

FROM THE CEO

Fairness in assessment

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One of the key features of quality assessment is that questions are explicit. Students shouldn't have to second guess what is required of them in answering a question.

The application of this principle helps ensure fairness in assessment. If the question is clear the teacher will be able to develop an explicit marking key that derives naturally from the question and student responses. This enables quality feedback to be provided to each student.

A recurring theme from examination markers' feedback is; "if only students would answer the question asked". Similar comments are frequently heard in staffrooms, particularly after tests and exams. Is it possible that students do not understand what is required of them in answering the question? Should we focus even more than we do now on helping students to understand and demonstrate what they know and understand through assessment generally?

The Curriculum Council provides a list of key words that are used by the examiners in the writing of the WACE examination questions. It may be worthwhile picking out those that are relevant to a particular course and including these on the back of the course assessment outline when it is provided to students at the start of the year.

The list of key words is available from the next page of this document.

Glossary of key words in the formulation of questions

Account	Account for: state reasons for, report on. Give an account of; narrate a series of events or transactions
Advise	Recommend or inform
Analyse	Identify components and the relationship between them; draw out and relate implications
Apply	Use, utilise, employ in a particular situation
Argue	Make a case, based on appropriate evidence, for and/or against some given point of view.
Assess	Make a judgement of value, quality, outcomes, results or size
Calculate	Ascertain/determine from given facts, figures or information
Choose (multiple-choice)	Decide or select the most suitable from a number of different options
Clarify	Make clear or plain
Classify	Arrange or include in classes/categories
Comment on	Make reference to and expand upon
Compare	Show how things are similar and different
Complete	Finish an outlined task
Consider	Reflect on and make a judgement/evaluation
Construct	Make; build; put together items or arguments
Contrast	Show how things are different or opposite
Correlate	Demonstrate a mutual or complementary relationship
Create	Make, invent something
Critically (analyse/evaluate)	Add a degree or level of accuracy depth, knowledge and understanding, logic, questioning, reflection and quality to analyse/evaluate
Debate	Develop a logical (sometimes persuasive) argument, giving differing views in response to a topic
Deduce	Draw conclusions
Define	State meaning and identify essential qualities
Demonstrate	Show by example
Describe	Provide characteristics and features
Determine	Decide, find out

Discuss	Identify issues and provide points for and/or against
Distinguish	Recognise or note/indicate as being distinct or different from; note differences between
Draw (diagrams etc.)	An instruction, as in <i>draw a circle</i>
Evaluate	Make a judgement based on criteria; determine the value of
Examine	Inquire into
Explain	Relate cause and effect; make the relationships between things evident; provide why and/or how
Explore	Investigate, search for or evaluate
Extract	Choose relevant and/or appropriate details
Extrapolate	Infer from what is known
Identify	Recognise and name
Illustrate	Similar to 'explain' (see above), but requires the quoting of specific examples or statistics or possibly the drawing of maps, graphs, sketches, etc.
Interpret	Draw meaning from
Investigate	Plan, inquire into and draw conclusions about
Justify	Support an argument or conclusion; give reasons for your statements or comments
Label (and annotate)	Identify by placing a name or word used to describe the object or thing
List	Provide a series of related words, names, numbers or items that are arranged in order, one after the other
Name	Provide a word or term used to identify an object, person, thing, place etc. (something that is known and distinguished from other people or things)
Outline	Sketch in general terms; indicate the main features of
Predict	Suggest what may happen based on available information
Prepare (e.g. in Accounting)	Take the necessary action to put something into a state where it is fit for use or action, or for a particular event or purpose
Present (an argument)	Offer or convey something such as an argument or statement to somebody formally; a discussion that offers different points of view on an issue or topic; debate
Propose	Put forward (for example a point of view, idea, argument, suggestion) for consideration or action
Recall	Present remembered ideas, facts or experiences
Recommend	Provide reasons in favour

Recount	Retell a series of events
Respond to...	Provide an answer; reply
Select	Choose somebody or something from among several
Show	Give information; illustrate
Sketch	A picture or diagram that is done quickly, roughly; a brief outline
State	Express the main points of an idea or topic, perhaps in the manner of 'describe' or 'enumerate' (see above).
Summarise	Express, concisely, the relevant details
Synthesise	Put together various elements to make a whole; gather all ideas and combine them into a complex whole; combine all parts