

Keele University - Generic Assessment Criteria Level 7 (PGT)

STEP 1	STEP 2	STEP 3	STEP 4	CLASSIFICATION
Band	Band Descriptor	Position within Band	Mark	Corresponding PGT Classification
Excellent	Work that could not be bettered at <i>taught</i> postgraduate level. In some disciplines, this may be at or approaching publishable standard.	Upper	100	Distinction
	<p>Work that is predominantly characterised by evidence of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An excellent level of knowledge and understanding of complex issues, underlying concepts, theory and methodology, at the forefront of the subject or practice, including ability to use and apply these where appropriate. • Evidence of extensive and discriminating reading/use of source material, accurately used in support of the work. The materials include primary sources and current research. The materials are skilfully evaluated and their assumptions appraised and/or their arguments challenged. Accurate use of academic conventions. • Evidence of original, independent, and critical thought and a strong, well-structured argument that is convincing and well-supported. Detailed analysis and critical thought, including reflection upon the limitations of theory and/or research. Explores the boundaries of existing knowledge. • Excellent communication skills. Demonstrates the ability to interpret and/or present concepts and/or data in a clear, critical and constructive way. 		90	
		Middle	85	
			80	
		Lower	75	
	72			
Very Good (may still contain very minor errors or areas for improvement)	<p>Work that is predominantly characterised by evidence of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A very good level of knowledge and understanding of issues, including some complex issues found at an advanced level. Able to describe and use appropriate concepts, theory and methodology, mostly at the forefront of the subject or practice. • Evidence of a range of reading/source material, accurately used in support of the work. The materials include primary sources and current research. Some appraisal or challenge of the arguments presented in the materials. Accurate use of academic conventions. • A very good, well-structured argument that is appropriately supported by source materials and/or use of pertinent examples. Evidence of critical thought or evaluation of competing arguments. Some signs of presenting argument or information in a new light. • Very good communication skills. Clear presentation of argument/analysis that is organised, logical, and coherent. 	Upper	68	Merit
		Middle	65	
		Lower	62	

Good/ Satisfactory (contains minor errors or areas for improvement)	<p>Work that is predominantly characterised by evidence of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A satisfactory level of knowledge and understanding of main issues. Sufficient awareness of subject or practice. Able to describe and use a range of the major concepts, theory and methodology. • Familiarity with a proportion of central reading/source material, but with some minor errors, omissions, or questionable interpretation of essential material. Generally satisfactory use of academic conventions but may have minor errors or omissions. • Argument that identifies and offers some analysis of key issues. Some critical judgement offered. Ability to structure an argument that connects aspects of core subject knowledge and, where appropriate, their application. Some use of relevant source materials or examples to support argument. • Good communication skills. Clear style and presentation of argument/analysis that is generally coherent and well-structured. 	Upper	58	Pass
		Middle	55	
		Lower	52	
Fail (Some reasonable elements but needs improvements before meeting pass threshold at this level)	<p>Work that is predominantly characterised by evidence of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A limited level of knowledge and understanding of a restricted range of issues that are poorly conceived and poorly directed towards the question, or containing notable errors/omissions. Limited awareness of subject or practice. Shows some understanding of empirical or theoretical issues but is not able to develop them further. Limited use of relevant material. • Familiarity with a proportion of basic reading/source material, but with errors and/or omissions of essential material. Academic conventions may be used weakly. • Some evidence of argument but containing irrelevant or unrelated elements. Inadequate attention to structure and organisation of argument. Limited or no critical judgement in analysing issues or presenting ideas. Limited attempt to connect aspects of subject knowledge. Limited use of relevant materials or examples to support ideas. • Satisfactory communication skills but with some errors in expression or style. Basic presentation and simplistic expression, containing notable deficiencies. 	Fail	48	Fail
		Fail	45	
		Fail	42	
Fail (Needs substantial improvements before meeting pass threshold)	<p>Work that is predominantly characterised by evidence of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A very limited level of knowledge and understanding of some relevant issues or materials, or containing major errors/omissions and misconceptions. Very limited awareness of subject or practice. Little use of relevant material. • Evidence of little reading appropriate for the level of study, and/or minimal or indiscriminate use of sources. Academic conventions used weakly. • Insufficient attempt at argument and containing irrelevant or unrelated elements. Inadequate attention to structure and organisation of argument. No critical judgement in analysing issues or presenting ideas. No proper support for ideas presented. • Limited communication skills. Limited use of specialist subject vocabulary. Difficulties in communicating simple ideas. Poor presentation skills. 	Fail	38	Fail
		Fail	35	
		Fail	32	

<p>Poor (Needs very substantial improvements before meeting pass threshold)</p>	<p>Work that is predominantly characterised by evidence of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An attempt to answer the question but with little understanding or grasp of course materials. Little awareness of subject or practice. Little ability to utilise subject knowledge or materials. • Little or no evidence of reading. Views presented are unsupported and non-authoritative. Academic conventions are largely ignored. • Struggles to distinguish between assertion and argument. Little attempt to address question and/or opinions offered are purely subjective. Unable to offer coherent synthesis, analysis or evaluation of ideas and information. • Limited communication skills. Limited or no use of specialist subject vocabulary. Difficulties in communicating simple ideas. Very poor presentation skills. 	<p>Low fail</p>	<p>20</p>	<p>Fail</p>
<p>Very Poor</p>	<p>Irrelevant, token, or no submission that can be characterised by evidence of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fragmentary or no evidence of familiarity with course material. No genuine attempt to answer the question or work that is totally irrelevant. No real awareness of subject or practice. Little or no ability to connect subject knowledge or materials to appropriate contexts. Work that is fundamentally wrong. • No evidence of reading. Views are unsupported and non-authoritative. Academic conventions are largely ignored. • Unable to distinguish between assertion and argument or fails to offer any relevant view. Fails to address question and/or opinions offered are purely subjective, or work that is totally irrelevant or fundamentally wrong. • Extremely limited communication skills. Extremely limited or no use of specialist subject vocabulary. Difficulties in communicating simple ideas. Very poor presentation skills. 	<p>Token marks may be awarded if a submission is made that has no substance</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>Fail</p>
				<p>0</p>

Guidance for level 7 students – Keele’s 21-point mark scale

Your work for level 7 will be marked using the University’s **21-point marking scale**, unless specific discipline demands upon the type of assessment undertaken preclude this.

This scale has 21-mark (or grade) points on it that fall into classes of performance which themselves correspond to the overall degree classification. The University uses these classes of performance for its postgraduate modules, as follows:

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

These classes of performance correspond to generic descriptive bands, ranging from Excellent to Very Poor, that characterise the quality of work being marked. By using these generic descriptors, assessed work is given a mark that falls within the range of marks for each band. So, there is a descriptor for work that falls within the Excellent range, another for the Very Good 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 band 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 (upper, middle, lower) within the band. The work will be awarded the mark assigned to the relevant position in the band. As an example, for work that meets the descriptors of the Very Good band in most respects, it will be in the ‘upper’ position in the band 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 same would also apply if a single unit of assessment is composed of more than one element, so that marks are assigned to each element using the 21-point mark scale prior to averaging to produce the overall mark for the unit.

The table attached shows each band (including the subdivisions into upper, middle, and lower) and the marks assigned to each position in the band on the 21-point mark scale, alongside the University’s generic descriptors for work in the band.

For those undertaking an integrated degree, these generic marking criteria will be used to determine the mark for level 7 modules. The final class of integrated degree will be determined by the relevant Keele degree classification algorithm, available on the University’s website at <https://www.keele.ac.uk/sas/academicsservices/degreeclassification/>.

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/>

Level 7 Generic Marking Criteria - Staff Guidance

1. Generic level 7 marking criteria have been developed 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 work produced at level 7. However, it was also recognised that there were many advantages to developing a greater unification in approach to marking assessments for taught work across the University as a whole. Close similarities between marking descriptors have therefore been maintained wherever relevant across levels 4-7.
2. The central aims of the generic level 7 marking criteria are to achieve consistency in approach with those recently adopted for levels 4-6 and to ensure that we reward our students appropriately for their achievements.
3. The use of a “step marking” system alongside the assessment criteria supports these aims.
4. While achieving the objective of consistency – both across levels 4-7 and across all disciplines in the University – is a primary aim, it is recognised that individual Schools may need to supplement the guidance accompanying the mark scheme for level 7 to take account of local variations for specific types of assessment not readily covered by the generic guidance. This might include, for example, certain kinds of empirical assessments. In cases where such local discipline or programme specific assessment criteria are used, it is expected that their framework is compatible with the University’s generic assessment criteria.
5. When using the criteria, colleagues should note that in each band, the criteria apply to “work which is predominantly 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.
6. When using the criteria, colleagues should bear in mind that they should also use their own academic judgement to allow for the interpretation and application of the criteria to different discipline requirements and expectations.
7. Although it is expected that these criteria will need to be adapted for different types of assessments, such adaptation should comply with the “step marking” approach and the bands used must reflect as precisely as possible the generic assessment criteria.
8. The marking of assessments should be primarily guided by reference to the descriptive criteria, with bands should serving as general guidance as to where the work is positioned within a class (‘upper’, ‘middle’, or ‘lower’).
9. In the case of ‘Integrated’ degrees, it is expected that work undertaken at level 7 will be marked using the level 7 generic marking criteria. As the generic marking criteria are used to determine module marks for level 7, the overall classification for an integrated degree which also involves the use of marking criteria for modules at levels 4-6 will be determined by following the appropriate Keele degree classification algorithm, available on the University’s website at <https://www.keele.ac.uk/sas/academicservices/degreeclassification/>.

Document Name	Generic Assessment Criteria (Level 7 PG) – for use from 2018/10
Owner	Academic Registry
Version Number	[version number, with 0.1 increments for minor amendments]
Equality Analysis Form Submission Date	[Decision from Equality Analysis and form submission date]
Approval Date	26 April 2018
Approved By	[Committee name]
Date of Commencement	26 April 2018
Date of Last Review	26 April 2018
Date for Next Review	26 April 2022
Related University Policy Documents	[List all applicable]
<i>For Office Use – Keywords for search function</i>	