

# Types of summative assessment tasks

**Helping to create an inclusive learning environment at Oxford where all students feel valued and that they belong.**

Inclusive assessments focus on the ways in which assessment design can proactively minimise the likelihood of students being excluded, overlooked and/or disadvantaged through the ways in which they are assessed across their studies.

To find out more, read the 'Guide to designing inclusive assessments' at <https://ctl.ox.ac.uk/included-designing-inclusive-assessments>.

The following table lists types of different assessment tasks in a range of formats (written, oral, practical) that can be used to summatively assess students learning.

For each assessment task in the list, also consider the conditions in which it is taking place and the timing of the assessment.

Assessment task	Brief description	Format(s)
<b>Abstract</b>	Students are required to write an abstract of a journal article, research paper, documentary or other piece of work within a brief, specified word limit (eg 200–500 words).	Written
<b>Annotated bibliographies</b>	Students produce a list of resources on specified or agreed topics to a particular referencing convention. They annotate each of these with a commentary, which could include an evaluation of what they have read.	Written
<b>Business plan/design proposal</b>	Students create documents or presentations that aim to persuade others of the feasibility and profitability of a new product or service, and how this will be achieved.	Written
<b>Case studies</b>	Students find, select and argue for solutions to a 'real-world' or simulated problem/ challenge, and either write up, or orally, present their findings.	Written/oral

Assessment task	Brief description	Format(s)
<b>Commentaries</b>	Students are presented with material (eg a research paper, a seen/unseen extract from a text, a policy briefing, primary source/image, etc) which they then 'comment' on, usually drawing on their knowledge and understanding from the material provided, rather than conducting further research.	Written
<b>Critical analysis</b>	Students critically analyse a published source, e.g. a research paper. Some of the paper may be redacted and students might be required to answer questions on the methods used and conclusions drawn.	Written/oral
<b>Dissertations/thesis /research paper</b>	Students produce extended pieces of written work based on supervised independent research or investigation. The title and focus of the research may be developed by the student. The dissertation may be required to follow the format and conventions of a published paper or article in the discipline.	Written
<b>Essay</b>	Students write an essay on a specified topic/argument, within given parameters (eg word count, use of different sources etc).	Written
<b>Translations</b>	Students select an extended piece of untranslated work to translate from one language to another.	Written/oral
<b>Fieldwork/site/ museum visits</b>	Students' learning is assessed through fieldwork, a site or museum visit, or an industrial visit. The assessment task may be undertaken by students in a range of formats (eg practical, written and/or orally).	Practical/written/oral
<b>Multiple choice questions (MCQs)/extended matching questions (EMQs)</b>	Students are required to select the correct answer from a list of possible answers to a question. EMQs assess students' knowledge in more applied, in-depth ways.	Written
<b>Mini projects/ structured projects</b>	Students conduct small-scale research to address open-ended questions/extend a known result/address a real or simulated problem and present their findings in written and/or oral formats.	Written/oral
<b>Presentations</b>	Students prepare a spoken presentation on a topic, usually delivered in-person, but they could be pre-recorded by the student. Students might	Oral

Assessment task	Brief description	Format(s)
	also draw on other work in the presentation (eg a poster, report, etc) or respond to a prompt (eg case study or problem). Presentations are often followed by questions from the audience, which may include peers and members of the department/faculty.	
<b>Performance/exhibition/display</b>	Students prepare a performance, exhibition or display that often brings together a range of skills. In many subjects, a performance is the only way to assess key learning outcomes.	Practical
<b>Portfolios</b>	Students curate a collection of shorter pieces of their work to demonstrate their learning.	Written/oral
<b>Poster</b>	Students create screen-based, paper-based, or virtual objects which represent their ideas and / or research findings from individual or group projects. They often incorporate images, figures and graphs and so illustrate what is known. They can be created individually or collaboratively as a group. They can stand alone as an assessed artefact or be accompanied by a Q&A session (a form of visual communication which requires students to concisely summarise and prioritise information and/or ideas).	Written/oral
<b>Practical/fieldwork reports</b>	Students communicate the outcomes of a fieldwork visit, an experiment or a project they have conducted. This may be done in written and/or oral format.	Written/oral
<b>Practical tests/simulations</b>	Students undertake a series of tasks to demonstrate a range of practical skills and competencies in authentic contexts; this might involve students demonstrating their learning through simulated tasks.	Practical
<b>Problem sets/data handling</b>	Students are asked to solve a problem and/or analyse and interpret data and draw conclusions. Note that different types/styles of problem sets can assess a wide range of understanding and skills.	Practical/written
<b>Viva voce and interviews</b>	Students' understanding of submitted work and its wider implications are assessed orally.	Oral