# 2018 Women’s Studies Subject Assessment Advice

## Overview

Subject assessment advice, based on the previous year’s assessment cycle, gives an overview of how students performed in their school and external assessments in relation to the learning requirements, assessment design criteria, and performance standards set out in the relevant subject outline. They provide information and advice regarding the assessment types, the application of the performance standards in school and external assessments, and the quality of student performance.

Teachers should refer to the subject outline for specifications on content and learning requirements, and to the subject operational information for operational matters and key dates.

# School Assessment

## Assessment Type 1: Text Analysis

Students undertook one or two text analysis assessments, in which they analysed, for gender bias, the representation of gender in a text or texts, including cultural texts. Texts that were commonly analysed included: films, lyrics, music videos, video games, paintings, and a series of advertisements.

For this assessment type, students provided evidence of their learning primarily in relation to the following assessment design criteria:

* knowledge and understanding
* gender analysis
* communication.

The more successful responses commonly:

* integrated the language of gender analysis into perceptive analyses of gender in particular social locations. The concept of construction was clearly articulated
* emphasised both the diversity of women’s experiences and the similarity of experiences of women under different forms of patriarchal power.
* explored the concept of gender power, rather than described it
* looked at texts the students could easily relate to
* the task was structured to allow for gender analysis

The less successful responses commonly:

* were descriptive and narrative in approach; gender was described, rather than explored
* omitted the use of the language of gender or if present, not used perceptively
* gender construction hinted at, rather than explored in-depth

## Assessment Type 2: Essay

Students undertook one gender analysis assessment in the form of a persuasive written essay of a maximum of 1200 words.

For this assessment type, students provided evidence of their learning primarily in relation to the following assessment design criteria:

* gender analysis
* investigation and evaluation
* communication.

The more successful responses commonly:

* were topics which led to a persuasive response
* used a feminist framework for the exploration of the differences and commonalities between women
* demonstrated high levels of skill in the applied use of the language of gender
* were able to reference sources of information and ideas development
* did not assess too many specific features
* allowed the students to construct their own focus and essay question.

The less successful responses commonly:

* were a narrative rather than a persuasive essay. Students were often more successful when they were able to focus on a clear intent
* were scaffolded heavily and the question was the same for all students in the class
* identified strategies for effecting change, but did not engage with the evaluation of such strategies
* acknowledgment of sources was limited

## Assessment Type 3: Folio

Students undertook three gender analysis assessments. These assessments took a variety of forms of presentation and popular assessments included: a speech, an analytical report, a newspaper article and the analysis of art and advertisements.

For this assessment type, students provided evidence of their learning primarily in relation to the following assessment design criteria:

* gender analysis
* investigation and evaluation
* communication.

The more successful responses commonly:

* demonstrated in-depth investigation and evaluation of the ways in which various socials structures, cultural practices and ways of thinking disempowered women
* demonstrated knowledge of feminist texts and/or feminists eg Laura Mulvey – Visual pleasure and narrative cinema and male gaze, bell hooks – oppositional gaze theory, Michael Foucault –Theory of governmentality - docile bodies, minds and souls
* illustrated perceptive and analytical insights in a creative form
* included visual materials or analysis of visuals/films/painting/advertisements
* included varied task types and offered students a broad way of demonstrating the performance criteria for each element of the folio
* addressed all specific features of the Assessment Design Criteria
* analysed the concepts of identity in terms of class, sexuality, race, culture and religion

The less successful responses commonly:

* identified strategies for effecting change, but did not evaluate them
* described the diversity of experiences of women, but did not analyse in relation to the construction of gender
* did not utilise the full word count to demonstrate their depth and breadth of understanding in relation to the construction of gender and gender relations
* made minimal references to gender and struggled with the use of gender-specific language.

# External Assessment

**Assessment Type 4: Issues Analysis**

Students undertook and negotiated a detailed, in-depth, independent investigation of a gender issue that was derived from one of the issues in Key Issues in Women’s Studies. The students produced an analytical and evaluative piece of writing of a maximum of 2000 words.

For this assessment type, students provided evidence of their learning primarily in relation to the assessment design criteria:

* knowledge and understanding — KU1
* gender analysis — GA1 and GA2
* investigation and evaluation — IE1
* communication — C1, C2, and C3.

The more successful responses commonly:

* demonstrated an understanding of gender in a personal sense and as an attribute that shapes a sense of identity, and in a political sense, as a pervasive social construction that can facilitate or hinder social relationships and access to institutions
* investigated, analysed and deconstructed a number of particular examples in relation to their question
* demonstrated sophisticated, accurate and consistent use of the language of gender analysis that enhanced their point of view, in a persuasive style
* demonstrated in-depth investigation and acknowledged all sources, and used consistent referencing
* as per previous years, viewed the issue from a range of female perspectives.

The less successful responses commonly:

* used generalisations without specific illustrations
* read as a Health or Society and Culture essay, lacked a gender analysis focus
* lacked depth and diversity of investigation
* limited use of feminist sources and range of perspectives
* needed a specific question instead of a statement e.g. *Does the way the western media report violence against women perpetuate this violence by victim blaming or provide a way of changing attitudes to violence against women?*
* did not use the full word-limit to demonstrate in-depth investigation and diversity of women’s experiences
* as in all assessment types, students narrated and described, rather than analysed gender related to the chosen issue
* described the disempowerment of women rather than a strong analysis of gender socialisation that is implicit in such disempowerment.