

Marking Criteria and Rubrics – a short guide

Marking criteria gives the criteria against which the assessment will be judged and the explicit standards of performance for each grade category. This means that there may be areas of the marking criteria highlighted to indicate where a student sits in terms of the different grade bandings for each area but where there are no given points to be added up. Some areas on the marking criteria will have more importance than others, for example knowledge and understanding, and argumentation and analysis, will have more weight than referencing and spelling. Marking criteria can be made available to students or hidden if used as a marking guide for staff only.

Use cases:

- Where there are holistic assessment requirements
- Where the assessment is more about looking for concepts and other hard to quantify elements
- Where there is high level conceptual argument, analysis or ideation
- Where more flexibility is needed
- Can be used alone or in conjunction with a rubric

Examples of marking criteria:

Example 1 – Using a Word table

Criteria	A1 (90-100%)	A2 (80-89%)	A3 (70-79%)	B B- (60-63%) B (64-66%) B+ (67-69%)	C C- (50-53%) C (54-56%) C+ (57-59%)	D D- (40-43%) D (44-46%) D+ (47-49%)	F (0-39%)
Knowledge and Understanding	Highly sophisticated level of knowledge and understanding, showing a comprehensive and accurate grasp of all main theory/ concepts/ ideas.	Sophisticated level of knowledge and understanding, showing a comprehensive and accurate grasp of all main theory/ concepts/ ideas.	Excellent level of knowledge and understanding, showing a comprehensive and accurate grasp of all main theory/ concepts/ ideas.	Good knowledge and understanding demonstrated, with a sound grasp of main points of theory/ concepts/ ideas.	Reasonable level of knowledge and understanding of key theory/ concepts/ ideas, although limited in depth and range.	Basic understanding of theory/ concepts/ ideas, with some inaccuracy/ confusion apparent.	A tenuous grasp of theory/ concepts/ ideas.
Argumentation and Analysis	This represents either a new approach to a topic or a very thorough overview of traditional arguments that have been	As with A3 but with further sophistication in the argument.	Demonstrates comprehensive knowledge of the topic in its broader context; is very well structured with clear expression and judicious	A good, sound argument containing competent discussion of the topic while demonstrating good overall knowledge of the	Average level of argumentation containing basic ideas. Interpretation is reasonable. Shows some knowledge of the field but not	Very basic approach; interpretation is adequate but does not have a consistent argument; ideas are unstructured or tacked	Failure to fully address the question and/or interpretation is inappropriate. Little attempt to present any evaluation or analysis or this is

	<p>evaluated critically, leading to a clear and strong conclusion. The argument underlying the assessment is sophisticated and challenging; the point of view is clear and confident.</p>		<p>illustration. The argument represents an interpretive and considered approach to the question, not excessively reliant on secondary sources, with an added attempt to present an individual argument. Excellent critical/creative thinking demonstrated.</p>	<p>field. This should show signs of clarity and organization with appropriate selection of material, though it might not go much beyond standard interpretations. Some critical/creative thinking may be shown.</p>	<p>beyond what is found in scholarly summaries. The structure is adequate but often not very well developed and illustration is not always to the point. The beginnings of critical/creative thinking may be shown.</p>	<p>together; often irrelevant and undirected argumentation; little apt illustration. Does demonstrate some knowledge of source material.</p>	<p>hasty and illconsidered.</p>
Research and Reading	<p>Excellent range and depth of research and reading, which uses highly relevant methods/sources and shows innovation and originality.</p>		<p>Good research and reading is demonstrated, supporting key arguments or themes, showing some range and</p>	<p>Reasonable range of research and reading, which is largely relevant, although restricted to recommended</p>	<p>Research and reading is either limited in range or drawn from sources of limited relevance or validity.</p>	<p>Research and reading is scant and/or irrelevant.</p>	

		depth beyond recommended sources/core texts.	sources/core texts. Validity of some sources may be questionable.	
Presentation / referencing	<p>Formatting is consistent, error free, and impressive.</p> <p>Word count is within the approved range.</p> <p>Appendices are relevant, appropriate, and clearly presented.</p> <p>The UHI Harvard referencing system is used correctly and consistently throughout.</p> <p>All references cited in the text are included in the reference list.</p>		<p>There are some errors and inconsistencies in formatting.</p> <p>Word count is slightly outside of the approved range.</p> <p>Appendices are included but their purpose is not always clear or relevant.</p> <p>The UHI Harvard referencing system is used but with a number of errors either in the text or in the reference list.</p>	<p>Formatting is frequently erroneous or inconsistent.</p> <p>Word count is significantly inappropriate (either too long or too short).</p> <p>A non-standard or nonapproved referencing system was used and/or there are major errors in referencing both in the text and within the reference list.</p>
Skills in written English	Language, grammar, and spelling are correct and appropriate throughout the dissertation.		There are some errors regarding language, grammar, and spelling.	There are frequent and

			major errors regarding language, grammar, and spelling.
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Example 2 – Using an Excel spreadsheet and formulas

Student Name:	<input type="text"/>	Student I.D.:	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="2020/21"/>	module level:	<input type="text" value="SCQF 7"/>	
Module:	<input type="text"/>	Assignment:	<input type="text" value="Essay 1"/>	Tutor email:	<input type="text"/>	Tutor contact number:	<input type="text"/>
Final date for submission:	<input type="text"/>	Working days late	<input type="text" value="0"/>	Module Mark:	<input type="text" value="0.0"/>	Grade:	<input type="text" value="No Value"/>

	85-100 (1st Class)	70-84.9 (1st Class)	60-69.9 (2nd Upper)	50-59.9 (2nd)	40-49.9 (3rd)	20-39.9 (Fail)	0-19.9 (Fail)
Interpretation of the question/ Critical and creative thinking (0.10 weighting)	An exceptional level of insight and understanding. Many examples of critical /creative thinking demonstrated.	Several examples of creativity, originality, imagination, insight.	Interpretation is largely convincing, some critical and/or creative thinking apparent.	Interpretation may be less convincing, or the focus is unclear. Limited independent thought.	Interpretation is inappropriate or rationale for work inadequately demonstrated. More independent thought required.	Failure to fully address the question. Requires more independent thought.	Fails to grasp the question.

Relevance of Argument (0.20 weighting)	Precisely focused discussion. Comprehensive, concise, very well balanced argument	Rigorous coverage of all appropriate content.	Appropriate selection of content/ theory in key areas. Clear identification of the issues.	Largely relevant in key areas although with some omissions or extraneous material.	Some relevance, but some parts omitted/diverted by extraneous material.	Has some relevance but misses vital material/includes much tangential material.	Essentially irrelevant
Knowledge & Understanding (0.20 weighting)	Exceptional synthesis of material to demonstrate a complete mastery of all necessary theory/ concepts/ideas.	Clear evidence of a comprehensive grasp of all main theory/ concepts/ideas.	Sound grasp of main points of theory / concepts / ideas.	Some level of understanding of theory and key concepts, but application limited.	Evidence of general understanding of concepts, but inaccuracy/ confusion apparent.	Some, but mainly a tenuous, grasp of theory/concepts/ ideas.	No evidence of learning/ understanding of theory / concepts.
Reading & Referencing (0.20 weighting)	Excellent use of references and command of the literature with a flawless standard of referencing throughout.	Wide range of relevant reading, which is very well referenced.	A solid base of reading which is relevant and clearly referenced.	Limited range of reading which is referenced accurately for the most part.	Reading largely restricted to recommended texts and/ or referencing mostly inaccurate.	Reading is scant and / or irrelevant and references inadequate.	No evidence of relevant reading, references lacking.

Structure and presentation (0.20 weighting)	Exceptionally well presented, laid out and illustrated, excellent linkage of ideas, demonstrates innovative methods of presentation.	An attractively presented piece of work, logical development of the topic throughout, language is concise and appropriate.	Well presented, clear structure, shows evidence of care with syntax and grammar. Logical, coherent and lucid.	Mostly logical and coherent and with some attention to presentation.	Meaning apparent, but language not fluent, grammar and/or spelling poor. Some signs of logical structure.	Presentation has many inaccuracies in style/ spelling. Confused or illogical thinking.	Disorganised ideas, presentation inadequate.
Conclusions (0.10 weighting)	Own ideas are fully integrated with concepts, theories and literature. Extremely rigorous handling of evidence.	Conclusions point to evidence of innovative self-directed study and careful evaluation.	Relevant conclusions well argued.	Basic conclusions drawn, supported by evidence in essay.	Limited evidence of reflection. Conclusions weak or unclear.	Conclusions largely lacking, insubstantial or unsupported.	Key points largely ignored, lacks interpretation of evidence.

TUTOR COMMENTS *(note that marks/grade are provisional until ratified by exam board):*

Feed-forward:

Feedback/feedforward return date

12.3.21

Rubrics

A rubric is used to generate the mark by using a scoring guide to evaluate the responses against the items that are listed in the rubric, in other words, assigning points to each category that automatically add up to the overall mark. You can find out more about rubrics in the [Brightspace Assessment Guidance resource](#). Rubrics can also be used with marking criteria so that the marking criteria is showing the standards of judgement for the assignment and the rubrics are showing the marking against those standards of judgement.

Use cases

- Where assessments where the responses are not complex (i.e. at remembering, understanding and applying levels)
- Where there are short or simple pieces of assessment
- They can be useful for FE, particularly for SQA units with pass or fail only system
- They can be used in conjunction with marking criteria

Example rubric:

Course: UL308479: Youth behaviour and society - 2020/21

Criteria	Excellent 5 points	Very Good 4 points	Good 3 points	Average 2 points	Below Average 1 point	Poor 0 points	Criterion Score
Argument	Extremely well-argued, coherent and balanced postings.	Very well argued.	Well-argued.	Made some contributions to the online discussions which show basic understanding of the topics.	Contribution is negligible or if there is no evidence the student has understood the debated issues.	No contribution	/ 5
Reading and Referencing	Evidenced excellent use of the background readings/ wider academic literature to argue the points being made.	Can evidence very good use of the background readings/ wider academic literature to argue the points being made.	Makes reference to some relevant reading.	Minimum reference to the reading.	Some reference to reading but this was inappropriate or not relevant.	No contribution or no discernible evidence of engagement with the learning materials or wider relevant reading.	/ 5

Criteria	Excellent 5 points	Very Good 4 points	Good 3 points	Average 2 points	Below Average 1 point	Poor 0 points	Criterion Score
Academic Conversation	Evidence that the student has engaged in online discussions with others. Showing evidence of a good attempt at an academic conversation.	Evidence that the student has engaged in online discussions with others and attempted an academic conversation.	Some engagement with others and the points being made.	Very basic engagement with others and the points being made.	Very limited engagement with others or comments not relevant to the points being made.	No contribution or no engagement with others and the points being made.	/ 5

Total	/ 15
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Overall Score

A 12 points minimum Distinction	B 9 points minimum Very Good	C 6 points minimum Good	D 3 points minimum Pass	F 0 points minimum Fail
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Applies to both

There is evidence to show that there is no difference in the reliability of the result between marking criteria and rubrics (Morphett. A *et al*, 2019).

There should always be a stress on where marks can be given, not where they can be taken away e.g. assessing how well students have met the learning outcomes for the assessment.