

The University of Edinburgh

The Moray House School of Education

School Postgraduate Studies Committee

Developmental Disabilities: A Psychological Approach (EDUA11186)
Learning, Learners and Teaching (EDUA11094)
Child and Adolescent Development (EDUA11034)
(all courses on MSc Education)

Brief description of the paper

The marking categories and grade-related descriptors in the PGT Generic Handbook are currently used for marking assignments on these courses. This paper proposes retaining the marking categories, but amending the grade-related descriptors, so that they more closely match the requirements of the assignment. This is likely to benefit both students and markers.

No other aspects of these courses would change.

Action requested

Approval requested

Resource implications

Does the paper have resource implications? **No**

Risk assessment

Does the paper include a risk analysis? **No**

Equality and diversity

Does the paper have equality and diversity implications? **Yes**

By producing grade-descriptors which are more closely related to the requirements of the assignments, students will have a clearer indication of how to do well in these pieces of work. This is likely to be particularly beneficial for students who have come from UG backgrounds which are dissimilar to this MSc in terms of assessment work.

Freedom of information

Can this paper be included in open business? **Yes**

Any other relevant information

No

Originator of the paper

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**Proposed Grade-Related Criteria for use in:
Developmental Disabilities: A Psychological Approach (EDUA11186)
Learners, Learning and Teaching
Child and Adolescent Development
(all courses on MSc Education; Changes to be implemented from AY 2014-15)**

Background:

Four of the six PGT generic marking categories (e.g. Knowledge and Understanding of Concepts; Constructing Academic Discourse), are relevant for the assignments on these courses, and have been used in marking for a number of years.

However, the descriptors of each grade within these categories (which appear in the PGT Generic Handbook) are not a close match with the requirements of these assignments. For example to get an 'A' for 'Knowledge and Use of the Literature' the generic descriptors state that the student will have:

".... used most of the key references in the reading list for this course, without necessarily referring to every item on the list"

Similarly, to get an 'A' for 'Critical Reflection on Theory and Practice', the generic descriptors state that the student will have:

" ... extended critical discussion of most of the issues dealt with in the course"

For all three courses, students undertake a 4,000 word assignment on their choice of very specific topic from within the course. They are therefore not being asked to deal with most/all of the issues and all of the reading from the course. Rather, they are being asked to go into greater depth on a narrower range of issues.

The current generic grade-descriptors are therefore not helpful for the students or the markers on these courses. We have therefore developed new grade-descriptors which match the existing four (of the six) marking categories, but align more closely with the assignment requirements. These new descriptors incorporate the existing wording wherever it was still appropriate. Where new wording was required, this draws upon (and does not conflict with) the CHSS Postgraduate Common Marking Scheme wording, and is designed to suit a SCQF Level 11 course.

We are seeking approval for these proposed new grade-descriptors (below).

**Proposed New Grade-Descriptors
Knowledge and understanding of concepts**

A	There is evidence of excellent understanding of relevant concepts, with a strong and insightful discussion of the debate around key concepts.
B	There is evidence of a very good level of understanding of relevant concepts, without any significant misunderstanding. There is very good discussion of the debate around key concepts.
C	There is evidence of a good level of understanding of relevant concepts, although there may be some evidence of minor misunderstanding. There

	should be good discussion of the debate around key concepts.
D	There is evidence of a degree of understanding of relevant concepts, but there are some omissions or misunderstandings in the handling of these. Discussion of the debate around key concepts may be limited or superficial at times.
E	There is little or no evidence of understanding of relevant concepts, or the concepts are handled in a way that shows considerable misunderstanding or omission. Little, if any, discussion of the debate around key concepts.

Knowledge and use of the literature

A	An excellent range of relevant literature has been drawn upon, going well beyond the literature covered in class. This literature has been integrated into a coherent, insightful and analytical discussion.
B	A very good range of relevant literature has been drawn upon. This literature has been used to develop a relevant discussion which has a clear degree of critical understanding.
C	A sufficient range of relevant academic sources has been drawn upon. This literature has been used to develop a relevant discussion with a degree of critical understanding.
D	A limited range of relevant academic sources has been drawn upon. This literature has been used to develop a discussion, but this lacks relevance, criticality and/or shows superficial understanding in places.
E	There is little or no evidence of familiarity with relevant academic sources, and/or these sources have been misunderstood. Literature may have been used, but be largely irrelevant/inappropriate for the topic, and discussion descriptive rather than critical.

Critical reflection on theory (and practice)

A	There is extended critical discussion of key theories related to the assignment topic, which shows a strong degree of insight, understanding of different perspectives, and awareness of implications (where appropriate).
B	There is critical discussion of relevant theory, showing some insight, understanding of different perspectives, and awareness of implications (where appropriate).
C	There is critical discussion of relevant theory, but this may lack insight and be overly descriptive in places and/or the discussion is largely conducted from one perspective. There is some awareness of implications (where appropriate), but this may be limited.
D	There is discussion of relevant theory. This discussion may be critical in places, but is neither extensive, nor pursued to any depth, and may show elements of inconsistency/misunderstanding. There is little awareness of implications (where appropriate).
E	The assignment evidences poor awareness of relevant theory. Instead, the content is largely anecdotal or descriptive. Evidence of unsupported assertions, misunderstandings, or unquestioned assumptions. There is very limited awareness of implications (where appropriate).

Constructing academic discourse

A	The structure, organisation, quality of writing, expression of ideas and conformity to conventions of referencing are consistent with the quality required for publication in an academic journal.
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B	The structure, organisation, quality of writing, expression of ideas and conformity to conventions of referencing are very good.
C	The assignment demonstrates a largely logical and coherent framework. The quality of writing, expression of ideas and conformity to conventions of referencing are generally good.
D	For the most part the assignment demonstrates a logical and coherent framework, but sections of the argument may be confused or underdeveloped. The writing may lack fluency or be stylistically inappropriate in some places. Conventions of referencing and academic writing may be adhered to, but not fully.
E	The assignment is characterised by a number of the following: lack of a logical and coherent framework; writing lacks fluency or is stylistically inappropriate; the expression of ideas is confused or underdeveloped; conventions of referencing and academic writing are not adhered to.