

# Assessment & Appraisal

The purpose of the London Seminary course is to train men for Christian ministry, and so no degrees or certificates are awarded. During the course, assignments are set and will be assessed by the lecturers, as explained below. The purpose of assessment is to facilitate the process of appraisal. You will have regular appraisal meetings with the Principal or Vice-Principal, at which we look at your progress and development to identify strengths and weaknesses, help you to get the most out of the course, and develop skills relevant to the Christian ministry. These meetings are also an opportunity for you to raise any concerns or questions that you have about any aspect of the course or life at the seminary.

Except in languages, there are no exams at London Seminary. Assessment is done continuously, via assignments. Below you will find information on our assessment criteria and methods. Please study this carefully, as it will tell you what we are looking for in your work and will help you in producing it.

Assessment is by the lecturer who sets the assignment. During seminar presentations, an additional lecturer (usually the Principal or Vice-Principal) will be present to assist with assessment. All assessment is moderated by the Principal or Vice-principal.

## Assessment Criteria

The criteria by which we assess are relevant to the discipline of sermon preparation: clarity of thought and expression in college assignments will encourage clarity of thought and expression in your preaching.

### Content / Research

The quantity and quality of relevant information presented in the assignment. The amount of productive time spent reading and researching will inevitably be reflected in your work. No matter how articulate you are, or how interesting your opinions, these are no substitute for research. Research is the foundation upon which the written piece is constructed. Research does not mean plagiarism or regurgitation of other people's ideas, however.

### Analysis / Exegesis

How well you have understood, assimilated and used the information. Having amassed information, decisions must be made as to what is relevant and useful to the purpose of the project. Biblical data must be handled with precision. Other writings should be evaluated in the light of biblical revelation and in the context of evangelical Protestant doctrine.

### Argument / Structure

How well you have engaged with the assignment and persuasively presented your own conclusions about it. Your work should be more than a survey of authors' (or lecturers') opinions. You must have something to say on the subject under discussion, and the structure of your essay or presentation should guide the reader or hearer through an argument which flows logically to your conclusions.

### Style / Clarity

Your ability to write or speak coherent prose appropriate to the assignment. Good style should be personal without being whimsical or anecdotal. Poor spelling and punctuation hinder a reader's progress through an essay. Care should be taken to spell biblical names and theological terms correctly.

### Breadth of Application

How well your treatment of a particular question demonstrates broader understanding. In answering a specific question, it is important to demonstrate awareness of relevant broader issues within theology, biblical studies or church history. Where appropriate, you should draw out the practical implications of the subject to contemporary Christian life and ministry.

## Grades

Each piece of work you submit will be assessed according to these five criteria. Under each of the criteria, your work will receive one of the following grades:

A (distinction):	excellent
B (merit):	good
C (pass):	adequate or acceptable
CF (condoned fail):	just below standard
F (fail):	insufficient or unacceptable

These grades will be further explained by lecturers' written comments.

In line with most UK universities, which work to a pass mark of about 40%, our grade bands are as follows:

F	CF	C-	C	C+	B-	B	B+	A-	A	A+
0-36	37-42	43-47	48-57	58-62	63-67	68-77	78-82	83-87	88-97	98-100

The 40% pass mark does not mean that we have low standards, rather it gives us a wider range of marks within the pass category to give more nuance to grades. A 'typical' London Seminary student can expect to achieve an average of B (not A). Plus (+) and minus (-) are added to grades to indicate that a grade was close to the adjacent grade, e.g. B+ = almost an 'A'; B- = only just a 'B'. We instruct our lecturers not to give A+ grades on written work, as no piece of written work is so good that it cannot be improved by 2%. On language tests, however, it is possible to attain A+

## Deadlines And Extensions

Every assignment has a deadline. Work not handed in by this deadline will be considered to have failed unless an extension of the deadline for legitimate reasons has been requested in writing from the Principal or Vice-Principal and granted prior to the deadline. Students should not 'request permission' from the lecturer who sets the assignment. It is the seminary's responsibility to grant extensions and then inform the lecturer concerned.

We grant extensions when unforeseen and unavoidable circumstances prevent a student from meeting a deadline. These might be illness, or difficulties in family or church, for example. We cannot grant an extension simply because a student asks for one or has not left himself enough time to meet a deadline.

We do not give extensions for Written Seminar Reflections. The responsibility lies with students to choose which seminars to write up and plan their schedules so as to meet their deadlines.

Work that is submitted late without an extension is treated as a resubmission of failed work, which means it must be received within 4 weeks of the deadline. It will not receive a grade but will receive a simple 'pass' if it is up to standard.

Enforcing deadlines is standard academic practice. It is necessary for the following reasons:

- Not enforcing deadlines undermines the academic credibility of the Seminary and casts doubt on the validity of the grades of students who may wish to progress from the Seminary course to further study elsewhere.
- It is unfair to the majority of students who meet deadlines if others have extra time to complete an assignment.
- It is an inconvenience to the lecturer who marks the essays to have work coming in late. Lecturers are busy men who have to make time in their schedules to mark essays, just as students have to make time to write them.
- Being asked to make exceptions or overlook deadlines places lecturers in an embarrassing position.
- Assignments are often planned to be part of a teaching programme and late submission can mean that a student has not done necessary work before a subject is dealt with in class.
- Late submission of assignments increases the administrative burden on the administrative staff.

- Christian Ministry revolves around the meeting of (and juggling with) deadlines. Learning to organise your time and meet deadlines as a theological student will make the discipline of producing two or three messages a week in ministry more manageable.

A rule of thumb would be only to ask for an extension in circumstances where you would have to ask someone else to take a preaching engagement for you. **If you need to request an extension or exemption for a particular assignment, you must do so in writing using the form appended to this document or available.** Please apply as soon as you can after the need arises.

## Resubmission Of Work

All pieces of assessed work must be passed in order to complete the course successfully. A piece of work is failed if:

- it is significantly above or below the word or time limit (see below)
- it receives three or more 'CF' grades
- it is not handed in by the deadline and no extension has been granted
- it is plagiarised (see below)

In that event, the work in question may be re-done and re-submitted once, within four weeks of the date on which it was returned to the student. Re-submitted work will not be graded, but receive a simple pass or fail.

## Word Limits

We enforce word limits strictly. Work that is over the limit is almost always insufficiently edited and focussed. We instruct our markers to fail any work that is more than 100 words over the word limit. Anything under 70% of the word limit will also be failed because it will inevitably lack content, analytical detail and meaningful discussion. You should not ask 'how many words (or how much time) do I need to answer this question?' but 'how can I best answer this question in the allotted number of words or time limit?'

## Plagiarism

Plagiarism means presenting someone else's material as if it were your own. In the western educational world, it is generally regarded as the equivalent of stealing or cheating. At seminary, therefore, you must not engage in plagiarism in any of the work you do on the course.

Plagiarism occurs when you include in your own work extracts (whether phrases, sentences or paragraphs) from someone else's work, or a paraphrase of someone else's words without making clear that this is what you are doing. Consequently, it is vital that in your written work you include within quotation marks extracts from another person's work, and give the reference (author, title, date of publication, page number(s)), in a footnote, to the work from which the quotation comes. If you have paraphrased someone else's work, without quoting them precisely, you do not use quotation marks but you must give the reference in a footnote.

There are many reasons why plagiarism occurs. In some cultures, unattributed quotations from others may be perfectly acceptable. Sometimes students plagiarise because they feel they cannot improve on the way an idea is expressed, or because they are late in writing their essay and need to put something down without too much work, or simply as an expression of laziness. Whatever the reason or motive for it, it must be understood that plagiarism is not acceptable.

Usually, it is obvious to a lecturer if a student has plagiarised. If you are found to have plagiarised, your grades will be affected. A student who is found to have plagiarised, after having been warned for a previous incident of plagiarism, may be asked to leave the course.