

## **Module Grade Descriptors for Undergraduate Degree Programmes**

A module may have a number of different assessment elements, such as an end-of-module written examination, a mid-term in-class test, a multiple-choice type test, an essay, weekly homework, practice assessment, laboratory assessment, or an oral examination. Each of the module assessment elements contributes, in a pre-defined structured manner, towards the overall mark of the module as a whole.

The award of an overall mark to a module is a matter of academic judgement against agreed criteria (the module learning outcomes and agreed grade descriptors) and should not be simply a mathematical exercise.

In the module grade descriptor system, as described over the following pages,

- an A grade corresponds to a H1 level of performance;
- a B grade corresponds to a H2.1 level of performance;
- a C grade corresponds to a H2.2 level of performance;
- a D grade corresponds to a H3 performance in the final undergraduate or a Pass performance in the earlier years;
- an E grade corresponds to a compensatable performance, if the module is compensatable, otherwise a fail performance;
- F and G grades correspond to fail performances.

Grade descriptors act as guidelines for students and academic staff. The grade descriptors following are provided as general guidance and may be adapted for particular modules.

Grade and Marks Band	Grade Criteria relevant to modules in 1st Year and in the 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year of 4 year programmes	Additional criteria more relevant to modules in the later programme years
<b>A</b> 70 – 100	<p><b>Excellent</b> A comprehensive, highly-structured, focused and concise response to the assessment tasks, consistently demonstrating some or all, as appropriate, of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an extensive and detailed knowledge of the subject matter</li> <li>• a highly-developed ability to apply this knowledge to the task set</li> <li>• evidence of extensive background reading</li> <li>• clear, fluent, stimulating and original expression</li> <li>• excellent presentation (spelling, grammar, graphical) with minimal or no presentation errors</li> </ul>	<p>A deep and systematic engagement with the assessment task, with consistently impressive demonstration of a comprehensive mastery of the subject matter, reflecting;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a deep and broad knowledge and critical insight as well as extensive reading;</li> <li>• a critical and comprehensive appreciation of the relevant literature or theoretical, technical or professional framework</li> <li>• an exceptional ability to organise, analyse and present arguments fluently and lucidly with a high level of critical analysis, amply supported by evidence, citation or quotation;</li> <li>• a highly-developed capacity for original, creative and logical thinking</li> </ul>
<b>B</b> 60 – 69	<p><b>Very Good</b> A thorough and well-organised response to the assessment tasks, demonstrating some or all, as appropriate, of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a broad knowledge of the subject matter</li> <li>• considerable strength in applying that knowledge to the task set</li> <li>• evidence of substantial background reading</li> <li>• clear and fluent expression</li> <li>• quality presentation with few presentation errors</li> </ul>	<p>A substantial engagement with the assessment task, demonstrating</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a thorough familiarity with the relevant literature or theoretical, technical or professional framework</li> <li>• well-developed capacity to analyse issues, organise material, present arguments clearly and cogently well supported by evidence, citation or quotation;</li> <li>• some original insights and capacity for creative and logical thinking</li> </ul>
<b>C</b> 50-59	<p><b>Good</b> An adequate and competent response to the assessment tasks, demonstrating some or all, as appropriate, of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• adequate but not complete knowledge of the subject matter</li> <li>• omission of some important subject matter or the appearance of several minor errors</li> <li>• capacity to apply knowledge appropriately to the task albeit with some errors</li> <li>• evidence of some background reading</li> <li>• clear expression with few areas of confusion</li> <li>• writing of sufficient quality to convey meaning but some lack of fluency and command of suitable vocabulary</li> <li>• good presentation with some presentation errors</li> </ul>	<p>An intellectually competent and factually sound answer, marked by,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• evidence of a reasonable familiarity with the relevant literature or theoretical, technical or professional framework</li> <li>• good developed arguments, but more statements of ideas, arguments or statements adequately but not well supported by evidence, citation or quotation</li> <li>• some critical awareness and analytical qualities</li> <li>• some evidence of capacity for original and logical thinking</li> </ul>

Grade and Marks Band	Grade Criteria relevant to modules in 1st Year and in the 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year of 4 year programmes	Additional criteria more relevant to modules in the later programme years
<b>D+</b> 45 – 50	<p><b><u>Satisfactory</u></b> An acceptable response to the assessment tasks with</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• basic grasp of subject matter, but somewhat lacking in focus and structure</li> <li>• main points covered but insufficient detail</li> <li>• some effort to apply knowledge to the task but only a basic capacity or understanding displayed</li> <li>• little or no evidence of background reading</li> <li>• several minor errors or one major error</li> <li>• satisfactory presentation with an acceptable level of presentation errors</li> </ul>	<p>An acceptable level of intellectual engagement with the assessment task showing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• some familiarity with the relevant literature or theoretical, technical or professional framework</li> <li>• mostly statements of ideas, with limited development of argument</li> <li>• limited use of evidence, citation or quotation</li> <li>• limited critical awareness displayed</li> <li>• limited evidence of capacity for original and logical thinking</li> </ul>
<b>D</b> 40 – 44	<p><b><u>Acceptable</u></b> The minimum acceptable standard of response to the assessment tasks which</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• shows a basic grasp of subject matter but may be poorly focussed or badly structured or contain irrelevant material</li> <li>• has one major error and some minor errors</li> <li>• demonstrates the capacity to complete only moderately difficult tasks related to the subject material</li> <li>• no evidence of background reading</li> <li>• displays the minimum acceptable standard of presentation (spelling, grammar, graphical)</li> </ul>	<p>The minimum acceptable level of intellectual engagement with the assessment task with</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the minimum acceptable appreciation of the relevant literature or theoretical, technical or professional framework</li> <li>• ideas largely expressed as statements, with little or no developed or structured argument</li> <li>• minimum acceptable use of evidence, citation or quotation</li> <li>• little or no analysis or critical awareness displayed or is only partially successful</li> <li>• little or no demonstrated capacity for original and logical thinking</li> </ul>
<b>E</b> 35 - 39	<p><b><u>Marginal</u></b> A response to the assessment tasks which fails to meet the minimum acceptable standards yet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• engages with the subject matter or problem set, despite major deficiencies in structure, relevance or focus</li> <li>• has two major error and some minor errors</li> <li>• demonstrates the capacity to complete only part of, or the simpler elements of, the task</li> <li>• an incomplete or rushed answer e.g. the use of bullet points through part/all of answer</li> </ul>	<p>A factually sound answer with a partially successful, but not entirely acceptable, attempt to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• integrate factual knowledge into a broader literature or theoretical, technical or professional framework</li> <li>• develop arguments</li> <li>• support ideas or arguments with evidence, citation or quotation</li> </ul>

Grade and Marks Band	Grade Criteria relevant to modules in 1st Year and in the 2 <sup>nd</sup> Year of 4 year programmes	Additional criteria more relevant to modules in the later programme years
<b>F</b> 20 – 34	<p><b><u>Unacceptable</u></b> A response to the assessment tasks which is unacceptable, with</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a failure to address the subject matter resulting in a largely irrelevant answer or material of marginal relevance predominating</li> <li>• a display of some knowledge of material relative to the question posed, but with very serious omissions/errors and/or major inaccuracies included in answer</li> <li>• solutions offered to a very limited portion of the problem set</li> <li>• an answer unacceptably incomplete (e.g. for lack of time)</li> <li>• a random and undisciplined development, layout or presentation</li> <li>• unacceptable standards of presentation, such as grammar, spelling or graphical presentation</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<p>An unacceptable level of intellectual engagement with the assessment task, with</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• no appreciation of the relevant literature or theoretical, technical or professional framework</li> <li>• no developed or structured argument</li> <li>• no use of evidence, citation or quotation</li> <li>• no analysis or critical awareness displayed or is only partially successful</li> <li>• no demonstrated capacity for original and logical thinking</li> </ul>
<b>G</b> 0 – 19	<p><b><u>Wholly unacceptable</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• complete failure to address the subject matter resulting in an entirely irrelevant answer</li> <li>• little or no knowledge displayed relative to the question posed</li> <li>• little or no solution offered for the problem set</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<p>No intellectual engagement with the assessment task</p>

### Sub-Grade Marks Bands

Sub-Grade marks bands are defined according to the following table in the case of modules where the pass mark is set at 40%.

Note that

- the A, B, C, F and G grade bands are sub-divided into three sub-bands each,
- the D grade band is sub-divided into two sub-bands, and
- the E-grade band has no sub-band structure.

Grade	Sub-Grade Band	Marks Range
A	A+	77 – 100
	A	73 – 76
	A-	70 – 72
B	B+	67 – 69
	B	63 - 66
	B-	60 – 62
C	C+	57 - 59
	C	53 – 56
	C-	50- 52
D	D+	45 - 49
	D	40 - 44
E	E	35 - 39
F	F+	30 – 34
	F	25 – 29
	F-	20 – 24
G	G+	14 – 19
	G	7 - 13
	G-	1 - 6
	No Grade	0

**Use of Sub-Grade Marks Bands** where three sub-grades exist:

The **standard** sub-grade marks band for performance within a grade is the **mid sub-grade marks band**, e.g. performance at H2.1 level in a module, which is neither a marginal H2.1 performance nor one tending towards H1, would be allocated a mark in the B range, 63 – 66.

**Superior** performance at a major grade - that tending towards the next higher major grade - would be allocated a mark in the upper sub-grade marks band, e.g. performance tending towards, but not reaching H1 standard, would be allocated a mark in the B+ range, 67 – 69.

**Marginal** performance at a major grade - that tending towards the next lower major grade - would be allocated a mark in the lower sub-grade marks band, e.g. performance better, but not significantly better, than H2.2 level would be allocated a mark in the B- range, 60 – 62.