2020 Women’s Studies Subject Assessment Advice

Overview

Subject assessment advice, based on the 2020 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, advertisements and fairy tales.

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, particularly social locations and contexts. 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.
* analysed specific parts of the texts and the effect/view of women presented.

The less successful responses commonly:

* the text/s were simply recounted with a descriptive and narrative approach; gender was described, rather than explored and omitted the use of the language of gender or if present, not used perceptively
* did not explore the diversity of women’s experience; and in particular did not discuss the different factors affecting individual women e.g. colour, social class
* used limited evidence from the texts to demonstrate their analysis.

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, the question is critical in directing students to a persuasive form e.g. had a question/statement that could be clearly argued, a position taken
* were able to reference sources of information and ideas
* used a wide range of sources/ evidence to support their position
* provided evidence of conceptual understanding of the issue being explored.

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
* did not use evidence to support their analysis
* demonstrated limited acknowledgment of sources.

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 by a feminist/s, interviews, 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:

* illustrated perceptive and analytical insights in a creative form. More students used poetry, pod casts and videos to present their responses
* included varied task types and three key issue areas, which offered students a broad way of demonstrating the performance criteria for each element of the folio
* analysed the concepts of identity in terms of class, sexuality, race, culture and religion
* demonstrated the ability to address questions/issues comprehensively, to focus on outcomes required and refer to tangible evidence, practical solutions or to hypothesise effectively.

The less successful responses commonly:

* described the diversity of experiences of women, but did not analyse in relation to the construction of gender
* focused on similar issues/topics across the three tasks
* limited use of the subject terminology/language of gender analysis.

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 and how it impacted a range of women and disempowered them socially, economically and politically. Presented a strong analysis of gender socialisation that is implicit in such disempowerment.
* 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.

The less successful responses commonly:

* read as a Health or Society and Culture essay, and lacked a gender analysis focus. This has been consistent across the years.
* used generalisations without specific illustrations and lacked depth and diversity of investigation
* focused on how the issue can be improved/strategies of empowerment in great detail but this is not a performance standard addressed in the Issues Analysis
* as in all assessment types, students narrated and described, rather than analysed gender related to the chosen issue.

Other advice

Some students exceeded the word count. Teachers are reminded that word limits are set to address consistency of task, ability to write succinctly, and fairness.

Overall, the standard or work was at a high level.