

Long Answer Questions

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DESCRIPTION

Long Answer Questions are often viewed as a classic form of assessment and are commonly used across UG programmes. The student is furnished with a question or scenario which prompts a detailed written response by the student. LAQ assessments can be under timed conditions (exam hall) or a take-home piece, with a word limit or maximum number of pages. LAQs can generate research, consolidation of multiple sources, evaluation, critical thinking, argument and arrival at a conclusion.

Virtues

- Offers students an opportunity to demonstrate knowledge, skills, and abilities in a variety of ways
- Can concurrently develop research skills, and the ability to formulate arguments supported with reasoning and evidence, as well as accuracy in grammar and language
- Scope for independent thought and argument in addition to recall and memory
- Develops key writing skills that will be required in the world of work
- Will be a required skill for further study, eg postgraduate, PhD
- Allows a student to immerse in a chosen topic and develop a level of understanding and familiarity that can be an absorbing and highly enjoyable.

Drawbacks

- Can be time consuming for marking summative assessment
- Can be time consuming to give feedback on formative assessment
- Take-home LAQ can be an easy target for academic misconduct, via plagiarism and collusion
- Can feel a dated form of assessment
- Can attract “topic spotting” and detract from revising the whole syllabus or the the “write all you know about” style response
- Can disadvantage students with educational challenges, such as dyslexia, dyspraxia or non-native English speakers, or students from weaker educational backgrounds who have had less exposure to this method
- Requires objective assessment criteria for students and markers, and clarity on how the total breakdown of mark is achieved/awarded.

FURTHER READING

Race, P (2009) Designing assessment to improve Physical Sciences learning
https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/system/files/ps0069_designing_assessment_to_improve_physical_sciences_learning_march_2009.pdf