**Contemporary Issues (ICM6100)– Guide to assessments 2020/2021**

The assessment for this module will comprise of two written assessments and an oral presentation:

1. A 1500-2000 word blog post (40%) – due in week 5
2. A 1500-2000 word ‘Fact Check’ assignment (40%) on a contemporary issue – due in week 9
3. Oral presentation (20%) – will be held in week 11

**Submission dates:**

Blog Post – Wed 21st Oct, 23.59pm

Fact check – Wed 18th Nov, 23.59pm

Oral presentation – Week 11, Thursday 3rd December 12.40-15.40

**Assessment one: 1500-2000 word written assignment (blog post - 40% weighting)**

Due in week 5

*Please write and submit your blogpost via* ***QMPlus Hub***

This assessment is delivered in the form of a blog post. Most of you will have never written a blog post before, but don’t worry! It is easy to do and will be assessed in the normal way against the same criteria as a normal written assessment would be assessed. See assessment criteria on QMPlus for these criteria. Also see the end of these guidance notes for a short interpretation of the marking criteria.

**Instructions for the assessment**

Assessment: *Please write a 1500-2000 word blog post responding to a topical news item that has arisen in the media on a contemporary health issue* of your choosing.

Blog posts are usually written as a response to a topical event or piece of writing or verbal comment made in the media. To help you choose your topic, refer back to the activity we did in week one where we reviewed the newspapers, and where you identified health related articles. You could repeat that activity yourself and focus on one article/topic. You could then track down the original research paper or report that has informed or inspired the news item, and also search for other relevant evidence to inform your blog post.

**Structure**

A typical blog post has a standard structure or ‘anatomy’ (see below):

There is usually a catchy title or headline to get the reader’s interest, and an accompanying image of some kind (which should be referenced). As with your standard written assessment, there is then an introduction and a short summary of the ‘problem’ also known as the ‘lead in’. Then you get to the main points you want to make. This is the equivalent of the argument section of a standard written assessment. You finish your blog post with a short summary statement. Most blogs have software that automatically allows for comments, so a sentence at the end of the post encouraging your readers to reply is pretty typical.

**Referencing**

In blogposts, the usual way that this is done is via hyperlinks. You will see the sign for inserting a hyperlink on the QMPlus hub page (see figure below):



It is good practice to make your hyperlinks as accessible as possible for visually and orally impaired readers. When embedding a link in a post, it's more useful for orally impaired readers to describe the link, rather than just telling the reader to "click here." For example, it's better to write out, "To learn more about global health, check out [Andrew’s great blog](http://www.andrewharmer.org/)" instead of "To learn more about global health, click [here](http://www.andrewharmer.org/).” This is because software is used that reads out hyperlinks - hearing ‘click here’ won’t tell the listener very much about the link! Whenever possible, underline your links or make sure that there is a color contrast between hyperlinked text and regular text. That way, colorblind users will able to find a link immediately without having to hover over it with their cursors.

**Style**

A blogpost is very much a personal statement and, as such, can be informal - even irreverent! It can also be highly technical or specialized. It is down to your own personal writing style. This does NOT mean that you can produce lazy, unimaginative prose, or illogical groundless arguments. Indeed, you will score a low mark in the ‘critical thinking’ component of the marking criteria if you do so.



**Marking criteria**

The blogpost will be marked against the four standard criteria used to mark essays (see below). However, these require a slight re-interpretation for them to relate to a blogpost:

1. **Accuracy:** Relevance of essay to question/title; all references must link to a live url (hyperlink); quality of writing, including correct spelling and grammar.

*For the blogpost you are* ***not*** *required to reference using Harvard or Vancouver, and you are* ***not*** *required to provide a bibliography. Instead, you will be assessed on the accuracy of your hyperlinking - so make sure they are all ‘live’ links! The catchiness of your blog post title will* ***not*** *be assessed, but you should definitely try to be imaginative! Images are not necessary, but you are encouraged to use them where possible.*

1. **Structure and organisation**: flow, coherence and fluency of essay; appropriate use of frameworks to organise essay.

*Please see the figure above that describes the typical structure of a blogpost.*

1. **Content**: Knowledge of subject matter and relevant literature, including facts and details and relevant arguments, concepts and theory

*This criterion applies equally to your blogpost as it would any other written assessment.*

1. **Critical Thinking:** Use ofrelevant theory**,** analysis, debate, comparison, argument and strength / cohesion of conclusions

*This will be difficult to demonstrate in a 1500-2000 word assessment, but there* ***should*** *be evidence in your post of critical engagement with evidence, sources, and argument. Note the importance of a sound conclusion that follows from what you have written in your post.*

**BSc essay marking criteria with additional blogpost-specific rubric in red.**

**QMUL Student Number:**

**Module Title:**

**Module paper title:**

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| **Marking rubric** | **Comments** |
| **Accuracy**   * Quality of writing in terms of spelling, grammar, punctuation; language * Accurate hyperlinks * All images referenced appropriately |  |
| **Structure and Organisation**  Coherence, flow and fluency of essay; with appropriate use of headings and sub-headings, as well as descriptive and conceptual frameworks for organising the content of the blogpost. |  |
| **Content**  Knowledge of subject matter and relevant literature, including facts and details as well as relevant and current debates, arguments, policies and theory. |  |
| **Critical Thinking**  Application of analysis and independent thinking; demonstration of a clear and coherent argument and conclusions that draw on data, evidence and theory; and the production of credible and insightful recommendations |  |
| **Marking breakdown**  Accuracy will account for approximately 15% of the mark, Structure and Organisation 25%, Content 30%, and Critical Thinking 30%. | |

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| **Marking penalties** | **Guidance** | **Penalty** |
| **Relevance of essay to question/title** | Blogposts must be relevant to the chosen topic. If you write an excellent blogpost that was off-topic, you will be penalised. | A blogpost that is *completely* irrelevant to the chosen topic will be scored a zero.  A blogpost that is partially irrelevant or incomplete will have between 5 and 20 marks deducted depending on how off topic it is. |
| **Plagiarism** | Cases of plagiarism will be dealt with according to QMUL Regulations for Assessment Offences. | The penalties can range from a formal reprimand to suspension or expulsion. |
| **Late submission** |  | Five marks will be deducted for each 24 hour period or part thereof after the submission date and time, including weekends and bank holidays.  An assignment submitted more than 120 hours late will be awarded a mark of zero. |
| **Word count** | Word count will apply to:   * Tables that are made up of text * Headings and sub-headings   Word count will not apply to:   * References * Numerical data * Labels of graphs and figures | * 5% above word limit = 5 marks deducted * 5-10% above word limit = 10 marks deducted * 10-15% above word limit = 15 marks deducted * > 15%> above word limit = automatic fail. |
| **Non-submission** |  |  |

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| **Agreed Final Internal Mark /100** |
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**General Comments for student feedback:**

1st Marker Signed:

**Assessment two: A 1500-2000 word ‘Fact Check’ assignment (40%) on a contemporary health issue**

Due in week 9

This assessment is delivered in the form of a ‘fact check’. Please could you choose one of the following news stories:

* <https://www.theguardian.com/science/2020/feb/17/long-term-offenders-have-different-brain-structure-study-says>
* <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-44575139>
* <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-7991315/Children-sit-hours-day-likely-depression-18.html>
* <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/9772515/scientists-reveal-cannabis-could-cure-pancreatic-cancer/>

If you come across your own story that you'd really like to fact check, that's also ok.

To help you structure your fact check, we will be using a standard structure used by the NHS’ fact checking service ‘[Behind the Headlines’](https://www.nhs.uk/news/). When writing your fact check, please follow these steps:

1. What is being fact checked? Provide a short description of the health issue that you are fact checking.
2. The research underlying the story:
   1. Where did the story come from?
   2. What kind of research was this?
   3. What did the research involve?
   4. What were the basic results?
   5. How did the researchers interpret the results?
3. Accuracy: Does the story identified in step 1 accurately describe the research on which the story was based?
4. Interpretation: interpret the results of your fact check based on your learning from the module (e.g. how is the study framed; is there a political bias; has the story been sensationalized for its audience?)
5. Conclusion: was the story/topic represented accurately, mostly accuarately, inaccurately?

The marking criteria for your fact check will be the standard criteria for all written assessments: Accuracy; Structure and Organisation; Content; and Critical Thinking. Below is guidance on how your fact checking assignment relates to the standard criteria?

Accuracy (15% weighting): You will be required to reference your fact check as if it were an essay, and you will also be marked on the clarity of your writing and grammar.

Structure and Organisation (25% weighting): We have provided you with a recommended structure (steps 1-5 above) but it is up to you to produce a fact check that is clearly structured accurately, and which flows logically, step by step.

Content (30% weighting): The criteria are the same as for any written essay, but you should ensure that you address each of the steps 1-5 above.

Critical thinking (30% weighting): The criteria are the same as for any written essay.

**BSc essay marking criteria with additional fact check-specific rubric in red.**

**QMUL Student Number:**

**Module Title:**

**Module paper title:**

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| **Marking rubric** | **Comments** |
| **Accuracy**   * Correct and consistent use of Harvard or Vancouver referencing system * Quality of writing in terms of spelling, grammar, punctuation; language |  |
| **Structure and Organisation**  Coherence, flow and fluency of essay; with appropriate use of headings and sub-headings, as well as descriptive and conceptual frameworks for organising the content of the factcheck. |  |
| **Content**  Knowledge of subject matter and relevant literature, including facts and details as well as relevant and current debates, arguments, policies and theory. |  |
| **Critical Thinking**  Application of analysis and independent thinking; demonstration of a clear and coherent argument and conclusions that draw on data, evidence and theory; and the production of credible and insightful recommendations |  |
| **Marking breakdown**  Accuracy will account for approximately 15% of the mark, Structure and Organisation 25%, Content 30%, and Critical Thinking 30%. | |

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| **Marking penalties** | **Guidance** | **Penalty** |
| **Relevance of essay to question/title** | Factcheck must be relevant to the chosen news story. If you write an excellent factcheck that was off-topic, you will be penalised. | A factcheck that is *completely* irrelevant to the chosen news story will be scored a zero.  A factcheck that is partially irrelevant or incomplete will have between 5 and 20 marks deducted depending on how off topic it is. |
| **Plagiarism** | Cases of plagiarism will be dealt with according to QMUL Regulations for Assessment Offences. | The penalties can range from a formal reprimand to suspension or expulsion. |
| **Late submission** |  | Five marks will be deducted for each 24 hour period or part thereof after the submission date and time, including weekends and bank holidays.  An assignment submitted more than 120 hours late will be awarded a mark of zero. |
| **Word count** | Word count will apply to:   * Tables that are made up of text * Headings and sub-headings   Word count will not apply to:   * References * Numerical data * Labels of graphs and figures | * 5% above word limit = 5 marks deducted * 5-10% above word limit = 10 marks deducted * 10-15% above word limit = 15 marks deducted * > 15%> above word limit = automatic fail. |
| **Non-submission** |  |  |

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| **Agreed Final Internal Mark /100** |
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**General Comments for student feedback:**

**Assessment three: Oral presentation**

**Assessment three: Oral Presentation**

When: Thursday 3rd December from 12.40 (please see your group times below)

Instructions for the presentation:

* Each group should choose a contemporary global health issue;
* In the presentation the group should explain why it is a wicked problem;
* The group should offer a critique of the current UK government’s response to the contemporary health issue (you can choose another government if you wish);
* Based on that critique, the group should present recommendations for reform of (or alternatives to) that response.

Each group will have 10 minutes to present. Powerpoint slides must be sent to Dami ([d.oyewole-omodara@qmul.ac.uk](mailto:d.oyewole-omodara@qmul.ac.uk)) no later than **the day** **before** the presentation (i.e. Wednesday 2nd December).

All students will be assessed against the same criteria (see marksheet below). The slides you send us will be the basis for our assessment of *content* and *analysis* criteria, but your oral contribution will also inform your mark. Obviously, your oral contribution to the presentation will be the primary criterion for the *presentation skills* criterion, so it is important that each of you have an opportunity to speak during the 10 minute presentation.

In the event of internet disruption, we will cancel the presention and reschedule. All presentations will be recorded and made accessible afterwards.

**Groups and times**

You only need to attend for the time stated below.

12.40 - 13.40: Group 1 (Sarah, Kinza, Aysenur, Salma, Sibella); Group 2 (Larissa, Mollie, Lizzy, Emma, Ruby); Group 3 (Yarra, Patrick, Nella, Anais).

13.40-14.40: Group 4 (Neha, Moriom, Amrit); Group 5 (Mariam, Akifah, Sumayyah); Group 6 (Sadika, Catherine, Ilhaam, Zaynab).

14.40-15.40: Group 7 (Emily, Jess, Sam, Marianna, Charlotte); Group 8 (Emediong, Chido, Karissa, Amber, Nasra); Solo presentations (Simone, Amanul, Abira).

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| **Oral presentation marking criteria**  **(NB: this assessment is weighted at 20% for the module)** | | |
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| **Criteria** | **Markers comments** | **Mark** |
| *Presentation skills: (max 10 marks)*   * Clear and concise language; * Effective and organized use of visual aids (where appropriate); * Easy to follow, see and hear; * Confident and knowledgeable answers to questions |  | /10 |
| *Content: (max 10 marks)*   * Sources cited properly (where appropriate); * Well-chosen and organised material; * Good command of literature; * Appropriate use of examples. |  | /10 |
| *Analysis: (max 10 marks)*   * Argument clearly stated and developed; * Awareness and understanding of key issues and debates; * Argument supported by evidence presented; * Appreciation of limitations of evidence presented and identification of issues for further research. |  | /10 |
|  |  | **Total:** |