Generic Assessment Criteria – Level 7

Contents

Guidance for students – Keele's 24-step mark scale 2
Generic Assessment Criteria – Written Work: Level-7 (PGT and Integrated Master's Programmes at Level-7). 4
Generic Assessment Criteria – Reflection: Level-7 (PGT and Integrated Master's Programmes at Level-7)..... 8
Generic Assessment Criteria – Presentations: Level-7 (PGT and Integrated Master's Programmes at Level-7) 11
Generic Assessment Criteria Staff Guidance – Level 7..... 15

Guidance for students – Keele's 24-step mark scale

Your work for Level 7 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 most, but not all, postgraduate modules*.

70-100	Distinction
60-69	Merit
50-59	Pass
0-49	Fail

**Where exceptions to the above table exist (e.g., in the case of some apprenticeship or professional programmes), this will be made clear to you through the assessment brief.*

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 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 Distinction range (or the first-class range for students on integrated Master's programmes), another for the Merit range (or the upper second-class range for students on integrated Master's programmes), 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 assessment 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 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 pieces of work?

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, 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 or not the 24-step mark scale applies to that assessment.

Generic Assessment Criteria – Written Work: Level-7 (PGT and Integrated Master's Programmes at Level-7)

Descriptor	Detailed Descriptor	Position within Band	Mark	PGT Degree Classification	Integrated Master's Degree Classification
	Work that could not be bettered at Master's level study.		100	Distinction	First Class
Exceptional	As for 'outstanding' but underpinned by elements of originality and/or novel ideas in thinking and a strong critical appreciation of the topic. No improvement could reasonably be expected.	Middle Lower	95 90	Distinction	First Class
Outstanding	Work that is typically characterised by evidence of the following: • An outstanding level of knowledge and understanding of complex issues, key concepts and principles at the forefront of the discipline • Outstanding awareness of subject and/or practice • Outstanding evidence of original, independent and critical thought • A strong, well-structured argument that is convincing and well supported by an outstanding range of sources and/or evidence • Pushes the boundaries of existing knowledge • Evidence of extensive and discriminating reading/use of source material, accurately used in support of the work • Demonstrates the ability to interpret and/or present concepts and/or data in a critical and constructive way • Clearly structured, robust and persuasive arguments, lucidly written, uses clear and accurate expression	Middle Lower	85 80	Distinction	First Class
Excellent	Work that is typically characterised by evidence of the following: • An excellent level of knowledge and understanding of complex issues, key concepts and principles at the forefront of the discipline • Excellent awareness of subject and/or practice • Evidence of original, independent, and critical thought • A strong, well-structured argument that is convincing and well-supported by a wide range of sources and/or evidence • Explores the boundaries of existing knowledge	Upper Middle	78 75	Distinction	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	PGT Degree Classification	Integrated Master's Degree Classification
	• Evidence of extensive and discriminating reading/use of source material, accurately used in support of the work • Demonstrates an excellent ability to interpret and/or present concepts and/or data in a critical and constructive way • Clearly structured, robust and persuasive arguments, lucidly written, uses clear and accurate expression	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 or very good level of knowledge and understanding of key concepts and principles • Good or very good awareness of subject and/or practice • Able to describe and use a range of major concepts, theories and methodologies in a good or very good level of detail • Strong arguments which offer good analysis of key issues • Use of a broad/wide range of sources and/or evidence to support work • Demonstrates a good or very good ability to interpret and/or present concepts and/or data • May contain some minor errors and/or minor areas for improvement • Clearly structured, robust and persuasive arguments, lucidly written, uses clear and accurate expression	Upper Middle Lower	68 65 62	Merit	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 • Sufficient awareness of subject and/or practice • Able to describe and use a range of major concepts, theories and methodologies • Some critical judgement offered • Arguments offer some analysis of key issues, but they may lack coherence and/or supporting evidence	Upper Middle	58 55	Pass	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	PGT Degree Classification	Integrated Master's Degree Classification
	• Evidence of familiarity with the key sources and/or evidence but may contain questionable interpretation of critical materials • Demonstrates some ability to interpret and/or present concepts and/or data • May contain some errors and/or areas for improvement • Organisation and clarity of writing are of sufficient standard for the reader to engage easily • Needs some improvement in one or more areas	Lower	52		
Fail **(Some reasonable elements but needs some improvement before meeting pass threshold at Master's level)**	Unsatisfactory work that is typically characterised by evidence of the following: • A limited level of knowledge and understanding of a restricted range of issues. Poorly conceived and poorly directed to the question/task • Shows some understanding of empirical or theoretical issues but is not able to develop them further • Some evidence of argument but contains irrelevant or unrelated elements. Arguments may be superficial/shallow • Some familiarity with basic reading material but little evidence of the use of sources and/or evidence, or over reliance on very basic resources • Demonstrates a limited ability to interpret and/or present concepts and/or data • Likely to contain repetition, inconsistencies and/or some major errors • Organisation and clarity of writing may be limited, but will be sufficient for the reader to engage with most aspects of the work • Needs some improvement before meeting pass threshold at Master's level	Upper Middle Lower	48 45 42	Fail	Fail (revert to UG award candidature)
Fail (Needs major improvement before	Unsatisfactory work at Master's level that is typically characterised by evidence of the following: • A very limited level of knowledge and understanding of a restricted range of issues. Poorly conceived and poorly directed to the question/task	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	PGT Degree Classification	Integrated Master's Degree Classification
meeting pass threshold)	• Limited understanding of empirical or theoretical issues but cannot develop them further • Limited evidence of argument and/or contains irrelevant or unrelated elements. • Limited familiarity with basic reading materials and little evidence of the use of sources and/or evidence, or over reliance on very basic resources • Demonstrates a very limited ability to interpret and/or present concepts and/or data • Likely to contain repetition, inconsistencies and/or some major errors • Organisation and clarity of writing may be limited, but will be sufficient for the reader to engage with most aspects of the work • Needs major improvement to meet pass threshold at Master's level	Middle Lower	35 32	Fail	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	Fail
No submission, wrong answer	No submission, wrong answer		0	Fail	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 – Reflection: Level-7 (PGT and Integrated Master's Programmes at Level-7)

Descriptor	Detailed Descriptor	Position within Band	Mark	PGT Degree Classification	Integrated Master's Degree Classification
	Work that could not be bettered at taught Master's level study.		100	Distinction	First Class
Exceptional	As for 'outstanding' underpinned by elements of originality or novel ideas and sustained self-awareness. No improvement could reasonably be expected.	Middle Lower	95 90	Distinction	First Class
Outstanding	Work that is typically characterised by evidence of the following: • Outstanding reflective thinking, showing deep and critical examination of the learning process and how these reshape knowledge and inform current understanding and future practice, both academically and professionally • Evidences originality and strong self-awareness • Thoughtfully critiques assumptions and engages critically with literature or multiple perspectives to develop nuanced insights • Structure is logical, fluent, and cohesive, supporting a persuasive and sophisticated reflection • Very few, if any, weaknesses. Little improvement could reasonably be expected	Middle Lower	85 80	Distinction	First Class
Excellent	Work that is typically characterised by evidence of the following: • Excellent and methodical examination of the learning process, clearly connecting new knowledge to current understanding and implications for future practice, both academically and professionally • Demonstrates originality and self-awareness in analysing growth or change in perspective • Critiques assumptions effectively, supported by discerning use of literature and alternative viewpoints • Structure is coherent, well-organised, and aids reader understanding throughout • No serious weaknesses, a few areas of very minor improvement could be expected	Upper Middle Lower	78 75 72	Distinction	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	PGT Degree Classification	Integrated Master's Degree Classification
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: • Good or very good reflection showing clear understanding of how learning has developed and may inform future practice, both academically and professionally • Demonstrates developing originality and self-awareness • Assumptions are consistently challenged with integration of literature and different perspectives to support reflections, but lacks variety • Reflection is logically structured and coherent, with minor issues in flow or clarity • A few weaknesses may be identified, may need some improvement in one or more areas	Upper Middle Lower	68 65 62	Merit	2:1
Reasonable	Work that is typically characterised by evidence of the following: • Reasonable reflection demonstrating some awareness of how learning has developed and could influence future practice • Some evidence of self-awareness and attempts to question assumptions • Engages with literature and different perspectives to question some assumptions, though analysis may lack depth in places • Structure has a sustained narrative but lacks coherence • Needs some improvement	Upper Middle Lower	58 55 52	Pass	2:2
Fail **(Some reasonable elements but**	Unsatisfactory work that is typically characterised by evidence of the following: • Limited reflection that demonstrates little awareness of how learning informs current or future practice • Minimal evidence of self-awareness or critical engagement	Upper	48		

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	PGT Degree Classification	Integrated Master's Degree Classification
needs improvements before meeting pass threshold at Master's level)	• Reflection shows partial but incomplete critical engagement with literature or alternative perspectives • Structure is disjointed or unclear, and reflection lacks coherence • Needs some improvement before meeting pass threshold at Master's level	Middle Lower	45 42	Fail	Fail (revert to UG award candidature
Fail (Needs significant improvement before meeting pass threshold)	Unsatisfactory work at Master's level that is typically characterised by evidence of the following: • Very limited or superficial reflection showing no meaningful understanding of the learning process • Lacks originality, self-awareness, or criticality • Attempts are made to question or challenge assumptions, but are lacking critical engagement with literature or alternative perspectives • Mostly descriptive experiences without meaningful structure • Needs significant improvement to meet pass threshold at Master's level	Upper Middle Lower	38 35 32	Fail	Fail
Token submission	Minimal relevant content or engagement with the reflective task. Lacks any clear structure, analysis, or self-awareness. Token marks may be awarded for isolated relevant content.	Token submission	20, 10, 5	Fail	Fail
No submission, wrong answer	No submission, wrong topic, or wholly irrelevant content.		0	Fail	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: Level-7 (PGT and Integrated Master's Programmes at Level-7)

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	PGT Degree Classification	Integrated Master's Degree Classification
	Work that could not be bettered at Master's level study.		100	Distinction	First Class
Exceptional	As for 'outstanding' but underpinned by elements of originality and/or novel ideas in communication and sophisticated critical insight. No improvement could reasonably be expected.	Middle Lower	95 90	Distinction	First Class
Outstanding	Work that is typically characterised by evidence of the following: • Outstanding knowledge and understanding of complex issues, key concepts, and principles • Demonstrates strong criticality, pushing the boundaries of existing knowledge • Communication style is clearly structured, robust and persuasive • Visual aids are clear, elegant, and meaningfully support the argument • 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 ability to interpret or reframe complex ideas • Extensive and discriminating reading/use of source material, accurately used in support of the work • Very few, if any, weaknesses. Little improvement could reasonably be expected	Middle Lower	85 80	Distinction	First Class
Excellent	Work that is typically characterised by evidence of the following: • Excellent knowledge and understanding of key concepts and principles at the forefront of the discipline • Demonstrates criticality, exploring the boundaries of existing knowledge • Communication style is clearly structured, robust and logical	Upper	78		

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	PGT Degree Classification	Integrated Master's Degree Classification
	• Visual aids are well designed, clearly integrated, and enhance engagement • Demonstrates an excellent ability to interpret and/or present concepts and/or data in a critical and constructive way • Responses to questions, if appropriate, are thoughtful, showing depth of analysis and clear reasoning • Evidence of extensive and discriminating reading/use of source material, accurately used in support of the work • No serious weaknesses, a few areas of very minor improvement could be expected	Middle Lower	75 72	Distinction	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 • Demonstrates critical awareness with strong arguments which offer good analysis of key issues • Communication style is clear and professional, with mostly coherent structure • Visual aids are appropriate and support understanding effectively • Demonstrates a good or very good ability to interpret and/or present concepts and/or data • Responses to questions, if appropriate are confident and well informed, though not always fully developed • Evidence base is appropriate and up to date, though may lack depth or precision in citation • May contain some minor errors and/or minor areas for improvement	Upper Middle Lower	68 65 62	Merit	2:1
Reasonable	Work that is typically characterised by evidence of the following: • Reasonable knowledge and understanding of key concepts and principles • Overall presentation shows competence but lacks criticality and/ or signposted evidence	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	PGT Degree Classification	Integrated Master's Degree Classification
	• Communication style is clear enough to follow but some arguments may lack depth • Visual aids are serviceable but limited in quality or relevance • Responses to questions, if appropriate, are uneven, showing partial understanding • Evidence base is limited or inconsistently integrated, but may contain questionable interpretation of critical materials • May contain some errors and/or areas for improvement	Middle Lower	55 52	Pass	2:2
Fail **(Some reasonable elements but needs improvements before meeting pass threshold at Master's level)**	Unsatisfactory work that is typically characterised by evidence of the following: • Unsatisfactory knowledge and understanding of key concepts and principles • Overall presentation contains some evidence of argument but has insufficient criticality and/ or signposted evidence • Communication style may be difficult to follow and may lack coherence with • Visual aids are basic, inaccurate, or fail to support the argument • Demonstrates some ability to interpret and/or present concepts and/or data • Responses to questions, if appropriate, show limited understanding • Evidence base is weak, outdated, or poorly cited • Likely to contain inconsistencies and/or some major errors • Needs some improvement before meeting pass threshold at Master's level	Upper Middle Lower	48 45 42	Fail	Fail (revert to UG award candidature)
Fail (Needs significant improvement before meeting pass threshold)	Unsatisfactory work at Master's level that is typically characterised by evidence of the following: • A very limited knowledge and understanding of relevant concepts and principles. • Overall presentation lacks coherence, preparation, and academic credibility • Communication style is disorganised and unclear • Visual aids are absent or inappropriate • Responses to questions, if appropriate, demonstrate minimal understanding	Upper Middle	38 35	Fail	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	PGT Degree Classification	Integrated Master's Degree Classification
	• Evidence base is absent or irrelevant • Needs significant improvement to meet pass threshold at Master's level	Lower	32		
Token submission	Minimal engagement with the task. Knowledge, communication, and evidence base absent or incorrect. Token marks may be awarded for isolated relevant material.	Token submission	20, 10, 5	Fail	Fail
No submission, wrong answer	No submission, wrong answer		0	Fail	Fail

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.

Generic Assessment Criteria Staff Guidance – Level 7

1. The aim of the generic assessment criteria is to ensure that at Keele we reward our students appropriately for their achievements. The generic Level 7 marking criteria were implemented following recognition that there are some important differences between postgraduate and undergraduate work, including mark scales and classification banding, but also expectations surrounding the quality of the work produced at Level 7. Close similarities between the marking descriptors have been maintained wherever relevant across Levels 3-7.

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 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.

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.

Worked Examples:

- **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 module marks 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. In the case of 'Integrated' degrees, it is required that work undertaken at level 7 will be marked using the level 7 generic marking criteria.

9. The criteria have been carefully cross referenced with Keele's PGT regulations - in particular, colleagues should note:

- 45% is the threshold mark for "compensation" of an overall module mark for PGT students (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.*