Generic Assessment Criteria – Levels 3, 4, 5, & 6

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Guidance for students – Keele's 24 step mark scale

Your work will be marked using the University's **24-step marking scale.** This scale has 24-steps on it, each of which falls into one of the classes of performance which correspond to the overall degree classification. The University uses these classes of performance for all its undergraduate modules.

70-100	First Class
60-69	Second Class, Upper Division (also referred to as "Upper Second" or "2.1")
50-59	Second Class, Lower Division (also referred to as "Lower Second" or "2.2")
40-49	Third Class
0-39	Fail

There are three versions of the generic assessment criteria, the first for written assessments, the second for presentation-type assessments (e.g., oral and poster presentations, podcasts and vlogs etc), and the third for reflective assessments (e.g., reflective diaries and logs). Staff must make clear to you which one of the three versions of the generic assessment criteria apply to each assessment item via the assessment brief.

Where adaptation of the generic assessment criteria is required for specific types of assessment (e.g., creating computer code, language tests, creative work) or in specific contexts (e.g., TNE provision and international partnerships), staff must produce revised assessment criteria that comply with the 24-step marking approach and reflect the bands used in the generic criteria as closely as possible. Staff must include these adapted criteria, which require approval by School Education Committee, in your assessment brief.

Within each version of the generic assessment criteria, the University has generic descriptors for work which falls within each of the grade boundaries shown above. There is a descriptor for work which falls within the Lower Second-Class range, another for the Upper Second-Class range, and so on. The mark that each piece of your work receives depends on the extent to which it satisfies the elements in the generic descriptors.

The person marking your work will consider it alongside the generic criteria to decide which class of performance the work falls into. The marker will then determine the extent to which your work meets the criteria to arrive at a judgment about the position (high, mid, low) within that class.

What if my module has more than one piece of assessment?
If a module has more than one assessment component, the mark for each piece of assessment is determined using the 24-step mark scale and then the marks are averaged, taking account of each of the assessment components' respective weightings, in order to produce the module result. This is expressed as a percentage. Your overall module mark could therefore be any whole number up to 100 and is not limited to one of the marks on the scale.

Does the 24-step mark scale apply to all assessments?
No. The 24-step mark scale is applied to single assessment components where an assessment of the quality of the work is made and a single overall mark awarded. There are some assessments such as KLE tests, class tests, numerical tests, etc. where an answer is either correct or incorrect and marks are awarded accordingly. The 24-step mark scale does not apply to these assessments and so you may, for example, receive a mark of (e.g.,) 63% for a class test. This mark will remain and will not be rounded to 65%.

What should I do if I am unsure about whether or not the 24-step mark scale applies to my assessment?
You should contact your module leader, or the person who set the work in the first instance and ask them to clarify whether the 24-step mark scale applies to a specific assessment.

Generic Assessment Criteria – Written Assessments (Levels 3, 4, 5, and 6)

Descriptor	Detailed Descriptor	Position within Band	Mark	UG Degree Classification
	Work that could not be bettered at this level.		100	First Class
Exceptional	As for 'outstanding' but strongly underpinned by independent thought, originality and/or novel ideas in thinking, and a strong critical appreciation of the topic. Little improvement could be expected.	Middle Lower	95 90	First Class
Outstanding	Work that is typically characterised by evidence of the following: • Outstanding knowledge and understanding at the forefront of the discipline • Evidence of independent thought and/or originality in thinking • Very well structured, robust and persuasive arguments, lucidly written, uses clear and accurate expression • Accurate use of a broad and/or extensive range of sources and evidence to support work • Demonstrates the ability to interpret and/or present concepts and/or data in a critical and constructive way • Very few, if any, weaknesses	Middle Lower	85 80	First Class

When using the criteria, staff should note that in each band, the detailed descriptor states "work that is typically characterised by". It is <u>not</u> necessary for work to fulfil all the criteria absolutely. The extent to which the criteria need to be fulfilled to gain a particular mark remains a matter of professional academic judgement.

Descriptor	Detailed Descriptor	Position within Band	Mark	UG Degree Classification
Excellent	Work that is typically characterised by evidence of the following: • An excellent level of knowledge and understanding of key concepts and principles • Some evidence of originality and/or novel ideas in thinking • Clearly structured, robust and persuasive arguments, lucidly written, uses clear and accurate expression • Accurate use of a broad/wide range of sources and evidence to support work • Demonstrates an excellent ability to interpret and/or present concepts and/or data in a critical and constructive way • No serious weaknesses	Upper Middle Lower	78 75 72	First Class
Good/Very Good **(Work which is, on balance, 'very good' should be awarded a mark of 68)**	Work that is typically characterised by evidence of the following: • A good/very good level of knowledge and understanding of key concepts and principles • Clearly structured, robust and persuasive arguments, lucidly written, uses clear and accurate expression • Good or very good use of accurate sources and evidence to support work • Demonstrates a good or very good ability to interpret and/or present concepts and/or data • Some weaknesses may be identified	Upper Middle Lower	68 65 62	2:1
Reasonable	Work that is typically characterised by evidence of the following: • A reasonable level of knowledge and understanding of key concepts and principles	Upper	58	

When using the criteria, staff should note that in each band, the detailed descriptor states "work that is typically characterised by". It is <u>not</u> necessary for work to fulfil all the criteria absolutely. The extent to which the criteria need to be fulfilled to gain a particular mark remains a matter of professional academic judgement.

Descriptor	Detailed Descriptor	Position within Band	Mark	UG Degree Classification
	• Arguments are evident but they may lack coherence and/or supporting evidence • Some evidence of the use of sources and evidence to support work • May contain some repetition, inconsistencies and/or some errors • Organisation and clarity of writing are of sufficient standard for the reader to engage easily • Demonstrates some ability to interpret and/or present concepts and/or data • Work at the lower end of this grade may contain some errors • Needs some improvement	Middle Lower	55 52	2:2
Pass	Work that is typically characterised by evidence of the following: • A limited level of knowledge and understanding of key concepts and principles, or coverage of a restricted range of issues • Limited evidence of awareness of some key concepts and principles • Arguments may be superficial/shallow • Little evidence of the use of sources and evidence to support work, over reliance on very basic resources • Very likely to contain repetition, inconsistencies and/or some errors • Organisation and clarity of writing may be limited, but will be sufficient for the reader to engage with most aspects of the work • Demonstrates a limited ability to interpret and/or present concepts and/or data • Likely to contain serious weaknesses • Needs significant improvement	Upper Middle Lower	48 45 42	3rd Class 3rd Class
Fail	Unsatisfactory work that is typically characterised by evidence of the following:	Upper	38	

When using the criteria, staff should note that in each band, the detailed descriptor states "work that is typically characterised by". It is <u>not</u> necessary for work to fulfil all the criteria absolutely. The extent to which the criteria need to be fulfilled to gain a particular mark remains a matter of professional academic judgement.

Descriptor	Detailed Descriptor	Position within Band	Mark	UG Degree Classification
	• A failure to demonstrate an understanding of many of the key concepts and principles • Arguments may be lacking entirely or be very shallow • No/very limited use of sources and evidence to support work • May contain serious weaknesses and/or major flaws in understanding • Organisation and clarity of writing may be limited, but will be sufficient for the reader to engage with most aspects of the work • Demonstrates a very limited ability to interpret and/or present concepts and/or data • Shows some evidence of understanding of the assessment • Needs major improvement	Middle Lower	35 32	Fail
Token submission	Unsatisfactory work with limited understanding of the assessment. Fundamentally flawed arguments and/or incorrect information. Token marks may be awarded for any relevant information, as applicable.	Token submission	20, 10, 5	Fail
No submission, wrong answer	No submission, wrong answer		0	Fail

When using the criteria, staff should note that in each band, the detailed descriptor states "work that is typically characterised by". It is <u>not</u> necessary for work to fulfil all the criteria absolutely. The extent to which the criteria need to be fulfilled to gain a particular mark remains a matter of professional academic judgement.

Generic Assessment Criteria: Reflective Assessments (Levels 3, 4, 5, and 6)

Descriptor	Detailed Descriptor	Position within Band	Mark	UG Degree Classification
	Work that could not be bettered at this level.		100	First Class
Exceptional	As for 'outstanding' but strongly underpinned by originality and/or novel insight into the reflective process. Little improvement could be expected.	Middle Lower	95 90	First Class
Outstanding	Work that is typically characterised by evidence of the following: • Outstanding reflection showing deep, critical engagement with learning experiences and how knowledge informs or transforms current understanding and future practice • Effectively critiques assumptions and integrates a broad range of perspectives and literature • Structure is highly coherent, demonstrating clarity, depth, and mature critical judgement • Very few, if any, weaknesses	Middle Lower	85 80	First Class
Excellent	Work that is typically characterised by evidence of the following: • Excellent reflection of the learning process, discussing how learning occurred, and how new acquisition of knowledge will alter current knowledge or inform future practice • Excellent critiquing or challenging of assumptions, supported by insightful use of literature or introduction of varied perspectives • Structure is clear and coherent • No serious weaknesses	Upper Middle Lower	78 75 72	First Class
Good/Very Good	Work that is typically characterised by evidence of the following:	Upper	68	

When using the criteria, staff should note that in each band, the detailed descriptor states "work that is typically characterised by". It is <u>not</u> necessary for work to fulfil all the criteria absolutely. The extent to which the criteria need to be fulfilled to gain a particular mark remains a matter of professional academic judgement.

Descriptor	Detailed Descriptor	Position within Band	Mark	UG Degree Classification
(Work which is, on balance, 'very good' should be awarded a mark of 68)	• Good or very good demonstration of reflective thinking, with exploration of how learning experiences impact current knowledge and may influence future practice • Assumptions are questioned thoughtfully, with consistent integration of literature or varied perspectives to support reflections • Structure is mostly clear and coherent • Some weaknesses may be identified	Middle Lower	65 62	2:1
Reasonable	Work that is typically characterised by evidence of the following: • Reasonable demonstration of reflective thinking, including some insights into the learning process and how it may influence current knowledge or future practice • Attempts are made to question or challenge assumptions, with occasional references to literature or alternate perspectives, though these may not be fully explored • Structure is adequate, but may be inconsistent or descriptive in parts • Needs some improvement	Upper Middle Lower	58 55 52	2:2
Pass	Work that is typically characterised by evidence of the following: • Some demonstration of reflection on learning experiences, though with limited introspection or minimal insights into how this impacts current knowledge or future practice • Some basic references to literature or other perspectives may be present but are not deeply integrated • Shows some narrative structure beyond description • Needs significant improvement	Upper Middle	48 45	3rd Class 3rd Class

When using the criteria, staff should note that in each band, the detailed descriptor states "work that is typically characterised by". It is <u>not</u> necessary for work to fulfil all the criteria absolutely. The extent to which the criteria need to be fulfilled to gain a particular mark remains a matter of professional academic judgement.

Descriptor	Detailed Descriptor	Position within Band	Mark	UG Degree Classification
		Lower	42	
Fail	Unsatisfactory work that is typically characterised by evidence of the following: • Limited or superficial reflection with minimal evidence of engagement with the learning process. Lacks analysis, self-awareness, or connection to current knowledge or future practice • Limited attempt to challenge assumptions or draw on literature or perspectives • Minimal reflective structure, with reflections remaining largely descriptive • Needs major improvement	Upper Middle Lower	38 35 32	 Fail
Token submission	Unsatisfactory work with minimal relevant content or evidence of reflection. Demonstrates little understanding of the reflective process. Token marks may be awarded for any relevant information, as applicable.	Token submission	20, 10, 5	Fail
No submission, wrong answer	No submission, wrong topic, or wholly irrelevant content.		0	Fail

When using the criteria, staff should note that in each band, the detailed descriptor states "work that is typically characterised by". It is <u>not</u> necessary for work to fulfil all the criteria absolutely. The extent to which the criteria need to be fulfilled to gain a particular mark remains a matter of professional academic judgement.

Generic Assessment Criteria: Presentations (Levels 3, 4, 5, and 6)

Note: In line with Keele's Inclusive Education Framework, staff must not assess students on their ability to speak clearly or penalise them for referring to notes, memory cards etc.

Descriptor	Detailed Descriptor	Position within Band	Mark	UG Degree Classification
	Work that could not be bettered at this level.		100	First Class
Exceptional	As for 'outstanding' but strongly underpinned by originality and/or novel ideas in communication and critical insight. Little improvement could be expected.	Middle Lower	95 90	First Class
Outstanding	Work that is typically characterised by evidence of the following: • Outstanding knowledge and understanding of key concepts and principles, showing strong critical awareness of the subject and/or practice • Communication style is highly effective and coherent, with excellent structure • Visual aids are clear, visually appealing, and reinforce key messages • Demonstrates the ability to interpret and/or present concepts and/or data in a critical and constructive way • Responses to questions, if appropriate, demonstrate excellent understanding and the ability to interpret and explain complex ideas clearly • Evidence base shows wide reading and accurate citation of current and relevant sources • Very few, if any, weaknesses	Middle Lower	85 80	First Class
Excellent	Work that is typically characterised by evidence of the following: • Excellent knowledge and understanding of key concepts and principles, with evidence of critical thought and clear explanation • Communication style is coherent and well-paced, with a largely excellent structure • Visual aids are clear, logically organised, and effectively support key points • Demonstrates an excellent ability to interpret and/or present concepts and/or data in a critical and constructive way	Upper Middle	78 75	First Class

When using the criteria, staff should note that in each band, the detailed descriptor states "work that is typically characterised by". It is not necessary for work to fulfil all the criteria absolutely. The extent to which the criteria need to be fulfilled to gain a particular mark remains a matter of professional academic judgement.

Descriptor	Detailed Descriptor	Position within Band	Mark	UG Degree Classification
	• Responses to questions, if appropriate, show confident understanding and ability to clarify or expand key ideas • Evidence base is broad, relevant, and well applied, with accurate citations. • No serious weaknesses	Lower	72	
Good/Very Good **(Work which is, on balance, 'very good' should be awarded a mark of 68)**	Work that is typically characterised by evidence of the following: • A good/very good level of knowledge and understanding of key concepts and principles • Communication style is generally clear and well structured • Visual aids are relevant and support understanding, with occasional minor weaknesses in clarity or design • Demonstrates a good or very good ability to interpret and/or present concepts and/or data • Responses to questions, if appropriate, are competent and show sound understanding • Evidence base is appropriate, using a range of relevant sources with mostly accurate citation • Some weaknesses may be identified	Upper Middle Lower	68 65 62	2:1
Reasonable	Work that is typically characterised by evidence of the following: • A reasonable level of knowledge and understanding of key concepts and principles, though explanation may be uneven or lacking depth • Communication style is understandable, but may lack coherence in places • Visual aids are functional • Demonstrates some ability to interpret and/or present concepts and/or data • Responses to questions, if appropriate, are limited but show some awareness of key ideas • Evidence base is present but is narrow or inconsistently used, with citation errors • Work at the lower end of this grade may contain some errors	Upper Middle Lower	58 55 52	2:2

When using the criteria, staff should note that in each band, the detailed descriptor states "work that is typically characterised by". It is <u>not</u> necessary for work to fulfil all the criteria absolutely. The extent to which the criteria need to be fulfilled to gain a particular mark remains a matter of professional academic judgement.

Descriptor	Detailed Descriptor	Position within Band	Mark	UG Degree Classification
	• Needs some improvement			
Pass	Work that is typically characterised by evidence of the following: • A limited level of knowledge and understanding of key concepts and principles, though explanation may be uneven or lacking depth • Communication style may be difficult to follow and may lack coherence • Visual aids may be cluttered, sparse, or inconsistent in quality • Demonstrates a limited ability to interpret and/or present concepts and/or data • Responses to questions, if appropriate, are limited but show some awareness of key ideas • Evidence base is present but narrow or inconsistently used, with citation errors • Likely to contain serious weaknesses • Needs significant improvement	Upper Middle Lower	48 45 42	3rd Class 3rd Class
Fail	Unsatisfactory work that is typically characterised by evidence of the following: • A failure to demonstrate an understanding of many of the key concepts and principles • Arguments may be lacking entirely or be very shallow • Visual aids are unsatisfactory or of poor quality • No/very limited use of sources and evidence to support work • May contain serious weaknesses and/or major flaws in understanding • Organisation and clarity of presentation may be limited, but will be sufficient for the reader to engage with most aspects of the work • Demonstrates a very limited ability to interpret and/or present concepts and/or data • Shows some evidence of understanding of the assessment • Needs major improvement	Upper Middle Lower	38 35 32	 Fail
Token submission	Unsatisfactory work with minimal relevant content. Demonstrates little or no engagement with the task. Knowledge, communication, and evidence base are	Token submission	20, 10, 5	Fail

When using the criteria, staff should note that in each band, the detailed descriptor states "work that is typically characterised by". It is <u>not</u> necessary for work to fulfil all the criteria absolutely. The extent to which the criteria need to be fulfilled to gain a particular mark remains a matter of professional academic judgement.

Descriptor	Detailed Descriptor	Position within Band	Mark	UG Degree Classification
	absent or wholly inadequate. Token marks may be awarded for any relevant information, as applicable.			
No submission, wrong answer	No submission, wrong answer		0	Fail

When using the criteria, staff should note that in each band, the detailed descriptor states "work that is typically characterised by". It is <u>not</u> necessary for work to fulfil all the criteria absolutely. The extent to which the criteria need to be fulfilled to gain a particular mark remains a matter of professional academic judgement.

Generic Assessment Criteria Staff Guidance

1. The aim of the generic assessment criteria is to ensure that at Keele we reward our students appropriately for their achievements. The criteria also ensure as much consistency as possible across all disciplines in the University.

2. There are three versions of the generic assessment criteria. One for written assessments, one for presentation-type assessments (e.g., oral and poster presentations, vlogs, podcasts, elevator pitches etc), and one for reflective work (e.g., reflective logs and diaries). Staff must use the version of the generic assessment criteria that most closely aligns with the nature of the assessment that they are marking. Staff must make clear to students which version of the three generic assessment criteria are being used for each assessment at the beginning of a module and via the module assessment briefs.

3. When using the criteria, staff should note that in each band, the detailed descriptor states "work that is typically characterised by". It is <u>not</u> necessary for work to fulfil all the criteria absolutely. The extent to which the criteria need to be fulfilled to gain a particular mark remains a matter of professional academic judgement.

4. Where adaptation of the generic assessment criteria is required for specific types of assessment (e.g., creating computer code, language tests, creative work) or in specific contexts (e.g., TNE provision and international partnerships), staff must produce revised assessment criteria that comply with the 24-step marking approach and reflect the bands used in the generic criteria as closely as possible. These revised criteria must be justifiable within the context of the assessment type and must be approved by School Education Committee (SECs). Staff must include these adapted criteria in their assessment briefs, which are approved by SECs at the start of each Semester. Revised criteria must also be communicated clearly to students at the beginning of a module.

5. The generic assessment criteria and the accompanying 24-step mark scale should be used where an assessment of the quality of the work is made. For some types of assessment, application of the 24-step mark scale is not appropriate because the mark awarded is based on a series of correct or incorrect answers, with marks awarded accordingly. Examples of assessment types where the 24-step mark scale should not be used include: class tests, KLE quizzes, tests with a series of short answer questions, numerical/mathematical tests.

6. If a module has more than one assessment component* the mark for each piece of assessment is determined using the 24-step mark scale and then the marks are averaged, taking account of each of the assessment components' respective weightings, to produce the module result. This is expressed as a percentage. An overall module mark can therefore be any whole number up to 100 and is not limited to one of the marks on the scale.

   <u>Worked Examples:</u>

   - **A module contains two assessment components , (1) an essay (20% of the module mark) and, (2) a consultancy style report (80% of the module mark).** For both assessments, the generic assessment criteria for written work should be used. The 24-step mark scale and accompanying descriptors should be applied to both pieces of

assessment individually, with the overall module mark a weighted average of the two marks. Note the overall module mark should remain as a weighted average and should not be adjusted to match the 24-step mark scale. It is therefore possible to have overall an overall module mark of any whole number between 0 and 100.

- **A module contains two assessment components , (1) a KLE quiz (20% of the module mark) and, (2) a Podcast (80% of the module mark).** The generic assessment criteria for presentations should be used to mark the podcast assessment. The 24-step mark scale and accompanying descriptors should be applied to the podcast assessment only. The marks for the KLE quiz are automatically calculated based on whether answers are correct or not and should not be adjusted to match the 24-step mark scale. The overall module mark will be a weighted average of the two assessments and again, could be any whole number between 0 and 100. The overall module mark should not be adjusted to match the 24-step mark scale.

7. It is important that these criteria are communicated effectively to students through the relevant assessment briefs. Separate guidance for students exists to accompany the generic assessment criteria.

8. The criteria have been carefully cross referenced with Keele's degree algorithm – in particular, colleagues should note:

- 30% is the threshold mark for "condonement" of an overall module mark for students starting at Keele prior to September 2022 (Regulation D5).
- 35% is the threshold mark for "condonement" of an overall module mark for students starting at Keele from September 2022 (Regulation D5).

**An assessment component is an assessment item which is listed in the module descriptor separately as a single assessment item and recorded on SCIMS with a single mark.*