some looseness in structure and cogency.

Standard criteria	Distinguishing Criteria
Argument is clear but organisation is not necessarily tight knit Evidence supports your thesis but links may not always be precise Structure of essay makes sense given argument. Paragraphs good and present coherent points Transitions from one idea to the next make sense Ideas flow logically most the time. Points are clear most the time You understand the question, the key concepts and the central issues You support your points with good examples Introduction clearly states argument but context and/or evidence can be vague. Demonstrates a wide range of reading and very good use of the material Quotes are well chosen and mostly used appropriately and/or effectively Sentence structure, grammar, spelling and citations are very good but writing can be imprecise. You mostly use active voice but sentences can be wordy, redundant and/or vague.	Clear evidence of reading and good synthesis of material Answers the question effectively and convincingly Convincing conclusion but not necessarily original or ambitious.

Upper Second Class Essays

A good paper (60-69)

The defining characteristic of a good paper is the author's attempt to use the course material in order to construct his/her own argument. While the argument might not be made effectively, and/or there may be mistakes and misunderstandings along the way, if the essay can put forward a thesis and attempts to evidence that thesis in a convincing fashion (using a coherent structure and various forms of supporting evidence) it will receive a 2.1. Sometimes, the argument will be implicit and/or not clearly specified but I can discern an underlying structure to the paper. A 2.1 paper will also have to illustrate that an understanding of the reading and will attempt to use it to put the argument forward. Overall what separates these essays from those below it is that they do not relay or describe course material but attempt to *use* it. These essays are written by students who have read the material, digested it and thought about how it relates to the question. In this sense, *you do not get a 2.1 essay by virtue of understanding the material or by virtue of having read the assigned reading*. The threshold between a 2.1 essay and a 2.2 rests on the student's capacity to illustrate that they can use the ideas presented in class and in the reading to support a clear thesis.

Standard criteria	Distinguishing Criteria
<p>Argument is clear but organisation loose and discussion sometimes wanders</p> <p>Evidence is mostly good and presented in a manner that endeavours to support your thesis</p> <p>Overall structure of essay can be discerned but it is not fully explained and/or rationale may be weak</p> <p>Paragraphs mostly good and present coherent points but occasionally wander into tangents/irrelevancies.</p> <p>Transitions from one idea to the next usually make sense</p> <p>Ideas flow logically most the time</p> <p>Points are explained but not always explained well and can sometimes be wrong</p> <p>Ideas are mostly understood but may be confusions, inaccuracies and/or mistakes</p> <p>Good examples but not always well defined, properly illustrated or used convincingly</p> <p>Introduction clearly states argument but the details are unclear and context/evidence not well defined</p> <p>Demonstrates a good range of reading</p> <p>Quotes make sense but are not always used appropriately and effectively</p> <p>Sentence structure, grammar, spelling and citations are good but writing can be vague</p> <p>You mostly use active voice but sentences are sometimes wordy, redundant and/or generally unclear</p>	<p>Essay suggests a thesis, but can be implicit or imprecise</p> <p>You understand the question and identify most the main issues</p> <p>You explain your points and logic most the time</p> <p>Clear evidence of reading and good synthesis of material, but may be limited intellectual engagement or insight.</p> <p>Structure may not be clear but there is an underlying coherence</p> <p>Clear conclusion but not necessarily convincing</p>

Lower Second Class Essays

An adequate paper (50-59)

An adequate paper illustrates a basic understanding of the question and course material, but does not use the material to construct an argument and/or answer the question. These essays usually do one of two things. At the high end, they attempt to make an argument, but the execution is poor usually due to the author's inability to effectively organise their thoughts and ideas on the page. So even though a thesis is implied or suggested, I cannot find enough logic or coherence in the argument to legitimate a 2.1. In this sense, a high 2.2 might meet the 'distinguishing criteria' of a 2.1 (it attempts to make an argument) but the standard criteria of a 2.2 (problems with grammar, vagueness, structure and organisation). The second thing essays in this category often do is provide a competent (or less than competent at the lower end) review of lecture material and/or the reading. In these essays there is often evidence of reading and an understanding of the subject matter, but the material is not used effectively, meaning it does not make (or attempt to make) an argument. These essays might 'suggest' an argument but do not describe or delineate that argument in a coherent fashion. They are distinguished from 3rd class essays by an adequate grasp of the material presented in lecture and/or the reading, but they are distinguished from a 2.1 by there being little evidence that they have engaged with that material in a deep or meaningful fashion. On the contrary, these essays tend to be descriptive reviews of themes and discussions taken from lecture and the reading.

Please note: if your essay reviews lecture material, even if it does so very well, it will most likely get a 2.2. If however, you attempt to make an argument, even if there are some mistakes, you most likely get a 2.1.

Standard criteria	Distinguishing Criteria
<p>Argument may be suggested but the thesis may be weak, unclear and/or vague</p> <p>Evidence may be stated or suggested rather than demonstrated</p> <p>There is little in the way of overall structure and paper wanders</p> <p>Paragraphs are not well-organized or coherent</p> <p>Transitions from one idea to the next not always logical</p> <p>Your logic may fail or your argument may be unclear.</p> <p>Points are often vague and suggestive</p> <p>A number of confusions, inaccuracies and mistakes in interpretation and understanding of material</p> <p>You provide examples but not clear what points examples support or what argument they serve.</p> <p>Introduction highlights main ideas rather than describes an argument and/or structure</p> <p>Evidence of reading but may be simply presented rather than analysed or used.</p> <p>Quotes are not well-chosen, disconnected and/or used inappropriately</p> <p>Repeated problems in sentence structure, grammar, punctuation, citation style, or spelling.</p> <p>Your writing style is often not clear, active, or precise</p>	<p>A broad but not a deep understanding of main issues</p> <p>Does not develop independent insights or conclusions.</p> <p>You do not explain your points or you explain them in an abbreviated manner</p> <p>No independent engagement with material</p> <p>Basic job synthesizing material presented in lectures/reading</p> <p>Thin and/or vague review of lecture material and/or reading</p> <p>Essay does not conclude but reiterates a bland and vague discussion</p>

Third Class Essays

A poor paper (40-49)

A poor paper demonstrates a poor understanding of the main issues. These essays do not attempt to put forth an argument, usually because they do not seem to understand the question or the main issues. They are often riddled with misunderstandings and confusions; they are often repetitive because they have very little to say; and they often suffer from poor grammar and sentence structure. They are similar to 2.2 papers in that they are descriptive, but deserve a worse mark because their descriptions tend to be inaccurate and/or confused. These papers do not fail because they evidence a broad (though basic and not always correct) understanding of issues.

Standard criteria	Distinguishing Criteria
<p>Argument is difficult to identify. No identifiable thesis or an incompetent thesis.</p> <p>Fails to support statements and/or the evidence you do provide is poorly understood</p> <p>Structure is unclear, not justified and discussion is often rambling</p> <p>Paragraphs show little structure or coherence.</p> <p>Transitions are confusing and unclear.</p> <p>Ideas often do not flow</p> <p>Paper is a loose collection of poorly explained ideas and statements</p> <p>Points are poorly explained and/or explanation is weak or non-existent</p> <p>Reading and lecture material may be confused, out of context or misunderstood</p> <p>Maybe evidence of reading but is often poorly understood and/or inappropriately used.</p> <p>Citations are often flawed or missing</p> <p>Quotes are not well-chosen, often disconnected and/or used inappropriately</p> <p>Your writing has serious problems in sentence structure, grammar, and diction.</p>	<p>Poor review of lecture material and/or reading with a number of confusions</p> <p>A poor understanding of question but some understanding of main issues to be addressed</p> <p>May attempt to put across ideas, but does so in an incoherent and often confused manner.</p> <p>Content of essay is only tangentially relevant to question</p> <p>No evidence of intellectual engagement with main issues.</p>

Failed Papers

High fail (35-39)

What distinguishes a high from a low fail is some evidence that you understand the question and some of the issues to be addressed. The paper is a fail because it does not address the issues it identifies in a substantive fashion, but it does recognise what those issues are. Such essays illustrate little understanding of main issues and are riddled with confusions and inaccuracies. They also have no apparent structure and are often a rambling list of disconnected points. Often the line that divides a 35 from a 30 is very thin, and I find myself searching such essays for evidence of a basic and/or abbreviated understanding of the central issues.

Standard criteria	Distinguishing Criteria
<p>No attempt to put forth a thesis. You fail to support statements and/or explanations are weak or nonsensical Structure is unclear and discussion is rambling Paragraphs show little structure. Transitions are unclear and/or non-existent Paper is a loose collection of poorly explained statements Maybe evidence of reading but it is poorly understood and/or inappropriately used. Narrative is a list of obvious points, confused concepts and misunderstood ideas Essay attempts to put forth points, but does not do so effectively or convincingly Quotes are not well-chosen, often disconnected and/or used inappropriately Citations are flawed or missing Your writing has serious problems in sentence structure, grammar, and diction.</p>	<p>Content of essay bears some relevance to question Some understanding of main issues involved Question is understood but in simplistic terms</p>

Low fail (15-34)

Essays at this level are indicative of a failed search on my part that the author has some understanding of the question and/or the main issues involved. These essays are usually 'off-the-cuff' rambles submitted only to prevent the author from getting a 0. The discussion is free-flowing and directionless. There is rarely an attempt to make a substantive point. These essays fail all the standard criteria since there is no attempt to put forth a thesis, no structure to speak of, no evidence presented and no real evidence (much less use) of reading. For the most part they are defined by the following characteristics

No comprehension of question or issues involved.

A collection of irrelevant statements

Discussion may be free-flowing and directionless

Points may often be irrelevant

May be major problems with basic grammar, sentence structure, mechanics and organisation.

Little evidence of understanding of basic issues discussed in module or the reading

Non attempts (0-14)

Non-attempts are papers that are either not submitted or papers that are submitted with minimal text (a virtual non-attempt). Such papers are rare and usually indicative of 'mitigating circumstances', a withdrawal or a planned fail.

