

Keele University - Generic Assessment Criteria

STEP 1	STEP 2	STEP 3	STEP 4	AWARD
Band	Band Descriptor	Position within Band	Mark	UG Award
Excellent	Work that could not be bettered at UG level	Outstanding	100	First
	Work that is largely characterised by evidence of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge and understanding showing significant signs of originality and an in-depth understanding of the underlying concepts and principles. • Evidence of extensive and discriminating reading / research using relevant sources and accurate use of academic conventions. • Use of new information, new methodology or new theory at the forefront of the discipline. • Some original insights; arguments are convincing and well supported in almost all respects. • Grasp of appropriate critical concepts and critical analytical ability. • A firm sense of relevance. • Ability to make use of scholarly reviews and primary sources. • Ability to present well-structured, robust and persuasive argument and judgements in accordance with the theories and concepts of the subject. • Excellent communication skills. Demonstrates the ability to interpret and/or present concepts and/or data in a critical and constructive way. 		90	
			85	
		Excellent	80	
		Very good	75	
			72	
Good	Work that is largely characterised by evidence of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good knowledge and understanding of underlying concepts and principles. • Ability to distinguish and use relevant material. • Good use of relevant sources; accurate use of academic conventions. • Good use of examples to illustrate points and justify arguments. • Good analysis and well-organised argument, well supported by evidence. • Develops and analyses the core issues covered by the assessment while dealing with some advanced aspects of the assessment topic, showing an ability to engage in debate on relevant material. • Good work demonstrating clear understanding of the issues. • Some signs of presenting information in a new light, or drawing strands together in a new framework. • Good communication skills with clear presentation of argument/analysis. 	Top	68	Upper Second
		Middle	65	
		Lower	62	

Satisfactory (Needs some improvement)	Work that is largely characterised by evidence of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of a sufficient number of core materials / ideas to substantiate general statements. • Appropriate use of quotation or other illustrative material. • Arguments are well constructed but omit or do not develop sufficiently some significant issues. • Illustrative examples that do not clearly justify arguments • Ability to recognise core issues and to construct a coherent answer that keeps these in view. • Adequate level of understanding of the relevant concepts. • tendency to repetition of lecture / seminar notes without much evidence of further appreciation of subject. • Shows understanding of relevant material, but only develops and analyses the core issues covered by the assessment to a limited extent. • Clear style with satisfactory presentation. 	Top	58	Lower Second
		Middle	55	
		Lower	52	
Pass (Needs Substantial Improvement)	Work that is largely characterised by evidence of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some knowledge of a restricted range of issues related to the assessment suggesting a lack of understanding of some key concepts • Shows limited understanding of relevant material. • Partial understanding of relevant issues or technical terms. • Some development or illustration of points. • Presentation of material that shows only a narrow ability to understand and correctly deploy the work of others. • Identifies and states accurately relevant principles but fails to effectively develop or analyse the core issues covered by the assessment. • Restricted use of relevant literature sources and (where appropriate to the assignment) work experience. • Some ability to argue logically and organise answers that may contain flaws in logic or methodology or both. • Arguments are poorly constructed or superficial with weak/simplistic presentation. 	Top	48	Third
		Middle	45	
		Lower	42	
Fail	Work that is largely characterised by evidence of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some attempt at an answer but seriously lacking in content and or ability to organise thoughts. • Inability to identify or state accurately even basic ideas relevant to the core issues covered by the assessment. • Significant errors or misconceptions in respect of a core issue covered by the assessment that indicate a serious misunderstanding of the assessment topic. • Reproduces in an inappropriate or incorrect manner the work of others. • Little evidence of coherent thinking or organisation of arguments • Includes a significant amount of irrelevant material. • Poor / inappropriate / inaccurate presentation. • Work that just fails to meet the required standards, but could be condoned. 	Fail	38	Fail
		Fail	35	
		Fail	32	

Poor	<p>Work that is largely characterised by evidence of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contains major errors or misconceptions that indicate a fundamental misunderstanding of the assessment topic. • Deficiencies in structure, presentation and formulation of arguments that are sufficiently serious to indicate a fundamental lack of understanding of the assessment topic. • No appreciable evidence of coherent thinking or organisation. • Consistently poor presentation. • Work that is insufficient to be condoned. 	Low fail	20	Fail
Very Poor	Token or no submission.	Token marks may be awarded if a submission is made that has no substance	10	Fail
			0	

Guidance for students – Keele’s 21 point mark scale

Your work will be marked using the University’s **21 point marking scale**.

This scale has 21 mark (or grade) points 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 of 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

The University has generic descriptors for work which is given a mark that falls within the range of marks in each class. So – there is a descriptor for work which falls within the Lower Second Class range, another for the Upper Second Class range, and so on. You can find the descriptors attached to this document.

The mark which each piece of your work will be given 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 in order to arrive at a judgment about the position (high, mid, low) within the class. The work will be awarded the mark assigned to the relevant position in the class. As an example, for work which meets the descriptors of the 2.1 class in most respects, it will be a ‘high 2.1’ and be awarded mark point 68.

If a module has more than one ‘unit’ (or piece) of assessment, (e.g. the assessment comprises two assessed essays), the mark for each unit is determined using the 21 point mark scale and then the marks are averaged, taking account of the units’ respective weightings, in order to produce the module result. This is expressed as a percentage (and therefore may be any number up to 100 and so is not limited to one of the marks on the scale).

The table attached shows each class of degree (including the subdivisions into high, medium and low) and the marks assigned to each position in the class on the 21 point mark scale, alongside the University’s generic descriptors for work in the class.

If you have any queries about the mark scale or descriptors, please consult your personal tutor, one of your academic tutors or contact the Student Learning team

<https://www.keele.ac.uk/studentlearning/>

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 and that this is reflected in the proportion of “good degrees” (2:1 and above) that are awarded.
2. The use of a “step marking” system alongside the assessment criteria supports this overall aim.
3. In order to achieve the additional objective of ensuring as much consistency as possible across all disciplines in the University, it is important that these criteria and the step marking system which accompanies them are widely adopted across the institution. It is therefore also very important that they are communicated effectively to students, using the guidance for students which has been agreed by Senate. Schools may need to supplement that guidance to take account of local variations for specific types of assessment not readily covered by the generic guidance.
4. When using the criteria, colleagues should note that in each band, the criteria apply to “work which is largely characterised” by those criteria. It is not necessary for work to fulfil all of 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.
5. When using the criteria, colleagues should bear in mind that they should also use their own academic judgement to allow for the application of the criteria to different levels of study.
6. Colleagues should remember that these criteria have been introduced after extensive consultation, in order to assist the adoption of a consistent approach across the institution. Consequently, it is expected that there will need to be some adjustments in marking practices and not merely a retention of the status quo.
7. Guidance for students has been drafted to accompany the criteria. The Student Learning Team will also be working alongside the Students’ Union to develop materials and activities to support students in understanding the new criteria. The Academic Development Team will provide similar sessions and materials for staff.
8. These criteria will need to be adapted for different types of assessments, and it is expected that this will occur. However, such adaptation must comply with the “step marking” approach and the bands used must reflect as precisely as possible the generic assessment criteria.
9. The criteria have been carefully correlated with Keele’s degree algorithm – in particular, colleagues should note:
 - 10% is the threshold mark for determining “non-engagement with studies” (Regulation 1A 9.3)
 - 30% is the threshold mark for “condonement” of a mark (Regulation 1A 11.4).