

University of Hull Undergraduate Grading Descriptors

1 Introduction

The University of Hull Grading Descriptors for levels 4, 5 and 6 have been developed to align with the Quality Assurance Agency's Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (2008) and the SEEC Credit Level Descriptors for Higher Education (2010). The appropriate descriptors for the level of study that students are undertaking should be made available to students in all programme and module documentation.

The descriptors outlined in this document are necessarily generic as they need to be applicable to all academic disciplines. They aim to provide a framework for articulating expected standards of students' work. The framework provides clear and consistent statements to describe student performance which, in turn, facilitate transparency in feedback to students, helping students to understand how to improve their performance.

2 Using the grading descriptors: some key principles

The descriptors included here outline the key features and general characteristics of assessed work associated with each grade-band. However, in order that students are able to understand exactly how they are being assessed and the standard of work they are expected to achieve, their work should always be assessed against published assessment criteria. A programme of study's published assessment criteria differ from grading descriptors as they create a direct link between the learning outcomes of the module(s) under study, the generic grading descriptors contained in this document and the particular level of study (i.e. Level 4, 5 or 6) at which the student is working. For further information on the differences between Levels 4, 5 and 6 please refer to the Quality Assurance Agency's Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (2008) available at: <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Documents/FHEQ08.pdf>

The grading descriptors outlined in this document are not mutually exclusive. Students' work may demonstrate some characteristics of, for example, the 50-59 and 60-69 categories. The final grade for the work should always be matter of academic judgement based on the balance of this. Examiners should be prepared to award the full range of marks and should interpret the descriptors in the context of their discipline, field of study or area of practice. The emphasis given to each descriptor, and the way it is used in the published assessment criteria will necessarily vary depending on the nature of the assessment task, the level of study and the disciplinary area. For example, module leaders will need to be able to identify and explain what exemplary, outstanding, excellent, good or satisfactory looks like in relation to the learning outcomes of their module in order that students are able to understand why they have received the grade they have and how they could improve their work.

In relation to this, where Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB) requirements or course-specific requirements indicate a pass/threshold mark which is different to the University norm outlined in this framework, additional marking/grading criteria should be provided to students with an explanation as to why and how this differs from the norm. Work representing unsafe or unfit practice, for students registered on professional courses with fitness to practise requirements, will be marked as a fail.

THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL UNDERGRADUATE GRADING DESCRIPTORS (Levels 4, 5 and 6)

Exemplary First Class Honours 90-100	
All learning outcomes and associated assessment criteria have been achieved to an exemplary standard.	The work represents an exemplary response to the task and attains the very highest standards of scholarship that can be expected of an undergraduate submission. It is likely to demonstrate most or all of the following characteristics:
	<p>Technical Characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All requirements for the assessment task have been adhered to; • The organisation, structure and standard of presentation of the work, including referencing where appropriate, are exemplary throughout; • There is an exemplary standard of written and/or oral communication and the use of disciplinary terminology and techniques displays the highest level of accuracy and understanding that can be expected. <p>Higher Order Academic Criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is an exemplary display of in-depth understanding, exploration and insight and/or research; • The work is inspirational, creative, innovative and authoritative. Levels of intellectual rigour, independence of judgement and insightful contextualisation are exemplary; • Use and application of a depth and breadth of contextual evidence, ideas, concepts, theory and other relevant information and artefacts is exemplary; • There is exemplary evidence of high quality analysis, synthesis, evaluation and critical appraisal; • The work displays exemplary levels of creativity, initiative, decision-making, and self reflection.

Outstanding First Class Honours

80-89

All learning outcomes and associated assessment criteria have been achieved to an outstanding level and some to an exemplary standard.

The work represents an **outstanding** response to the task and attains some of the highest standards of scholarship that can be expected of an undergraduate submission. It is likely to demonstrate most or all of the following characteristics:

Technical Characteristics:

- All requirements for the assessment task have been adhered to;
- The organisation, structure and standard of presentation of the work, including referencing where appropriate, are outstanding throughout;
- There is an outstanding standard of written and/or oral communication and the use of disciplinary terminology and techniques displays the highest level of accuracy and understanding that can be expected.

Higher Order Academic Characteristics:

- There is an outstanding display of in-depth understanding, exploration, insight and/or research;
- The work is inspirational, creative, innovative and authoritative. Levels of intellectual rigour, independence of judgement and insightful contextualisation are outstanding;
- Use and application of a depth and breadth of contextual evidence, ideas, concepts, theory and other relevant information and artefacts is outstanding;
- There is outstanding evidence of high quality analysis, synthesis, evaluation and critical appraisal;
- The work consistently displays outstanding levels of initiative, decision-making, and self reflection.

First Class Honours**70-79**

All learning outcomes and associated assessment criteria have been achieved to high level of excellence and some to an outstanding.

The work represents an **excellent** response to the task and mostly attains the highest standards of scholarship that can be expected of an undergraduate submission. It is likely to demonstrate most or all of the following characteristics:

Technical Characteristics:

- All requirements for the assessment task have been adhered to;
- The organisation, structure and standard of presentation of the work, including referencing where appropriate, are excellent throughout;
- There is an excellent standard of written and/or oral communication and the use of disciplinary terminology and techniques displays the highest level of accuracy and understanding that can be expected.

Higher Order Academic Characteristics:

- There is an excellent display of in-depth understanding, exploration, insight and/or research;
- The work is inspirational, creative, innovative and authoritative. Levels of intellectual rigour, independence of judgement and insightful contextualisation are excellent;
- Use and application of a depth and breadth of contextual evidence, ideas, concepts, theory and other relevant information and artefacts is excellent;
- There is evidence of high quality analysis, synthesis, evaluation and critical appraisal;
- The work consistently displays excellent levels of initiative, decision-making, and self reflection.

Upper Second Class Honours - 2(i)
60-69

All learning outcomes and assessment criteria have been achieved to a good standard with many (at the higher ranges of this band) achieved to a very good/excellent standard.

The work represents a **good** to **very good** response to the task and attains good standards of scholarship. It is likely to demonstrate most or all of the following characteristics:

Technical Characteristics:

- All requirements for the assessment task have been adhered to;
- The organisation, structure and standard of presentation of the work, including referencing where appropriate, are good throughout;
- There is a good standard of written and/or oral communication and the use of disciplinary terminology and techniques display good levels of accuracy and understanding.

Higher Order Academic Characteristics:

- There are no significant inaccuracies, misunderstandings or errors;
- There is a good display of understanding, exploration, insight and/or research;
- The work shows evidence of intellectual rigour, independence of judgement and insightful contextualisation though it may lack finesse;
- The work displays evidence of creativity and innovation in the use of ideas, concepts, theory and other relevant information and artefacts;
- There are some good examples of critical analysis, synthesis, evaluation and critical appraisal;
- The work displays good levels of initiative, decision-making, and self reflection.

Lower Second Class Honours - 2(ii)

50-59

All learning outcomes and assessment criteria have been achieved to a satisfactory standard with some (at the higher ranges of this band) achieved to a good standard.

The work represents a **satisfactory** response to the task and attains competent standards of scholarship. It is likely to demonstrate most or all of the following characteristics:

Technical Characteristics:

- There may be some minor divergences from the specifications of the assessment task;
- The organisation, structure and standard of presentation of the work are satisfactory, although some instances of poor organisation or limited use of referencing conventions may be present;
- There is a reasonable standard of written and/or oral communication, though some errors may be present. The use of disciplinary terminology and techniques displays satisfactory levels of accuracy and understanding.

Higher Order Academic Characteristics:

- Inaccuracies, misunderstandings or errors are mostly minor;
- There is some evidence of understanding, exploration, insight and/or research, but there are some gaps;
- The work shows some but limited evidence of intellectual rigour, independence of judgement and insightful contextualisation;
- The work shows some but limited examples of creativity and innovation in the use of ideas, concepts, theory and other relevant information and artefacts;
- The work is conscientious and attentive to the subject matter or task set but is balanced more towards a descriptive approach than a critical and analytical approach. Topics are mostly addressed but not always examined in sufficient detail;
- The work displays some but limited examples of initiative, decision-making, and self reflection.

Third Class Honours

40-49

All learning outcomes and assessment criteria have been met but only to the minimum required level.

The work represents an **adequate, but weak** response to the task and attains very limited standards of scholarship. It is likely to demonstrate most or all of the following characteristics:

Technical Characteristics:

- There may be some major divergences from the specifications of the assessment task;
- The organisation, structure and standard of presentation of the work are poor;
- There is a basic but poor standard of written and/or oral communication. The use of disciplinary terminology and techniques displays minimal levels of accuracy and understanding.

Higher Order Academic Characteristics:

- Inaccuracies, misunderstandings and/or errors are present, but are not significant enough to impact on the ability of the work to meet the learning outcomes and assessment criteria;
- There is limited evidence of understanding, exploration, insight and/or research;
- The work shows limited evidence of intellectual rigour, independence of judgement and insightful contextualisation;
- Students' grasp of ideas, concepts, theory and other relevant information is weak and is poorly articulated or contains flaws;
- The work displays a descriptive approach and evidence used is likely to be limited to that provided by lecturers;
- The work displays very limited examples of initiative, decision-making, and self reflection.

**Marginal Fail
30-39**

One or more of the learning outcomes and assessment criteria have not been met.

The work represents an **unsatisfactory** response to the task. It may display some strengths but these are outweighed by several weak features. It is likely to demonstrate most or all of the following characteristics:

Technical Characteristics:

- The work pays insufficient attention to the assessment criteria and significantly diverges from the specifications of the assessment task;
- The work is disorganised and unclear and the standard of presentation, including referencing where appropriate, is weak;
- There is an unsatisfactory standard of written and/or oral communication; there may be significant flaws in spelling, grammar and composition which undermine the clarity of meaning. The use of disciplinary terminology and techniques does not meet required levels of accuracy and understanding.

Higher Order Academic Characteristics:

- There are substantial inaccuracies, misunderstandings or errors which affect the ability of the work to meet the learning outcomes and assessment criteria;
- The work does not meet expected levels of understanding and exploration of major ideas. It contains some material of merit but shows very limited insight and/or research;
- There is insufficient demonstration of learning outcomes to justify a pass grade;
- The work draws on a very limited range of contextual evidence, theory, literature and other artefacts. There is very little evidence of wider reading and very limited evidence of the mechanics of scholarship;
- The work does not make any real attempts to assess or apply the evidence or theory. Examples are occasionally provided but are poorly articulated;
- The work demonstrates no substantive evidence of initiative, personal responsibility, decision-making and self-reflection.

Fail 1-29	
Most or all of the learning outcomes and assessment criteria have not been met.	The work represents a very unsatisfactory response to the task. Any strengths of the work are heavily outweighed by its weaknesses. It is likely to demonstrate most or all of the following characteristics:
	<p>Technical Characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The work pays insufficient attention to the assessment criteria and there are serious deviations from the specifications of the assessment task; • The work is disorganised and unclear and the standard of presentation, including referencing where appropriate, is extremely poor; • There is an unsatisfactory standard of written and/or oral communication - there are significant flaws in spelling, grammar and composition which undermine the clarity of meaning. The use of disciplinary terminology and techniques is extremely limited and unsophisticated. <p>Higher Order Academic Characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are significant inaccuracies, misunderstandings or errors; • The work does not meet expected levels of understanding and exploration of major ideas. It shows very limited insight and/or research; • The work draws on a very limited range of contextual evidence, theory, literature and other artefacts. Citations are almost or entirely absent and awareness of mechanics of scholarship is very weak; • The work is wholly descriptive and lacks any sustained arguments or critical appraisal; • The work demonstrates no evidence of initiative, personal responsibility, decision-making and self-reflection.
Non-submission 0	