

ILM Assessment terminology

The following terms are working definitions of the more common verbs used by ILM assessments.

Analyse What makes this work the way it does?	To examine something in detail to discover or determine the meaning or essential features and draw conclusions. To break something down into components or essential features, to identify possible causation and/or draw conclusions. Analysis is not solely confined to data, but will often involve some manipulation of data to identify patterns, etc. The more complex the topic being analysed, the higher the level, but analysis will rarely be a low level activity.
Appraise Does this seem to work to the required standard?	Less detailed but broader and more comprehensive than an assessment, looking at the whole and making judgements. Appraisal in its broader sense requires a judgement about the subject, identifying its strengths and weaknesses and/or how well something or someone performs in a particular context. Appraisal is more subjective than an evaluation, although it will refer to appropriate criteria.
Assess Is this to the required standard?	Examining a topic and making a judgement, based on standard criteria. An assessment will judge each element individually. An assessment does not consider any causal factors, but focuses primarily on impact or outcomes.
Compare How does this relate to that?	Used with two or more examples, comparison requires a description of their relative features, effectiveness or outcomes. Context and variation determines the level of cognition involved.
Compare and contrast To what extent are they alike and to what extent are they different?	Provide an account of the characteristics of two or more entities that enable judgements to be made as to how they are similar and how they are different.
Contrast How good is this compared to that?	Used with two or more examples, makes some assessment of their relative features, effectiveness or outcomes. By definition, this is more demanding than to compare, and the factors which determine the level for compare also apply.
Conclude Why is this my decision?	To make a decision, explaining the logic behind this choice and the main contributing factors.
Critical How valid and relevant are the ideas and information I am using?	To be critical means that you are required to make judgements about the validity or relevance of the ideas and information you are using; to explore their meaning, and to demonstrate understanding of the topic from different perspectives and theoretical frameworks
Critically analyse What makes this work the way it does, and why?	Implies careful, exact, in-depth or detailed analysis. Tends to focus more on the components and to comment on their significance, causal relationships or impact on the whole. Requires informed judgement with reference to some conceptual theory, idea, practice or experience so will always involve a fairly high level of cognitive skill.
Critique What are the reasons for my views and conclusions on this?	To critique is to analyse something in detail in order to draw conclusions and provide reasons for your opinion as to its worth or value.
Define What, exactly, does it mean?	To state precisely the meaning of something.
Describe What does it look like?	An account of the principal features of the topic. Involves some element of selection of the more important features. Again context and possible variation is significant, as is the degree of detail required in the description.
Detail What are the important features?	To detail is to include all the important elements or features.
Differentiate How is this different?	Distinguish one thing from another.
Determine What is the scope? What have I found out?	To fix in scope and to come to a conclusion after a period of observation or consideration.
Establish How permanent is this? How true is this?	To establish something is to review history and context of something and then to prove correct, to confirm and validate that claim.

Evaluate How well does each part of this work, and what needs to be done to make it work better?	An evaluation is an examination of complex issues, requiring higher level cognitive skills, that is more focussed (narrower area, but in more detail) than a review. An evaluation is normally detailed and provides a solution or conclusion and/or recommendation (perhaps for further exploration). An evaluation could include a comparative element and will ascertain the usefulness or contribution of each part to the whole
Examine What can you find out about it?	Examine is about exploring a topic in some detail (identifying positive and negative features of the topic) without necessarily drawing conclusions and making judgements. An examination could be used to inform decision making; in itself it will probably not be conclusive. The degree of detail and the context in which the examination takes place will determine level.
Explain How does it work?	Involves some description of a topic with an account of the practices or uses associated with the topic, or characteristics of the topic. It may also imply some reasons for those practices, depending on context. Again, the level of cognitive skill involved will depend on the complexity of the subject matter.
Identify What are they?	Involves some selection of subject matter from a larger set or context. Requires ability to recognise – the level of cognitive skill required depends on the context. And the degree of variation in the set from which the identified elements are being drawn.
Justify Why do it?	Present an argument for a particular action or choice. Will usually imply some form of assessment or analysis, and may be linked with one or other action
List What exists?	Presentation of specific, required information in a structured format. Essentially a recall of learnt information; although this may be quite complex information, listing does not imply significant cognitive skills.
Outline What are the main features?	To give a general idea and overview of a topic without going into detail.
Reflect What have I learnt from this experience?	A process or model of learning from an experience in order to give consideration to what might be an improvement or be done differently next time.
Research What can you find out about it?	Identifying and collecting data or information about a subject and presenting it in a codified or structured form. Research does not imply any analysis of the data collected, although that may be implied by the context. Research does not imply any judgement about the data collected, but may well be combined with related verbs (analyse, evaluate) to ensure that these actions take place.
Review Overall, how well does this work, and what may need to be done about it?	Making a judgement about a topic which relies upon a combination of evidence and some kind of theoretical model(s), construct or practice. A review is a 'snapshot' of an activity that has breadth and will focus more on the whole. A review may well lead onto detailed further exploration and/or recommendations for further actions
Select Which are the most important?	Use judgement and knowledge to choose certain factors in preference to others.
Specify What, exactly, is it?	To describe in a precise and exact manner the particular qualities or characteristics of something.
Summarise What are the main points?	Give a brief account of a topic or idea outlining the main points in a succinct manner.
Verify How have I checked this to ensure it is correct?	To verify is to confirm something by investigation.