ASSESSMENT GUIDELINE

Module Title | Health Policy – Principles, Practice & the Evidence Base
Module Code | HEA00021M
Module Level* | 7
Word Limit / Exam Duration | 2,500 words
Assessment Type(s) | Protocol

Marking Criteria
Guidelines should be read in conjunction with the marking criteria guidance for the module level* noted above: http://www.york.ac.uk/healthsciences/student-intranet/exam-assess/markgrid/

Confidentiality
It is a breach of confidentiality to disclose any personal information about a patient, service user, colleague, staff or any other person or place that could in principle enable them to be identified. For further guidance please refer to the departmental policy on Confidentiality at the following link: www.york.ac.uk/healthsciences/student-intranet/exam-assess/conduct/confidentiality/

Assessment Timing
The deadline for correctly presenting a submission is 4.30pm on the published submission date. The submission deadline is published on the Programme Assessment Schedule available on the following link: http://www.york.ac.uk/healthsciences/student-intranet/timetables/assessment-schedules/

Referencing
You must reference your work in accordance with departmental referencing guidelines which you can access via the following link: http://www.york.ac.uk/integrity/harvard.html

Assessment Guidance

Purpose of the Assignment: To assess the ability of students to apply creatively evaluative methods of health services research to assessing the effect of policy interventions.

Assignment Task: Choose a policy intervention of interest to you. This can be from any health system in any country. Make sure you choose a policy intervention, not a clinical intervention. The intervention and your assignment should address a strategic policy issue related to the financing, organisation or delivery of health services, or a broad public health intervention. Please consult the module leader if you have any doubt about your choice. If you are struggling to think of an appropriate intervention we can make some suggestions for consideration on request, but we would prefer you to think of an area that interests you.

Design a protocol for evaluating, using experimental or quasi-experimental methods, supplemented if necessary by other methods, the success or failure (including costs and benefits) of the policy change.

Use the following headings to guide your protocol:
1. Summary cover sheet – this should be a one page briefing paper for the responsible Minister of Health. In this briefing, convince the Minister of the importance of evaluating scientifically the policy under consideration and the risks associated with a poor evaluative design. (~10% of marks)
2. Aims / objectives of the policy intervention under consideration – both relevant broad policy aims (e.g. efficiency, cost containment, equity) and more specific objectives of the intervention. (~10% of marks)
3. Background – historical and political background, potential strengths and weaknesses and costs and benefits of the intervention and likely consequences (intended and unintended). (~20% of marks)
4. Existing evidence relevant to the intervention, including evidence from other countries where appropriate. Make sure you critically appraise the evidence you present. (~20% of marks)
5. Study design and methods. (~40% of marks). This should include:
   a. Quantifiable consequences of the intervention (intended and unintended) and their measurement;
   b. Methods to be used to evaluate the intervention, including data analytic methods.
   Consider appropriate subheadings (e.g. population, intervention, control, outcomes)
6. References - cite all your sources. (essential)

The course will include a mid-term session where we discuss and develop ideas for your assignment, and you will work in a group on an example from an international health care system, covering questions 1-5a above. Following lectures will focus on methods for question 5b.
Marking Criteria:
70-100: The assignment would contain a clear, concise, structured and well-written protocol, containing incisive critical appraisal of relevant policy and opinion, good summary of existing relevant evidence, and a scientifically valid, creative and feasible study design.
60-69: The assignment would contain a clear, concise, structured and well-written protocol, containing reasonable critical appraisal of relevant policy and opinion, an adequate summary of existing relevant evidence, and a scientifically valid and feasible study design.
50-59: The student would demonstrate an understanding of policy analysis and evaluation but contain some omissions or a few errors. The existing evidence base will have been covered, but may not have been considered in sufficient depth, or there may be problems in feasibility or scientific validity of study design.
40-49: The student would demonstrate some understanding of policy analysis and evaluation but the assignment may contain a number of errors and/or omissions.
1-39: The student failed to demonstrate the understanding of policy analysis and evaluation. There is clear evidence that some concepts have been misunderstood.
0: Not submitted

Additional Information: Protocols should be expressed clearly and concisely. Please ensure that your chosen intervention is a policy change not a clinical intervention. Give thought to what the intervention is designed to achieve, to how the success or failure of the intervention can be quantifiably measured, and to an appropriate and scientifically valid study design to evaluate success or failure. Demonstrate awareness of likely costs and benefits (but this is not an economics assignment, you do not need to outline an economic evaluation). Choose a primary outcome measure and, if you like, a few secondary outcome measures, and ensure that these are appropriate measures that reflect the policy objectives. The focus of your answer should be on the study design (heading 5 above), as this is often where many marks are gained or lost. Do not allow the other elements of your assignment to reduce the content and clarity of the methods – keep the assignment focused and concise. If you find existing evaluations of the policy you have chosen, make sure you are able to improve on them and that your proposed evaluation would add to the evidence base.