

# MARKING GUIDELINES

**Marking Guidelines apply to timed written University scheduled examinations only.**

A student with a disability who has a reading, writing or spelling difficulty can be disadvantaged when assessment takes the form of a written timed examination.

A student's written work may contain **surface errors** in spelling and grammar such as inaccuracies in the use of tense, grammatical agreement, plurals, spelling and punctuation.

The following guidelines should be taken into consideration when marking the examination script of a student with a reading, writing or spelling difficulty:

1. First, read the script to judge the student's underlying understanding of the topic; then assess their performance against the learning outcomes. If the script contains all the required elements but does not introduce them in a clear logical order, avoid penalising the student for a lack of structure in their writing unless this is an aspect of the competency being assessed.
2. Errors in **spelling** do not necessarily mean that the student is confused about the meaning of the word or its function in their writing. Generally, such errors do not lead to ambiguity and should not be penalised when subject knowledge is being assessed.
3. **Lexical** errors, such as *coarse* for *course*, do not mean that the student is confused about the meaning of the words. This kind of error should not be penalised unless it leads to ambiguity.
4. **Grammatical** errors, like incorrect tense endings, lack of subject-verb agreement and incorrect word order may not affect the meaning of the sentence. Where the student's meaning is clear and the errors do not lead to ambiguity, the student should not be penalised.
5. A student with a disability who has a reading, writing or spelling difficulty might not always use **punctuation** as a tool to clarify meaning. Scripts may contain long sentences that are difficult to follow with indiscriminate punctuation or no punctuation at all. Very short sentences or fragments of sentences might also be produced. Where the student's meaning is clear and the errors do not lead to ambiguity, the student should not be penalised.
6. Some students may have restricted vocabulary and use a far more limited range of words that one would expect. Avoid penalising students who show this style of writing, unless written communication is an aspect of the competency being assessed.
7. Where grammar and spelling are core competencies of a course a student's work must be marked on the basis of accuracy in the language and therefore these marking guidelines will not apply.
8. In all subjects, if a student's errors make a material difference to the meaning of their work, it will not be possible to classify them as surface errors that do not incur penalty. For instance, if a nursing student writes hypertension instead of hypotension, this will affect the mark awarded.
9. In all subjects, if the surface errors make the student's work so ambiguous that it is impossible to decipher the meaning, then this diminishes his/her ability to demonstrate the module's learning outcomes and this would be reflected in the marks awarded.