

SECTION 10: MARKING

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10.1 ANONYMITY

Written examinations

- 10.1.1 It is a requirement, in respect of all written examinations whether administered centrally or by a School, that scripts remain anonymous until marking and (unless it is impossible) moderation has been completed.
- 10.1.2 The front covers of answer books used in centrally administered examinations have a folding strip which, at the end of the examination, is sealed by the candidate to conceal his or her name. The Examinations, Student Records and Graduation Office can normally supply Schools with similar cover sheets for use in School examinations, but for security reasons can no longer provide answer books. Schools are asked to make their request at least two weeks before the front covers are required.
- 10.1.3 In centrally administered examinations, candidates are asked to write their Examination Candidate Number on the cover of each answer book. Each student's Examination Candidate Number is included in the information given on their personal timetable, and is also listed by their name on the seating list for each examination. A decoding list linking students'

names to their Candidate Examination Numbers is circulated to all Examination Representatives at the beginning of each examination period.

Coursework and in-class tests

10.1.4 Wherever practicable and appropriate, coursework and in-class tests should remain anonymous to the marker until the marking has been completed. Schools are responsible for determining whether anonymous marking is practicable and appropriate in relation to coursework and in-class tests in their modules. Where a School agrees that anonymisation of coursework/in-class tests is not appropriate and practicable, the School should consider enhancing the moderation process for coursework/in-class tests and must ensure that the extent of the moderation carried out is clearly documented.

Anonymity following marking

10.1.5 Unless it is impracticable, candidates should remain anonymous during the moderation process and until the results have been determined by the Programme Examiners' Meeting.

10.2 MARKERS

10.2.1 Marking shall be carried out by appropriately qualified and properly appointed persons. It should be noted that peer assessment may be used for formative purposes and a marker's determination of a formal mark may be informed by peer marking.

10.3 MARKING RANGES FOR LEVELS 4-6 (UNDERGRADUATE)

10.3.1 The generic marking criteria for modules at Levels 4-6 are set out in Annex 1. Specific marking criteria for particular work should be consistent with the generic marking criteria. The Level 4-6 marking scale is as follows.

Passing categories at Honours level	
70-100	First Class
60-69	Second Class Division 1
50-59	Second Class Division 2
40-49	Third Class
Failing categories at Honours level	
35-39	Below the undergraduate threshold standard
0-35	Unsatisfactory work

10.3.2 Marks of 29 and 39 were previously not permitted as the final module mark for a module at Levels 4-6. This policy was amended with effect from 2017/18. For further details, please see Section 13.2 of the *Assessment Handbook*.

10.3.3 Some modules may be assessed on a Pass/Fail basis.

10.3.4 Other outcomes include:

DN = Deemed Not To Have Sat

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- RN = Result Not Yet Available
 NR = No recommendation submitted to the Senate
 U = Unassessed module

10.4 MARKING RANGES FOR LEVEL 7 (POSTGRADUATE/INTEGRATED MASTERS)

10.4.1 The generic marking criteria for modules at Level 7 (whether for an Postgraduate Taught programme or an Integrated Masters programme) are set out in Annex 2. Specific marking criteria for particular work should be consistent with the generic marking criteria.

The Level 7 marking scale is as follows.

	Postgraduate Taught	Integrated Masters
Passing categories		
70-100	Distinction	First Class
60-69	Merit	Second Class Division 1
50-59	Pass	Second Class Division 2
Failing categories		
40-49	Below the Masters threshold standard	Below the Masters threshold standard
0-40	Unsatisfactory work	Unsatisfactory work

10.4.2 Some modules may be assessed on a Pass/Fail basis.

10.4.3 Other outcomes include:

- DN = Deemed Not To Have Sat
 RN = Result Not Yet Available
 NR = No recommendation submitted to the Senate
 U = Unassessed module

10.5 MARKING CRITERIA

10.5.1 Marking shall be conducted in accordance with the relevant marking criteria, as set out in Annexes 1 and 2.

10.5.2 In exceptional cases a module may be designated as assessable on a PASS/FAIL basis provided that it has been agreed at scrutiny that the only relevant consideration in assessing the module is the acquisition of a threshold competence in the skills or knowledge being assessed.

10.5.3 Marking of multiple-choice questions
 The use of negative marking (i.e. the deduction of marks or fractions of marks for incorrect

answers) is not permitted, other than in exceptional circumstances, such as in relation to a programme with Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies accreditation. In such cases, the School is required to discuss the issue with the relevant Teaching and Learning Dean.

10.6 MARKING ACROSS THE FULL RANGE

10.6.1 It is essential that markers make full use of the range of marks available (i.e. all marks from 0 to 100), subject to the provision that work in the First Class range (or Distinction range for the Foundation Degree and for Masters degrees) should only be awarded one of the following 'step marks': 72, 75, 80, 85, 90, 95, 100. Please note that modules which have a detailed marking scheme capable of yielding a mark of 100, and in which the highest marks are demonstrably achievable by the best candidates performing within the normal range as defined by the relevant University marking criteria are excepted from the step-marking provisions. (Markers should also note the provisions relating to module marks in 10.3.2, above.)

10.7 STEP-MARKING IN THE FIRST CLASS/DISTINCTION RANGE

- 10.7.1 The University is committed to rewarding excellence by ensuring that First Class/Distinction achievement is awarded appropriate marks from across the full First Class/Distinction range (70-100) in order that such achievement is appropriately represented in the weighted average used in classification.
- 10.7.2 For marking purposes, the First Class/Distinction range is divided in two. Marks in the range 85–100 should be awarded to work in the upper half of the **normal** range for First Class/Distinction work. Marks in the range 70-84 should be awarded to work in the lower half of the **normal** range for First Class/Distinction work. These provisions are designed to ensure that appropriate use is made of the full First Class/Distinction range of marks.
- 10.7.3 The marker must use his or her professional judgement to assess the work and award the most appropriate allowable mark, in accordance with the following guidelines.
- 10.7.4 **Step-marking in the First Class/Distinction range should be applied at the point where the primary academic judgement about the quality of a piece of work is being made, i.e. where a piece of work is being marked. Step-marking should be applied once only, and, where more than one piece of work contributes to a module mark, the module mark calculated from its constituent elements should not then be raised to a step mark. In these cases, a module mark in the first class range need not be a step mark.**
- 10.7.5 However, step-marking should not be applied in an assessment for which an appropriate detailed marking scheme is available which is capable of generating all marks (for instance, an examination paper with a series of questions to which a detailed marking scheme applies). Such assessments are excepted from the step-marking provisions since the full range of First Class/Distinction marks (including 100) is demonstrably available and the highest marks are demonstrably achievable by the best candidates performing within the normal First Class/Distinction range as defined by the University marking criteria (see Annex 1).
- 10.7.6 For example:
- a) Where a module mark is derived from one assessment which lacks a detailed marking scheme and where the work demonstrates First Class/Distinction quality, only stepped marks can be used, i.e. 72, 75, 80, 85, 90, 95 and 100.
 - b) Where a module mark is derived from one assessment which has a detailed marking scheme capable of generating all marks, the mark generated from the marking scheme should be used, i.e. 0-100.

- c) Where a module mark is derived from several components which do not have detailed mark schemes, each component should be marked using step-marks for work in the First Class/Distinction range. But when these elements are aggregated, with whatever weighting, in order to produce a module mark, this overall mark can use numbers other than those in the steps.
- d) Where a module mark is derived from several components which do have detailed mark schemes, each component should be marked in accordance with the mark scheme. When these elements are aggregated, with whatever weighting, in order to produce a module mark, this overall mark can use numbers other than those in the steps.
- e) Where a module mark is derived from a number of assessment components, some of which have a detailed marking scheme and some of which do not, those components which have a detailed marking scheme should be marked in accordance with the detailed marking scheme and those which do not should use the stepped marks for the First Class/Distinction. When these elements are aggregated, with whatever weighting, in order to produce a module mark, this overall mark can use numbers other than those in the steps.

All staff should be aware of these guidelines on step marking when undertaking any marking of coursework or examinations. It is also essential that external examiners are aware of these practices, to supplement the information they will receive as a matter of course from the Examinations, Student Records and Graduation Office.

10.8 MODULE MARKS: WHOLE NUMBERS AND ROUNDING

- 10.8.1 For individual modules, marks should be whole numbers.
- 10.8.2 In calculating the mark for a module, .50 should be rounded up to the next higher whole number and .49 should be rounded down to the next lower whole number.

10.9 MARKING ILLEGIBLE SCRIPTS

Prevention

- 10.9.1 Students are encouraged to seek help from Study Advice should they find handwriting long exam answers difficult.
- 10.9.2 Tutors/Lecturers should advise students that exam scripts are handwritten and that it is their responsibility to answer the questions in a clear and legible way.
- 10.9.3 This warning is also printed on the front of every pink answer booklet used for central examinations.

In the first instance of finding an illegible script

- 10.9.4 Markers are recommended to seek a second opinion, if practical. If a script is genuinely illegible, then **the School should contact the student directly and ask them to come in to type up their exam answers on a computer. This is called 'making a fair copy'.**
- 10.9.5 At this point the student has waived the normal exam answer anonymity. The write up should be monitored by staff or an invigilator to ensure that no additional notes or variation is made from the original text. Ideally this should be carried out as soon as possible after the issue is raised, but the student may have further exams which need to be avoided when booking rooms and/or invigilators for this purpose. The department must cover the cost of the

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- invigilator if no departmental staff member is available. (The Examinations, Student Records and Graduation Office can recommend suitably trained invigilators if necessary).
- 10.9.6 The student may not be aware that their script is hard to read, so this should be disclosed sensitively. Highlight the possibility that they could benefit from visiting Study Advice team in the Library: www.reading.ac.uk/library/study-advice.
- 10.9.7 If the student suspects that they have a Specific Learning Difficulty (like Dyslexia), recommend that they book an appointment with the Disability Advisory Service in the Carrington Building.
- 10.9.8 **Explain in writing that this is a warning to take greater care in future, and that this opportunity to 'make a fair copy' will not be offered again. In other universities the penalty can be that the script receives zero marks.**

If the same student produces a further illegible script

- 10.9.9 If the student was not aware of the problem with the original script at the time, then treat as above. However, if the student has received notification before and has already used their opportunity to make a fair copy in the past, then it is up to the School to decide how the script should be marked – i.e. crediting only where content is clear. Again, suggest the student seeks additional help from Study Advice/Disability.

Special arrangements

- 10.9.10 Some students will be granted the opportunity to use a PC to type their answers, or an Amanuensis (scribe) to handwrite their answers, but these are both special arrangements which are only granted in advance of the exam period by the Examinations, Student Records and Graduation Office and/or Disability Advisory Service Specialist Teacher Assessor based on a specific, evidenced physical or learning disability (or sometimes a temporary injury). www.reading.ac.uk/essentials/support-and-wellbeing/disability/specific-learning-difficulties
- 10.9.11 In very exceptional circumstances, there may be a student whose special arrangements for exams include the opportunity for the student or an amanuensis (scribe) to make a fair copy of their scripts. In this case, this will be decided in advance of the exam period and the Disability and/or Examination Representatives within the department will already be aware of this arrangement. www.reading.ac.uk/exams/guidance-for-students/special-examination-arrangements.

Introduction and Guidance

This document is designed primarily to provide an overview of what a graduate should be able to do given their final degree classification. These expectations can be adapted to individual modules and can be used as the basis for designing marking rubrics (sometimes called Marking Schemes) for individual assessment tasks. However, when using this guidance as the basis for module-level assessments, it needs to be recognised that the levels of performance need to be appropriate for the level of the module. For example, assessments at Part One will need to be appropriate to a student working at level 4 on the [QAA's framework for higher education qualifications](#) (FHEQ). The table below summarises the progressive expectations for *graduates* at each level of qualification.

Level 4 – Certificate of Higher Education	Level 5 – Diploma of Higher Education /Foundation Degrees	Level 6 – Bachelor Degrees
<p>Holders of a Certificate of Higher Education will have a sound knowledge of the basic concepts of a subject and will have learned how to take different approaches to solving problems. They will be able to communicate accurately and will have the qualities needed for employment requiring the exercise of some personal responsibility. The Certificate of Higher Education may be a first step towards obtaining higher level qualifications.”</p>	<p>Holders of qualifications at this level will have developed a sound understanding of the principles in their field of study and will have learned to apply those principles more widely. Through this, they will have learned to evaluate the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems. Their studies may well have had a vocational orientation, for example HNDs, enabling them to perform effectively in their chosen field. Holders of qualifications at this level will have the qualities necessary for employment in situations requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and decision-making.</p>	<p>Holders of a bachelor's degree with honours will have developed an understanding of a complex body of knowledge, some of it at the current boundaries of an academic discipline. Through this, the holder will have developed analytical techniques and problem-solving skills that can be applied in many types of employment. The holder of such a qualification will be able to evaluate evidence, arguments, and assumptions, to reach sound judgements and to communicate them effectively.</p> <p>Holders of a bachelor's degree with honours should have the qualities needed for employment in situations requiring the exercise of personal responsibility, and decision-making in complex and unpredictable circumstances.</p>

(QAA:2014 p.21)

The QAA provides further guidance, [the Outcomes Classification Descriptions](#), on a range of criteria which can be used to evaluate whether or not a potential graduate meets the expectations appropriate to the level. These criteria are described

in four general categories: Knowledge and Understanding, Cognitive skills, Practical skills, and Transferrable skills. Helpfully, these expectations are extrapolated to show progressively higher expectations at each level of degree classification. The generic marking criteria which follow are based on the QAA guidance.

However, relying solely on this extrapolation can be limiting as only covers *graduates* at level 6 on the FHEQ (see previous paragraph). Therefore, as stated earlier, expectations also need to be appropriate to the level of the *module*. There ought to be clear progression in expectations as the levels increase. The following example of the Problem Solving criterion, is taken from the [SEEC level descriptors](#) to demonstrate progression across different levels.

	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6	Level 7	Level 8
Problem-solving and enquiry	Applies pre-defined problem-solving techniques to investigate given problems using information and data in familiar contexts.	Applies established problem-solving methods and techniques to recognise and investigate problems, using information and data in familiar and unfamiliar contexts.	Applies a range of relevant problem-solving methods and techniques to define and investigate problems, patterns and relationships using information and data in contexts of varying complexity.	Selects and applies specialist problem-solving strategies, methods and techniques to define, investigate and critically evaluate problems using information and data in complex and inter-related contexts.	Selects and adapts appropriate advanced problem-solving strategies, methods and techniques to design systematic investigations that define and critically evaluate problems, using specialist information and data in unpredictable and complex contexts.	Develops innovative and highly advanced problem-solving strategies, methods and techniques to design comprehensive investigations that critically evaluate problems to generate new and information and data in highly abstract and complex contexts.

Extract from SEEC Level Descriptors 2021

The descriptors at Level 3 are particularly pertinent for programmes with a Foundation year as modules in Part 0 should be aligned this level. These SEEC descriptors are therefore a sound starting point for developing appropriate module-level criteria.

There is potential for over-lap and transferability between the four headings used in the descriptors below which may depend on the nature of the discipline. There is no expectation to rigidly follow these headings; for example, a transferrable skill in one discipline might be considered a practical skill in another. Oral Communication may be an example of a skill which can fall into many categories.

Not every criterion, which appears in the first column of each table which follows, needs to be covered in every assessment. Assessment criteria need to be driven by the learning outcomes which means that only relevant criteria need to be considered.

When constructing feedback, these descriptors can be used to construct consistent and useful comments. These descriptors can also be used when building marking rubrics using appropriate online tools.

When used as marking rubrics these descriptors are useful tools to develop assessment literacy. They should be unpacked for students before assessments are submitted using a variety of techniques, for example, through the use of exemplars which show the differentiated standards. Students can also use these descriptors to engage in self and/or peer marking exercises.

Note on communication (see Transferable skills, below)

In considering Programme Learning Outcomes (PLOs), Schools should normally include a PLO around clear communication. This refers to the student's ability to use language effectively to express their ideas clearly for the purpose of an assessment. Good written communication skills include logical sequencing and structure in the development of ideas, an appropriate style or level of formality for the intended audience, and an appropriate control of vocabulary, spelling, punctuation and grammar.

The PLO should be reflected in Module Learning Outcomes and in marking criteria for assignments, but not necessarily in all modules or all assignments. It is recommended that 10-15% of a mark at Foundation and Part 1, and 5-10% of a mark at other Parts and PGT, be allocated to the assessment of clear communication within written assignments.

In applying the above criterion, Schools should take as a benchmark the normal standard of written English which would be expected in a professional workplace or in academic writing.

It is recognised that the conditions of timed written examinations are unlike the more natural contexts in which students more commonly write, such as within the workplace, where students would have greater access to a range of tools to support them. As a result, it is not expected that the above criterion around clear communication necessarily be included an outcome in the assessment of written examinations.

Knowledge and understanding

A systematic extensive and comparative understanding of key aspects of the field of study, including coherent and detailed knowledge of the subject and critical understanding of theories and concepts, at least some of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of defined aspects of a discipline.

Criteria	Not successful		3rd (pass or threshold) 40-49%	2.2 50-59%	2.1 60-69%	1st Class	
	0-29%	30-39%				Lower range (70-84%)	Upper range (85-100%)
Mastery of the Discipline	There is some isolated knowledge of the subject. However, there is inadequate understanding of subject-specific theories, paradigms, concepts and principles.	Your work shows limited knowledge and understanding gained from study. It contains irrelevant content and/or use of methods.	Your work demonstrates a depth of knowledge and understanding in key aspects of your field of study which sufficiently incorporates appropriate terminology, facts and concepts.	Your work consistently demonstrates a sound breadth and depth of subject knowledge and understanding – which may include subject-specific theories, paradigms, concepts, and principles. However, it, sometimes tends towards the descriptive rather than the critical or analytical.	Your work demonstrates a thorough breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding, showing a clear, critical insight.	Your work shows a strong grasp of knowledge and understanding, significantly beyond the threshold expectation at this level, and goes beyond what has been taught.	Your work shows exceptional knowledge and understanding, significantly beyond the threshold expectation at this level and goes well beyond what has been taught.
Scholarly Practice	Your work is wholly lacking in sufficient evidence of background investigation, analysis, research, enquiry and/or study.	Your work has limited background investigation, analysis, research, enquiry and/or study	Your work has general background investigation, analysis, research, enquiry and/or study which uses established techniques, with the ability to extract relevant points.	Your work consistently shows background investigation, analysis, research, enquiry and/or study using established techniques accurately, and critical appraisal of academic sources.	Your work shows thorough background investigation, analysis, research, enquiry and/or study using established techniques accurately, and demonstrates a well-developed ability to critically	Your work shows a strong and thorough background investigation, analysis, research, enquiry and/or study using established techniques accurately beyond the usual range. There is some evaluation	Your work shows independent, extensive and appropriate investigation, analysis, research, enquiry and/or study well beyond the usual range, together with critical evaluation, to advance work

Criteria	Not successful		3rd (pass or threshold) 40-49%	2.2 50-59%	2.1 60-69%	1st Class	
	0-29%	30-39%				Lower range (70-84%)	Upper range (85-100%)
					appraise a wide range of sources.	in order to advance and/or direct arguments.	and/or direct arguments.

Cognitive skills

A conceptual understanding of a level that is necessary to devise and sustain arguments, and/or to solve problems and comment on research and scholarship in the discipline, with an appreciation of the uncertainty, ambiguity and limits of knowledge.

Criteria	Not successful 0-29	Not successful 30-39	3rd (pass or threshold) 40-49%	2.2 50-59%	2.1 60-69%	1 st – Lower Range (70-84)	1 st - Upper Range (85-100)
Engagement with literature	Your work displays an over-reliance on set sources. You have not demonstrated an adequate ability to select and evaluate reading and research. Sources of readings and research have not been referenced.	Your work includes limited references to readings, research, and primary sources. Sources are used without adequate evaluation or comment expected at this level of study. Sources are poorly referenced.	Your work demonstrates your ability to select, evaluate and comment on reading, research, and primary sources within the set range. You have not always shown the relevance of these sources to your work. You have attempted to reference all sources.	Your work consistently demonstrates the ability to select, evaluate and comment on reading, research, and primary sources, sometimes beyond the set range. These sources have been referenced satisfactorily and are relevant to your work.	Your work demonstrates a thorough ability to select, evaluate and comment on reading, research, and primary sources, usually beyond the set range. These sources have been referenced and generally support your work.	Your work demonstrates a strong ability to select, evaluate, comment on, and synthesize a range of research, primary sources, and other information beyond the set range. These sources have been appropriately referenced support your work.	Your work demonstrates an exceptional ability to select, consider, evaluate, comment on and synthesise a broad range of research, primary sources, views and information. These sources have been appropriately referenced and strongly integrated into your work,

Criteria	Not successful 0-29	Not successful 30-39	3rd (pass or threshold) 40-49%	2.2 50-59%	2.1 60-69%	1 st – Lower Range (70-84)	1 st - Upper Range (85-100)
Clarity of Argument	Your work contains arguments and explanations which are weak and/or poorly constructed. There are many generalisations which lack credible evidence. Conclusions are unsupported or entirely missing., There is no critical evaluation or consideration of the arguments or alternative views of others.	Your work contains views/findings which are largely irrelevant, contradictory, or lacking in logic, Generalisations are made with little evidence and conclusions are largely irrelevant or invalid.	Your work demonstrates the ability to devise and sustain an argument, with some consideration of alternative views. You can explain matters and ideas which are often complex in nature.	Your work consistently demonstrates the ability to argue logically, with supporting evidence, while considering and evaluating a range of views and information. You have clearly and consistently explained complex matters and ideas.	Your work demonstrates a thorough ability to make coherent, substantiated arguments, as well as the ability to consider, critically evaluate and incorporate a range of views and information. You have demonstrated a thorough interpretation of complex matters and ideas.	Your work demonstrates a thorough and sophisticated ability to make logical, coherent, and well substantiated arguments. You are able to consider, critically evaluate and synthesize a wide range of views and information. You have demonstrated a through and critical interpretation of complex matters and ideas.	Your work makes consistent, logical, coherently developed, and substantiated arguments, and demonstrates the ability to systematically consider, critically evaluate and synthesise a wide range of views and information. You have demonstrated sophisticated perception, critical insight and interpretation of complex matters and ideas.

Criteria	Not successful 0-29	Not successful 30-39	3rd (pass or threshold) 40-49%	2.2 50-59%	2.1 60-69%	1st – Lower Range (70-84)	1st - Upper Range (85-100)
Analytical and problem-solving skills	Your work has shown little or no ability to solve problems and/or make decisions.	Your work has shown a limited ability to solve problems and/or make decisions	Your work demonstrates an ability to solve problems, applying a range of methods to do so, and the ability to make decisions in complex circumstances.	Your work demonstrates a consistent ability to solve complex problems, selecting and applying a range of appropriate methods. You are able to make decisions in complex and unpredictable circumstances.	Your work demonstrates a thorough approach to solving complex problems by selecting and justifying a range of methods. You are able to make justifiable decisions with some autonomy in complex and unpredictable circumstances	Your work demonstrates an exceptional approach to problem-solving by using and justifying a wide range of appropriate methods. You are able to make appropriate decisions with a large degree of autonomy in complex and unpredictable circumstances.	Your work has consistently demonstrated a wide range of extremely well-developed and sophisticated problem-solving skills, as well as a strong aptitude for decision-making with a high degree of autonomy, in highly complex and unpredictable circumstances.
Originality in thought Or Creativity	Your work shows little or no originality or creativity appropriate to the discipline.	Your work shows limited originality or creativity appropriate to the discipline	Your work shows some originality or creativity which is acceptable and appropriate to the discipline.	Your work has consistently demonstrated originality or creativity which is acceptable and appropriate to the discipline.	Your work has consistently shown a high level of creativity and originality Which is acceptable and appropriate to the discipline	Your work has demonstrated outstanding creative flair and originality which is acceptable and appropriate to the discipline	Your work has consistently demonstrated exceptional creative flair and originality which is acceptable and appropriate to the discipline.

Practical skills

An ability to manage one's individual learning and to accurately deploy established techniques of analysis and enquiry within a discipline or as necessary for the discipline.

Criteria	Not successful (0-29)	Not successful (29-30)	3rd (pass or threshold) (40-49)	2.2 (50-59)	2.1 (60-69)	1 st – Lower Range (70-84)	1 st – Upper Range (85-100)
Application of discipline-specific skills	Your work lacks sufficient evidence of discipline-specific skills development or application.	Your work demonstrates occasional or inconsistent application of discipline specific skills which may often be applied incorrectly.	Your work demonstrates evidence of developing and applying discipline-specific skills.	Your work consistently demonstrates the development and informed application of discipline-specific skills.	Your work demonstrates a thorough and effective application of discipline-specific skills.	Your work demonstrates an exceptional ability to effectively apply discipline-specific skills	Your work consistently demonstrates the accomplished, effective and innovative application of discipline-specific skills.
Completion of Practical tasks	You have made no, or limited, attempts to complete practical tasks/processes. Your attempts contain significant and fundamental errors.	You have attempted to complete practical tasks/processes; however, you have taken a limited, procedural, or mechanistic approach with little independence. Your attempts contain significant errors.	You show the ability to complete practical tasks/processes accurately and with some degree of independence.	You consistently demonstrate the ability to complete practical tasks/processes with significant independence in an accurate and well-coordinated way.	You demonstrate the ability to complete practical tasks / processes autonomously, with a high degree of accuracy and coordination.	You demonstrate the ability to complete practical tasks / processes with complete independence to an exceptional level of accuracy and coordination.	You consistently demonstrate the ability to autonomously complete practical tasks / processes with exceptional accuracy, coordination and proficiency.
Technical, Creative, or Artistic skills	You have demonstrated a lack of core technical, creative and/or artistic skills which are	You have demonstrated an insufficient level of technical, creative, and/or artistic skills	You have demonstrated technical, creative and/or artistic skills which are	You have consistently demonstrated well-developed technical, creative and/or	You have demonstrated a thorough command of highly developed	You have competently and effectively used a range of exceptional, highly developed and relevant	You have competently and effectively used a full range of exceptional technical,

Criteria	Not successful (0-29)	Not successful (29-30)	3rd (pass or threshold) (40-49)	2.2 (50-59)	2.1 (60-69)	1 st – Lower Range (70-84)	1 st – Upper Range (85-100)
	appropriate to the discipline.	which are appropriate to the discipline.	appropriate to the discipline.	artistic skills which are appropriate to the discipline.	technical, creative and/or artistic skills which are appropriate to the discipline	technical, creative and/or artistic skills which are appropriate to the discipline.	creative and/or artistic skills which are appropriate to the discipline.
Presentation of Research	<p>You have not presented your research findings clearly or effectively as appropriate to the discipline.,</p> <p>In your work, gathering, processing and interpretation of data is wholly unsatisfactory.</p>	<p>You have occasionally presented your research findings clearly or effectively; however, the overall standard is not at the expected level for the discipline.</p>	<p>You have presented your research findings, in several formats as appropriate to the discipline.</p> <p>You have gathered, processed and interpreted data effectively.</p>	<p>You have consistently presented your research findings effectively and appropriately in many formats as appropriate to the discipline., In your work you have gathered, processed and interpreted data efficiently and effectively.</p>	<p>You have presented research findings perceptively and appropriately in a wide range of formats as appropriate to the discipline.</p> <p>In your work you have gathered, processed and interpreted a range of data efficiently and effectively.</p>	<p>You have often presented research findings perceptively, effectively, and appropriately in a wide range of formats as appropriate to the discipline.</p> <p>In your work you have gathered, processed, and interpreted a wide range of data efficiently and effectively.</p>	<p>You have consistently presented research findings perceptively, highly effectively and appropriately in a wide range of formats as appropriate to the discipline.</p> <p>In your work you have gathered, processed and interpreted a wide range of complex data efficiently and effectively.</p>

Transferable skills

Personal and enabling skills appropriate to the discipline, including the ability to communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences, the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility, and decision-making in complex and unpredictable contexts.

Criteria	Not successful (0-29%)	Not Successful (29-39%)	3rd (pass or threshold) 40-49%	2.2 50-59%	2.1 60-69%	1 st Class (Lower range) 70-84%	1 st Class (Upper range) 85-100%
Communication (This criterion refers to the student's ability to use language effectively to express their ideas clearly for the purpose of an assessment. Good written communication skills include logical sequencing and structure in the development of ideas, an appropriate style or level of formality for the intended audience, and an appropriate use of vocabulary, spelling, punctuation and grammar.)	You are unable to express ideas and convey meaning with sufficient clarity. You are unable to accurately use terminology, and there are many grammatical errors which obscure your message.	You occasionally show clarity of meaning across a limited range of formats and media. There is often inaccurate terminology with some grammatical which make it difficult to understand your message	You can communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions across a range of formats and media You demonstrate clear expression and style.	You can communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions across a range of formats and media. You demonstrate a clear, coherent, and expressive style, with a suitable range of vocabulary.	You can communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions with a high degree of clarity and effectiveness across a range of formats and media You have a clear, fluent and expressive style with appropriate vocabulary.	You can communicate information ideas, problems and solutions to an outstanding level of clarity and effectiveness across a wide range of formats and media. You demonstrate an accurate, fluent, and sophisticated style when communicating.	You can consistently communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions with an outstanding level of clarity and effectiveness across a wide range of formats and media. You demonstrate an accurate, fluent, and sophisticated style when communicating.

Criteria	Not successful (0-29%)	Not Successful (29-39%)	3rd (pass or threshold) 40-49%	2.2 50-59%	2.1 60-69%	1st Class (Lower range) 70-84%	1st Class (Upper range) 85-100%
Numeracy	You have been unable to consistently demonstrate basic numeracy skills appropriate to your discipline.	You occasionally demonstrate some basic numeracy skills however you are not able to consistently operate as appropriate to your discipline	You have demonstrated numeracy skills appropriate to your discipline.	You have demonstrated strong numeracy skills appropriate to your discipline	You have consistently demonstrated a high standard of numeracy skills appropriate to your discipline.	You have demonstrated exceptional understanding and application of numeracy skills appropriate to your discipline	You have consistently demonstrated exceptional understanding and application of numeracy skills appropriate to your discipline.
Collaborative Working	Your contributions to collaborative working have been minimal and/or entirely absent.	You have made infrequent contributions to group discussions and/or project work and/or your contribution have been minimally useful to group discussions/project work.	You have made useful contributions to group discussions and/or project work.	You have made coherent and constructive contributions to group discussions and/or project work.	You have demonstrated effective collaborative working by making strong, valuable contributions to group discussions and/or project work You demonstrate appropriate engagement with team and/or leadership processes as appropriate.	You have demonstrated effective collaborative working by making strong, valuable contributions to group discussions and/or project work. You have demonstrated highly effective engagement with team and/or leadership processes as appropriate.	You have consistently demonstrated exceptional collaborative working by making clear, authoritative and valuable contributions to group discussions and/or project work, with exceptional teamwork and leadership skills as appropriate.

Criteria	Not successful (0-29%)	Not Successful (29-39%)	3rd (pass or threshold) 40-49%	2.2 50-59%	2.1 60-69%	1st Class (Lower range) 70-84%	1st Class (Upper range) 85-100%
Independent working	You have demonstrated little or no ability to manage your learning and/or work without supervision.	You have shown limited ability to undertake straightforward tasks even with appropriate guidance or supervision.	You have shown an ability to manage your learning and work with minimal or no supervision.	You have consistently and systematically managed your learning and work without supervision.	You have shown a strong ability to systematically manage your learning and to work without supervision.	You have shown an exceptional ability to manage your learning, often on your own initiative, and to work without supervision.	You have consistently shown an exceptional ability to manage your learning on your own initiative and to work without supervision.
Initiative	You have not demonstrated adequate initiative or personal responsibility for your work.	You have shown limited initiative or personal responsibility for your work	You have demonstrated appropriate initiative and/or personal responsibility for your work.	You have consistently demonstrated initiative and/or personal responsibility for your work.	You have consistently demonstrated well-developed initiative and/or personal responsibility for your work.	You have demonstrated an exceptional level of initiative and/or personal responsibility for your work.	You have consistently demonstrated exceptional initiative and/or personal responsibility for your work.
Reflective practice	You have shown little or no ability to reflect on your work.	You have attempted to engage with reflective practice; however you are unable to demonstrate sufficient ability to recognise strengths and weaknesses even when identified by others.	You have demonstrated the ability to reflect on your work and can recognise strengths and weaknesses as identified by others.	You have consistently demonstrated a well-developed ability to reflect on your work. You are often able to self-identify your strengths and weaknesses.	You have demonstrated the ability to reflect critically on your work and to show initiative in evaluating your strengths and weaknesses	You have consistently demonstrated the ability to reflect critically on your work and to show insight and autonomy in evaluating your strengths and weaknesses	You have consistently demonstrated an exceptional ability to reflect critically and independently on your work and to show insight and autonomy in evaluating your strengths and weaknesses

Introduction

- Please note that this framework applies to all modules at Level 7 (M-level), including those offered in a taught postgraduate Masters programme and those offered in the final Part of an Integrated Masters Programme.
- These criteria differ slightly to the university's marking criteria for Levels 4-6 to reflect that Level 7 (M-level) work is characterised by an expectation that students demonstrate independence and originality in their ability to appropriately evaluate, synthesise and apply subject knowledge. As outlined in the [QAA's Framework for Higher Education Qualifications](#) (FHEQ) a key element of assessed work at Level 7 (M-level) is that it should be informed by an awareness and understanding of current issues and/or new developments, much of which will be at, or informed by, the latest research in the field of study/area of professional practice. Students are therefore expected to demonstrate a specialised area of knowledge, skills and/or professional practice, which will allow them to undertake scholarly, independent research, which may be of publishable quality.
- This document extends the FHEQ descriptor for level 7 graduates, and provides an overview of what a graduate should be able to do given the overall classification of their degree, based on four criteria for evaluating student performance; Mastery of the Discipline, Research and Enquiry, Engagement with Literature, Professional and Transferrable skills
- For each criterion, a set of statements describe different levels of performance which can be used to describe a student's submitted work. For the upper Distinction band, a holistic approach is adopted so that the grade at this level is based on consistently exceeding the lower Distinction expectation across all criteria.
- The appropriate combinations of qualities needed to fulfil the criteria depend on the subject, and the criteria and descriptors can be interpreted in terms of the attributes required by each subject. It is not expected that every piece of work will demonstrate all the criteria indicated for each range of marks. A student's work will, however, be expected to demonstrate a preponderance of these criteria, as appropriate to the nature of the assessment and discipline context. Schools should contextualise the generic marking criteria for their students, providing a local context at either discipline, module or assessment level.
- These descriptors are also helpful in enhancing assessment literacy when students are able to engage in low-stakes, primarily formative, activities such as applying the criteria to self, peer, or exemplar work.

Criteria	Fail (lower band) (0-39)	Fail (narrow) (40-49)	Pass (50-59)	Merit (60-69)	Distinction (Lower) (72-84)	Distinction (upper) (85-100)
Mastery of the discipline	Your work shows little knowledge or understanding of the field. There is little or no criticality. Your analysis is poor/inconsistent and lacks focus.	Your work shows some knowledge and understanding of the field but this is mostly superficial and lacking in depth.	<p>Your work shows a sound understanding of the subject.</p> <p>You have undertaken a relevant and sound analysis and undertaken some critical analysis.</p> <p>You are able to analyse complex issues and make sound judgements</p>	<p>Your work has a well-defined focus which shows a systematic knowledge, understanding, and critical awareness of current issues within the discipline.</p> <p>You have shown critical evaluation of existing methodologies and where appropriate proposed new hypotheses.</p> <p>You can systematically and creatively deal with complex concepts and are able to make sound judgements even when data may be missing or incomplete.</p>	<p>Your work displays mastery of a complex and specialised area of knowledge.</p> <p>You show critical awareness of current problems and/or insights at the forefront of the field.</p> <p>You can systematically and creatively deal with complex concepts and are able to make excellent judgements.</p>	<p>Marks awarded at this level are based on a holistic marking approach in which all marking criteria are considered.</p> <p>Your work consistently exceeds the expectations of the 72-84 mark range in very criteria.</p> <p>Your work is of publishable standard, with minimal revision required, in peer-reviewed journals and/or professional conferences.</p>
Engagement with Research and Enquiry	Your work shows little or no skill in selected techniques applicable to own research or advanced scholarly activities.	Your work shows some skill in selected techniques and/or approaches appropriate to your research or advanced scholarly	Your work shows sufficient understanding and skills in selected techniques/ approaches appropriate to your	Your work shows comprehensive understanding and skills techniques/approaches appropriate to your	You have undertaken research highly effectively by using appropriate technical and/or professional skills.	

Criteria	Fail (lower band) (0-39)	Fail (narrow) (40-49)	Pass (50-59)	Merit (60-69)	Distinction (Lower) (72-84)	Distinction (upper) (85-100)
	Your work does not demonstrate any understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge	activities, but with significant areas of weakness. Lacks sufficient understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge	<p>research or advanced scholarly activities.</p> <p>You have shown some understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline</p> <p>You have been able to communicate effectively for a given audience.</p>	<p>research or advanced scholarly activities.</p> <p>You have shown good understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline.</p> <p>You have been able to communicate arguments, evidence and conclusions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences in an effective manner.</p>	<p>Your work shows an exceptional grasp of a range of techniques which are applicable to your personal research or advanced scholarly activities.</p> <p>You show originality in application of knowledge, and excellent grasp of how knowledge in your discipline is created and interpreted.</p> <p>You have been able to communicate arguments, evidence and conclusions to diverse audiences and at a very high level</p>	
Scholarly engagement with, and integration of, relevant literature	Your work does not evidence or discuss/apply appropriate examples of literature which relate to either current research or advanced scholarship in the field.	Your work evidences and discusses/applies some examples of literature relating to current research but lacks critical engagement.	Your work shows critical evaluation of literature relating to current research and advanced scholarship in the field.	Your work shows critical evaluation of a range of literature relating to current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline.	Your work clearly shows critical evaluation and insightfulness into a wide range of literature relating to current research and advanced	

Criteria	Fail (lower band) (0-39)	Fail (narrow) (40-49)	Pass (50-59)	Merit (60-69)	Distinction (Lower) (72-84)	Distinction (upper) (85-100)
	Your references to literature and use of academic conventions are flawed and/or irrelevant	Your references to appropriate literature/ evidence and use of academic conventions are insufficient and/or inconsistent	You make consistent and sound use of appropriate academic conventions and academic integrity	You make consistently good use of appropriate academic conventions and academic integrity.	scholarship in the discipline You make consistently excellent use of appropriate academic conventions and academic integrity.	
Professional and transferrable skills (Communication in the descriptors refers to the student's ability to use language effectively to express their ideas clearly for the purpose of an assignment. Good written communication skills include logical sequencing and structure in the development of ideas, an appropriate	Your work shows significant weaknesses in key professional and personal skills; such as communication, problem-solving and project management. You have not demonstrated the ability to work independently, flexibly, or as part of team when required.	Your work demonstrates some areas of effective employability skills, such as communication and problem-solving; however, there are some areas of overall weakness. You have demonstrated some ability to work flexibly, independently and/or as part of a team, but there are some areas of weakness	Your work consistently shows a good level of employability skills, including team working, project management, IT/computer literacy, creativity and flexibility. You are able to communicate effectively and confidently in a range of contexts, some of which are complex/ specialised. You are able to show consistent ability to tackle and solve demanding problems and plan and direct your own learning to	Your work demonstrates a high level of employability skills which include; working collaboratively project management, digital literacy, creativity and flexibility. You are able to communicate effectively and confidently in a range of complex and specialised contexts. You demonstrate self-direction in tackling and solving demanding problems. You are able to act autonomously in	Your work consistently shows a very high level of employability skills, including team working/leadership, project management, digital literacies and practices, creativity and flexibility. You demonstrate very high level communication skills, appropriate to the audience, in a range of complex contexts. Your written work is at a publishable standard within a peer-reviewed context. Your work demonstrates high	

Criteria	Fail (lower band) (0-39)	Fail (narrow) (40-49)	Pass (50-59)	Merit (60-69)	Distinction (Lower) (72-84)	Distinction (upper) (85-100)
<p>style or level of formality for the intended audience, and an appropriate use of vocabulary, spelling, punctuation and grammar.)</p>			<p>further advance your knowledge and skills.</p> <p>You demonstrate the independence of learning which required for continuing professional development.</p>	<p>planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level.</p> <p>You consistently demonstrate attitudes and approaches needed to advance your knowledge, understanding, and skills.</p> <p>Demonstrates the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development</p>	<p>levels of autonomy and originality in addressing and resolving demanding problems.</p> <p>You have consistently shown a high level of autonomy in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level.</p> <p>You have consistently demonstrated the skills and attitudes which are required to develop and acquire new knowledge, understanding, and skills to a higher level.</p> <p>You demonstrates the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development</p>	