

# The Student Writing and Tutor Assessment project

## Aim

**SWaTAP** aims to compare student writing and tutor marking in a distance learning setting across **four qualifications** in different disciplines:

**BA Hons Business Management**



**B Eng Engineering**

**BA Hons Childhood and Youth Studies**

**BA Hons History**

**Phase 1 of the pilot study is underway and involves the creation of a corpus by gathering:**

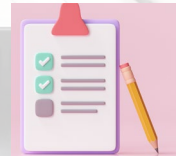
**c. 1,800** Undergraduate assignments across three levels of study



Marks and tutor feedback on those assignments



Demographic data on Student writers e.g. carer status, disability, prior quals, socioeconomic status



**Key RQ**  
What can a **combination** of research using **corpus linguistic** methodology and **tutor interviews** reveal about student writing and assessment practices in a distance learning context?

## Rationale

- Existing student writing corpora such as BAWE (Nesi & Gardner, 2018) do not focus on assessed writing in distance learning contexts.
- A corpus of student writing has potential to yield insights into disciplinary differences and, given large numbers, the impact of students' membership of social categories on their writing and how it is assessed.
- This should inform student writing support tailored to level, discipline and student need in the context of a large institution with over 140,000 undergraduate students.
- There is also potential to improve retention and achievement for all students, as well as to narrow awarding gaps.

**Phase 2 of the pilot study will collect**

Interview data from 8 recorded online interviews with tutor assessors, based partly on tutor perspectives on student texts shared at interview.



## Phase 1

Build and analyse:

- 1) a corpus of student writing from four named degrees:-  
50 x Level 3 students per discipline 3 x 60 credit modules (one per level of study); c. 3 assignments per module -> c. 1,800 assignments in total or a corpus of **c. 2.7m words**
- 2) A corpus of tutor feedback from on-script comments on the 1,800 assignments

## Phase 2 (ongoing)

Collect and analyse interview data from 8 tutors ( 2 per discipline) using a **text-focused interview** format. Interviews will be informed by initial corpus findings and will explore tutors' responses to specific aspects of student texts, drawing on texts in the corpus. Tutors will also be asked about their on-script and summary comment feedback practices.

Download scripts

Use bespoke R script to ingest all Word

Output to a csv file (contains extracted assignments, module code, assignment mark & student characteristics data)

Output of csv file (contains extracted feedback comments and the texts highlighted in comments using R docxtractr package)



## The project team:

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- Reference: Nesi, H. and S. Gardner (2018). "The BAWE corpus and genre families classification of assessed student writing." *Assessing Writing* **38: 51-55**
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