

## Keele University – Generic Assessment Criteria (Levels 3, 4, 5, and 6)

Descriptor	Detailed Descriptor*	Position within Band	Mark	UG Degree Classification
	Work that could not be bettered at this level.		100	First Class
Exceptional	As for 'outstanding' but strongly underpinned by independent thought, originality and/or novel ideas in thinking, and a strong critical appreciation of the topic. No improvement could reasonably be expected at this level.	Middle	95	
		Lower	90	
Outstanding	Work that is typically characterised by evidence of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outstanding knowledge and understanding at the forefront of the discipline</li> <li>• Evidence of independent thought and/or originality in thinking</li> <li>• Very well structured, robust and persuasive arguments, lucidly written, uses clear and accurate expression</li> <li>• Accurate use of a broad and/or extensive range of sources and evidence to support work</li> <li>• Demonstrates the ability to interpret and/or present concepts and/or data in a critical and constructive way.</li> <li>• Very few, if any, weaknesses. Little improvement could reasonably be expected</li> </ul>	Middle	85	
		Lower	80	

Excellent	<p>Work that is typically characterised by evidence of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An excellent level of knowledge and understanding of key concepts and principles</li> <li>• Some evidence of originality and/or novel ideas in thinking</li> <li>• Clearly structured, robust and persuasive arguments, lucidly written, uses clear and accurate expression</li> <li>• Accurate use of a broad/wide range of sources and evidence to support work</li> <li>• Demonstrates an excellent ability to interpret and/or present concepts and/or data in a critical and constructive way.</li> <li>• No serious weaknesses, a few areas of very minor improvement could be expected</li> </ul>	Upper	78	
		Middle	75	
		Lower	72	
<p>Good/Very Good</p> <p>(Work which is, on balance, 'very good' should be awarded a mark of 68)</p>	<p>Work that is typically characterised by evidence of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A good/very good level of knowledge and understanding of key concepts and principles</li> <li>• Clearly structured, robust and persuasive arguments, lucidly written, uses clear and accurate expression</li> <li>• Good or very good use of accurate sources and evidence to support work</li> <li>• Demonstrates a good or very good ability to interpret and/or present concepts and/or data</li> </ul>	Upper	68	2:1
Middle	65			

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A few weaknesses may be identified, may need some improvement in one or more areas</li> </ul>	Lower	62	
Reasonable	<p>Work that is typically characterised by evidence of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A reasonable level of knowledge and understanding of key concepts and principles</li> <li>• Arguments are evident but they may lack coherence and / or supporting evidence</li> <li>• Some evidence of the use of sources and evidence to support work</li> <li>• May contain some repetition, inconsistencies or errors</li> <li>• Organisation and clarity of writing are of sufficient standard for the reader to engage easily</li> <li>• Demonstrates some ability to interpret and/or present concepts and/or data</li> <li>• Work at the lower end of this grade may contain some major errors</li> <li>• Needs some improvement</li> </ul>	Upper	58	2:2
		Middle	55	
		Lower	52	

Pass	<p>Work that is typically characterised by evidence of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some knowledge and understanding of a restricted range of issues</li> <li>• Limited evidence of awareness of some key concepts and principles</li> <li>• Arguments may be superficial/shallow</li> <li>• Little evidence of the use of sources and evidence to support work, over reliance on very basic resources</li> <li>• Likely to contain repetition, inconsistencies and/or some major errors</li> <li>• Organisation and clarity of writing may be limited, but will be sufficient for the reader to engage with most aspects of the work,</li> <li>• Demonstrates a limited ability to interpret and/or present concepts and/or data</li> <li>• Likely to contain serious weaknesses</li> <li>• Needs major improvement</li> </ul>	Upper	48	3 <sup>rd</sup> Class
		Middle	45	
		Lower	42	
Fail	Unsatisfactory work that is typically characterised by evidence of the following:	Upper	38	Fail

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A failure to demonstrate an understanding of many of the key concepts and principles</li> <li>• Arguments may be lacking entirely or be very shallow</li> <li>• No/very limited use of sources and evidence to support work</li> <li>• May contain serious weaknesses and/or major flaws in understanding</li> <li>• Organisation and clarity of writing may be limited, but will be sufficient for the reader to engage with most aspects of the work</li> <li>• Demonstrates a very limited ability to interpret and/or present concepts and/or data</li> <li>• Shows some evidence of understanding of the assessment</li> <li>• Needs significant improvement</li> </ul>	Middle	35	
		Lower	32	
Token submission	Unsatisfactory work with limited understanding of the assessment. Fundamentally flawed arguments and/or incorrect information. Token marks may be awarded for any relevant information, as applicable.	Token submission	20, 10, 5	
No submission, wrong answer	No submission, wrong answer.		0	

*\*When using the criteria, colleagues should note that in each band, the detailed descriptor states “work that is typically characterised by”. It is not necessary for work to fulfil all the criteria absolutely. The extent to which the criteria need to be fulfilled to gain a particular mark remains a matter of professional academic judgement.*

## Guidance for students – Keele’s 24 point mark scale

Your work will be marked using the University’s **24-point marking scale**.

This scale has 24-mark (or grade) points on it, each of which falls into one of the classes of performance which correspond to the overall degree classification. The University uses these classes of performance for all its undergraduate modules.

70-100	First Class
60-69	Second Class, Upper Division (also referred to as "Upper Second" or "2.1")
50-59	Second Class, Lower Division (also referred to as "Lower Second" or "2.2")
40-49	Third Class
0-39	Fail

The University has generic descriptors for work which falls within each of the grade boundaries shown above. There is a descriptor for work which falls within the Lower Second Class range, another for the Upper Second Class range, and so on. You can find the descriptors attached to this document. The mark that each piece of your work receives depends on the extent to which it satisfies the elements in the generic descriptors.

The person marking your work will consider it alongside the generic criteria to decide which class of performance the work falls into. The marker will then determine the extent to which your work meets the criteria in order to arrive at a judgment about the position (high, mid, low) within that class.

### **What if my module has more than one piece of assessment?**

If a module has more than one ‘unit’ (or piece) of assessment, the mark for each unit is determined using the 24-point mark scale and then the marks are averaged, taking account of the units’ respective weightings, in order to produce the module result. This is expressed as a percentage. Your overall module mark could therefore be any whole number up to 100 and is not limited to one of the marks on the scale.

### **Does the 24 point mark scale apply to all pieces of work?**

No. The 24-point mark scale is applied to single pieces of work where an assessment of the quality of the work is made and a single overall mark awarded. There are some examples of work (e.g., KLE tests, class tests, numerical tests) where an answer is either correct or incorrect and marks awarded accordingly. The 24-point mark scale does not apply to these pieces of work and so you may, for example, receive a mark of (e.g.,) 63% for a class test. This mark will remain and will not be rounded to 65%.

### **What should I do if I am unsure about whether or not the 24-point mark scale applies to my assessment?**

You should contact your module leader, or the person who set the work in the first instance and ask them to clarify whether the 24-point mark scale applies to a specific assessment.

## Generic Assessment Criteria Staff Guidance

1. The aim of the generic assessment criteria is to ensure that at Keele we reward our students appropriately for their achievements and that this is reflected in an appropriate proportion of “good degrees” (2:1 and above) that are awarded. The criteria also ensure as much consistency as possible across all disciplines in the University.
2. Keele’s generic assessment criteria were first implemented in the 2017/18 academic year (for levels 3, 4, 5 and 6). The original criteria were introduced after extensive consultation. The revised criteria have been updated based on feedback from external examiners, consultation with staff (via a KIITE survey) and through assessing best practice across the sector.
3. When using the criteria, colleagues should note that in each band, the detailed descriptor states “work that is typically characterised by”. It is not necessary for work to fulfil all of the criteria absolutely. The extent to which the criteria need to be fulfilled to gain a particular mark remains a matter of professional academic judgement.
4. These criteria may need to be adapted for different types of assessments, particularly for those assessments which focus more on presentation and communication skills (e.g., presentations, podcasts, vlogs, posters), and it is expected that this will occur. However, such adaptation must comply with the “24-point step marking” approach and the bands used must reflect as closely as possible the generic assessment criteria.
5. The criteria and the accompanying 24-point mark scale should be used where an assessment of the quality of the work is made, and a single overall mark awarded. For some types of assessment, application of the 24-point mark scale is not appropriate because the mark awarded is based on a series of correct or incorrect answers, with marks awarded accordingly. Examples of assessment types where the 24-point mark scale should not be used include: class tests, KLE quizzes, tests with a series of short answer questions, numerical/mathematical tests.

### Worked Examples:

- **A module contains two pieces of assessment, (1) an essay (20% of the module mark) and, (2) a consultancy style report (80% of the module mark).** The 24-point mark scale and accompanying descriptors should be applied to both pieces of assessment individually, with the overall module mark a weighted average of the two marks. Note the overall module mark should remain as a weighted average and should not be adjusted to match the 24-point mark scale. It is therefore possible to have overall an overall module mark of any whole number between 0 and 100.
- **A module contains two pieces of assessment, (1) a KLE quiz (20% of the module mark) and, (2) a Podcast (80% of the module mark).** The 24-point mark scale and accompanying descriptors should be applied to the Podcast only. The marks for the KLE quiz are automatically calculated based on whether answers are correct or not and should not be adjusted to match the 24-point mark scale. The overall module mark will be a weighted average of the two assessments and again, could be any whole number between 0 and 100. The overall module mark should not be adjusted to match the 24-point mark scale.

6. It is important that these criteria are communicated effectively to students, using the guidance for students which has been agreed by Senate. Schools may need to supplement that guidance to take account of local variations for specific types of assessment not readily covered by the generic guidance. Guidance for students has been drafted to accompany the criteria
7. The criteria have been carefully cross referenced with Keele's degree algorithm – in particular, colleagues should note:
  - 10% is the threshold mark for determining “non-engagement with studies” ([Regulation B8](#))
  - 30% is the threshold mark for “condonement” of an overall module mark for students starting at Keele prior to September 2022 ([Regulation D5](#)).
  - 35% is the threshold mark for “condonement” of an overall module mark for students starting at Keele from September 2022 ([Regulation D5](#)).