

**UNIVERSITY OF CUMBRIA ACADEMIC PROCEDURES AND PROCESSES**

**APPENDIX 3a**

**University Wide Grade Descriptors**

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## University Wide Grade Descriptors

The following grade descriptors (Academic Regulations Section C 3.12) should be used in marking to decide the appropriate grades for individual assessment tasks at the different levels of study. The University reviews these descriptors periodically.

### Level 3

80-100 AA	Student meets all the requirements to attain 70 - 79 but demonstrates exceptional appreciation of the breadth of the field of study. Sophisticated ability to express the complexity of issues.
70-79 A	Student has met the LOs of the assessment with secure knowledge and understanding demonstrating study beyond the central requirements of the subject. The work shows clearly an appreciation of the importance of theoretical underpinning and provides evidence of simple analysis. Work shows confidence in using given tools/methods in defined practical contexts and/or problems and an ability to reach reasoned conclusions.
60-69 B	Student has met the LOs of the assessment with evidence of relevant acquisition of knowledge & understanding. The work shows the ability to express defined ideas clearly and with evidence of understanding and simple judgement. Work shows evidence that the student has applied given tools/methods with broad accuracy to well defined practical contexts and/or problems though conclusions drawn are limited.
50-59 C	Student has met the LOs of the assessment with evidence of acquisition of the main aspects of the knowledge of the subject. The work describes given knowledge clearly and displays limited evidence of an ability to use judgement. Work shows that the student has applied given tools/methods to well defined practical contexts and/or problems.
40-49 D	Student has met the LOs with evidence of simple acquisition of knowledge of the subject. The work describes given knowledge with few errors. Work shows that the student has applied given tools/methods with minor errors to well defined practical contexts and/or problems.
35-39 F	Student has not met all the LOs but shows some incomplete knowledge of the topic. The work displays inaccuracy and uncertainty in handling given knowledge. Unable to always apply given tools/methods to well defined practical contexts and/ or problems. For professional courses any work which contains evidence of, or reference to, unsafe or dangerous practice should be deemed a fail.

30-34 F	<p>Student has not met LOs with little knowledge of the topic.</p> <p>The work lacks coherence and demonstrates an inability to describe given knowledge.</p> <p>Poor understanding of given tools/methods and/or when to apply them to well-defined practical contexts and/or problems.</p>
0-29 F	<p>Student has failed the majority of the LOs.</p>

#### Level 4

80-100 A A	<p>Student meets all the requirements to attain 70 - 79 but demonstrates exceptional comprehension of knowledge &amp; understanding.</p> <p>Sophisticated ability to analyse beyond defined classifications/principles.</p>
70-79 A	<p><i>Student has met the LOs of the assessment with thorough knowledge &amp; understanding demonstrating study beyond the core requirements of the subject.</i></p> <p>The work shows a resourceful and imaginative ability to analyse based on defined classifications, principles, theories or models.</p> <p>Work shows clear evidence that the student has applied given tools/methods accurately to well defined practical contexts and/or problems.</p>
60-69 B	<p><i>Student has met the LOs of the assessment with evidence of relevant and sound acquisition of knowledge &amp; understanding.</i></p> <p>The work shows evidence of ability to analyse based on defined classifications, principles, theories or models.</p> <p>Work shows evidence that the student has applied given tools/methods accurately to well-defined practical contexts and/or problems. Although the work recognises inherent complexities in the area of study, some conclusions are reached on the basis of insufficient evidence.</p>
50-59 C	<p>Student has met the LOs of the assessment with evidence of acquisition of knowledge of the subject.</p> <p>The work is largely descriptive in nature with evidence of limited reasoning based on defined classifications, principles, theories or models.</p> <p>Work shows some evidence that the student has applied given tools/methods accurately to well defined practical contexts and/or problems, including limited recognition of the inherent complexities in the area of study.</p>
40-49 D	<p>Student has met the LOs with evidence of basic acquisition of knowledge of the subject.</p> <p>The work is limited to description and prone to unsubstantiated assertion or logic.</p> <p>Work shows evidence that the student has applied given tools/methods to well defined practical contexts and/or problems.</p>

35-39 F	<p>Student has not met all the LOs but shows an emerging knowledge of the topic.</p> <p>The work is descriptive and uncritical with some inaccuracy and lack of coherence.</p> <p>Unable to always apply given tools/methods to well defined practical contexts and/ or problems.</p> <p>For professional courses any work which contains evidence of, or reference to, unsafe or dangerous practice should be deemed a fail.</p>
30-34 F	<p>Student has not met LOs with little knowledge of the topic and many factual errors. The work is descriptive and uncritical with discussion which may be irrelevant or lack internal consistency. Insufficient understanding of given tools/methods to apply them to well-defined practical contexts and/or problems.</p>
0-29 F	<p>Student has failed the majority of the LOs.</p>

### Level 5

80-100 A A	<p>Student meets all the requirements to attain 70 - 79 with impressive knowledge &amp; understanding applying a well sustained critical approach drawing on a comprehensive breadth of evidence, reasoning and reflection.</p>
70-79 A	<p>Student has met the LOs of the assessment with evidence of detailed knowledge &amp; understanding of key concepts and theories, demonstrating a creative approach to a variety of ideas, contexts and frameworks.</p> <p>The work adopts a critical approach, using evidence, reasoning and reflection based on given classifications, principles, theories or models.</p> <p>Work shows sustained evidence that the student can identify &amp; define straightforward problems and/or practical contexts and can apply knowledge and skills aimed at their resolution.</p>
60-69 B	<p>Student has met the LOs of the assessment with evidence of detailed knowledge &amp; understanding of key concepts and theories, demonstrating a variety of ideas, contexts and frameworks.</p> <p>The work adopts a critical approach using given classifications/principles.</p> <p>Work shows evidence that the student can identify straightforward problems and/or practical contexts and choose appropriate methods for their resolution in a considered manner.</p>
50-59 C	<p>Student has met the LOs of the assessment with evidence of knowledge and understanding of key concepts and theories which is generally sound.</p> <p>The work shows evidence of a general critical approach using given classifications/principles, although there may be some lack of focus on key points.</p> <p>Work shows evidence that the student can apply learning in a considered manner to straightforward problems and/or practical contexts.</p>

40-49 D	<p>Student has met the LOs of the assessment with evidence of basic knowledge &amp; understanding of key concepts and theories.</p> <p>The work is heavily limited to description; analysis may be unsophisticated.</p> <p>Work shows evidence that the student can apply essential learning to straightforward problems and/or practical contexts.</p>
35-39 F	<p>Student has not met all the LOs of the assessment with basic knowledge of some relevant topic issues and evidence of partial understanding.</p> <p>Work is largely descriptive with some unsubstantiated assertion. Analysis is minimal or contradictory.</p> <p>Unable to always apply essential learning to straightforward problems and/or practical contexts. For professional courses any work which contains evidence of, or reference to, unsafe or dangerous practice should be deemed a fail.</p>
30-34 F	<p>Student has not met LOs with inadequate knowledge or understanding of the of the topic.</p> <p>The work is descriptive and uncritical with unsubstantiated assertion.</p> <p>Insufficient understanding of given tools/methods to apply them to straightforward practical contexts and/or problems.</p>
0-29 F	<p>Student has failed the majority of the LOs.</p>

### Level 6

80-100 A A	<p>Student meets all the requirements to attain 70 – 79. There is evidence of exceptional scholarship including critical evaluation and synthesis of issues and information that is innovative and challenges existing approaches.</p> <p>Accurate and detailed use of a range of evidence. Comprehensive knowledge and understanding of theories, principles and concepts.</p>
70-79 A	<p>Student has met the LOs of the assessment with evidence of comprehensive and up-to-date knowledge and understanding of concepts and theories and their interrelationship. The work shows a detailed appreciation of how aspects of the subject are uncertain, contradictory or limited.</p> <p>The work adopts a well-sustained critical approach using a breadth of evidence, reasoning and reflection.</p> <p>Works shows evidence of a mature and independent approach to problem solving. The student can create appropriate hypotheses and select, justify and use imaginative and innovative approaches in their investigations.</p>
60-69 B	<p>Student has met the LOs of the assessment with evidence of comprehensive and up-to-date knowledge and understanding of concepts and theories and their interrelationship with an awareness of how aspects of the subject are uncertain, contradictory or limited.</p> <p>The work adopts a critical approach using a breadth of evidence, reasoning and reflection.</p>

	Works shows evidence that the student can act confidently and autonomously in the identification and definition of complex problems and select, justify and use approaches aimed at their resolution.
50-59 C	Student has met the LOs of the assessment with evidence of detailed knowledge and understanding of key concepts and theories including an awareness of the <i>provisional nature</i> of knowledge.  The work shows evidence of a general critical approach using individual judgement and reflection although there is some limitation in the ability to conceptualise and/or apply theory.  Works shows evidence that the student can act without guidance in the identification of complex problems and can apply knowledge and skills to their resolution.
40-49 D	Student has met the LOs of the assessment with evidence of knowledge & understanding of key concepts and theories including basic recognition of the complexity of the subject.  The work is in the most part descriptive rather than based on argument and logical reasoning.  Works shows evidence that the student can apply appropriate learning accurately to complex problems and/or practical contexts.
35-39 F	Student has not met all the LOs of the assessment with only basic knowledge of key concepts and theories and weaknesses in understanding. There is little or no recognition of the complexity of the subject.  Work is largely descriptive with some unsubstantiated assertion. Analysis is minimal or contradictory.  Unable to always apply learning accurately to complex problems and /or practical contexts. For professional courses any work which contains evidence of, or reference to, unsafe or dangerous practice should be deemed a fail.
30-34 F	Student has not met LOs with inadequate knowledge or understanding of key concepts and theories. There is no recognition of the complexity of the subject.  The work is descriptive and uncritical with unsubstantiated assertion and a lack of analysis.  Insufficient understanding of given tools/methods to apply learning accurately or safely to complex problems and /or practical contexts.
0-29 F	Student has failed the majority of the LOs.

### Masters (M) Level

80-100% Distinction	Student has met the LOs of the assessment with:  <b>Knowledge and Clarity of Reasoning</b>  Exceptionally comprehensive knowledge base. Ability to discriminate and justify key issues and relate them to the wider context. Lines of thought are innovative and transparent and the arguments are confidently expressed to develop and synthesise compelling and novel conclusions.
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	<p>Conclusions drawn make a new contribution to the knowledge base of the discipline and there is clear evidence of originality of application in the presented work.</p> <p><b>Interface between Theory and Practice in the Professional Context</b></p> <p>Exceptional critical analysis of the interface between theory and practice, which evaluates and challenges theoretical adequacy and synthesises the development of professional practice. Exceptional evidence of self-understanding which leads to creative and novel use of multiple frameworks for evaluation and synthesis and challenges current practice in the professional context.</p> <p><b>Use of literature</b></p> <p>Exceptional, discerning and balanced range of key and peripheral primary and secondary sources demonstrating a very high level of critical evaluation and synthesis and the ability to challenge received wisdom in the subject. Outstanding evidence of wide reading on the subject and this is incorporated into novel conclusions.</p> <p><b>Organisation of Material</b></p> <p>Exceptional clarity of presentation that demonstrates ability to attend to all detailed aspects of organisation and structure of discussion and all supporting evidence. The work has the qualities consistent with publishable material.</p>
<p>70-79% Distinction</p>	<p>Student has met the LOs of the assessment with:</p> <p><b>Knowledge and Clarity of Reasoning</b></p> <p>Excellent, comprehensive knowledge base. Ability to discriminate and justify key issues and relate them to the wider context. Lines of thought are transparent and the arguments are confidently expressed to develop and synthesise compelling conclusions.</p> <p><b>Interface between Theory and Practice in the Professional Context</b></p> <p>Rigorous critical analysis of the interface between theory and practice, clearly elaborated to evaluate theoretical adequacy and synthesise the development of professional practice. Excellent, creative use of multiple frameworks for evaluation and synthesis of own stance.</p> <p><b>Use of literature</b></p> <p>Excellent, wide range of key and peripheral primary and secondary sources, demonstrating critical evaluation and synthesis within the professional context.</p> <p><b>Organisation of Material</b></p> <p>Excellent, coherent organisation and structure which enhances comprehension. Excellent presentation of all material. Referencing is accurate to a high degree.</p>
<p>60-69% Good pass</p>	<p>Student has met the LOs of the assessment with:</p> <p><b>Knowledge and Clarity of Reasoning</b></p> <p>Substantial knowledge base. Ability to discriminate key issues and establish some links to the wider context. Arguments are confidently expressed through clear, logical lines of thought. Conclusions are firmly articulated, comprehensive, relevant and arise directly from the premised arguments.</p>

	<p><b>Interface between Theory and Practice in the Professional Context</b></p> <p>Excellent critical analysis/evaluation of the relationship between theory and practice. Substantial use of multiple theoretical frameworks to evaluate professional practice with wide ranging synthesis to show how each is informing the other. Clear, critical evaluation of their usefulness.</p> <p><b>Use of literature</b></p> <p>Substantial selection of key primary and secondary literature sources demonstrating analysis and critical evaluation of a wide range of relevant issues for the professional context.</p> <p><b>Organisation of Material</b></p> <p>Organisation is comprehensive and structure coherent.</p> <p>Well presented, with considerable attention to detail which facilitates effortless comprehension.</p> <p>Supporting material is well presented and ordered with accurate referencing and minimal errors of detail.</p>
<p>50-59%</p> <p>Satisfactory Pass</p>	<p>Student has met the LOs of the assessment with:</p> <p><b>Knowledge and Clarity of Reasoning</b></p> <p>Sound knowledge base. Ability to discriminate key issues. Arguments are confidently expressed through clear, logical lines of thought. Conclusions are firmly articulated, relevant and arise directly from the premised arguments.</p> <p><b>Interface between Theory and Practice in the Professional Context</b></p> <p>Good, critical analysis/evaluation of the relationship between theory and practice. Some use of multiple theoretical frameworks to evaluate professional practice. Demonstrable synthesis to show how each is informing the other. Some evaluation of their usefulness.</p> <p><b>Use of literature</b></p> <p>Good selection of key primary literature sources with critical evaluation of significant issues for the professional context. Some limited analysis of related, secondary material.</p> <p><b>Organisation of Material</b></p> <p>Organisation and structure is coherent.</p> <p>Well presented, facilitating comprehension.</p> <p>Supporting material is well presented and ordered.</p> <p>Accurate referencing.</p>
<p>40-49%</p> <p>Fail</p>	<p>Student has not met all the LOs of the assessment with:</p> <p><b>Knowledge and Clarity of Reasoning</b></p> <p>Some defended knowledge of current, relevant issues. Limited development of arguments where lines of thought are discernible. Limited conclusions arising from premises.</p> <p><b>Interface between Theory and Practice in the Professional Context</b></p> <p>Some articulation of the relationship between and critical analysis/evaluation of the significance of relevant theory to specific</p>



	<p>professional practice with some awareness of how each may be informed by the other.</p> <p><b>Use of literature</b></p> <p>Range and choice of evidence/literature marginally inadequate. Some recognition and critical analysis of issues of significance for the professional context.</p> <p><b>Organisation of Material</b></p> <p>Organisation and structure does not adequately support the work. Presentation includes supporting material but is somewhat disorganised in places. Most referencing is sound and appropriate but limited in scope. For professional courses any work which contains evidence of, or reference to, unsafe or dangerous practice should be deemed a fail.</p>
<p>30-39%</p> <p>Fail</p>	<p>Student has not met the LOs of the assessment with:</p> <p><b>Knowledge and Clarity of Reasoning</b></p> <p>Some evidence of relevant knowledge base but little argument and lines of thought are poorly expressed and often demonstrate confused thinking. Conclusions drawn but often not related to discussion.</p> <p><b>Interface between Theory and Practice in the Professional Context</b></p> <p>Some use of relevant theory but lack of awareness of relationship to practice. Little integration of the articulation between theory and practice</p> <p><b>Use of literature</b></p> <p>Narrow but mainly relevant selection of evidence/literature demonstrating some recognition of significance for the professional context</p> <p><b>Organisation of Material</b></p> <p>Poorly organised, incoherent structure.</p> <p>Poor presentation and referencing.</p> <p>Little appropriate supporting material given.</p>
<p>0-29%</p> <p>Fail</p>	<p>Student has failed to meet the majority of the LOs of the assessment.</p>