

College of Science and Engineering

Extended Common Marking Scheme: General Descriptors for Honours Years

These general descriptors are for use by Schools as the basis for their Specific Descriptors. The descriptors are indicative of the level of performance expected from the students. They are not, however, a check list of qualities that each student must demonstrate. The way the performance is demonstrated will vary from subject to subject, and from one mode of assessment to another. These descriptors are written primarily as an aid to the assessment of judgmentally assessed work, such as essays, fieldwork, lab or project reports and certain types of examination.

Grade Mark Honours descriptors [degree class]

A1 90-100 Excellent (Outstanding) [First]

Often faultless. The work is well beyond that expected at the appropriate level of study.

A2 80-89 Excellent (High) [First]

A truly professional piece of scholarship, often with an absence of errors. As 'A3' but shows (depending upon the item of assessment):

significant personal insight / creativity / originality

and / or

extra depth and academic maturity in the elements of assessment.

A3 70-79 Excellent [First]

Knowledge: Comprehensive range of up-to-date material handled in a professional way.

Understanding and handling of key concepts: Shows a command of the subject and current theory.

Focus on the subject: Clear and analytical; fully explores the subject.

Critical analysis and discussion: Shows evidence of deep thinking and/or an appropriately logical and rigorous approach in critically evaluating and integrating the evidence and ideas. Deals confidently with the complexities and subtleties of issues Shows elements of personal insight / creativity / originality.

Literature synthesised, analysed and referenced: Comprehensive grasp of the up-to-date literature which is used in a professional way.

Structure: Clear and coherent showing logical, ordered thought.

Presentation: Clear and professional with few, relatively minor flaws.

Accurate referencing; using the correct referencing system. Figures and tables well constructed and accurate. Good standard of spelling and grammar.

B 60-69 Very Good [2(i)]

Knowledge: Very good range of up-to-date material, perhaps with some gaps, handled in a professional way.

Understanding and handling of key concepts: Shows a firm grasp of the subject and current theory but there may be gaps.

Focus on the subject: Clear focus on the subject with no or only trivial deviation.

Critical analysis and discussion: Shows initiative, the ability to think clearly, critically evaluate ideas, to bring different ideas together, and to draw sound conclusions.

Literature synthesised, analysed and referenced: Evidence of further reading. Shows a firm grasp of the literature, using good, up-to-date references to support the arguments.

Structure: Clear and coherent showing logical, ordered thought.

Presentation: Clear and professional with few, relatively minor flaws. Accurate referencing; using the correct referencing system. Figures and tables well constructed and accurate. Good standard of spelling and grammar.

C 50-59 Good [2(ii)]

Knowledge: Sound but limited. Inaccuracies, if any, are minor.

Understanding and handling of key concepts: Understands the subject but does not have a firm grasp and depth of understanding of all the key concepts.

Focus on the subject: Addresses the subject with relatively little irrelevant material.

Critical analysis and discussion: Limited critical analysis and evaluation of sources of evidence.

Literature synthesised, analysed and referenced: References are used appropriately to support the argument but they may be limited in number or reflect restricted independent reading.

Structure: Reasonably clear and coherent, generally presenting ideas and information in a logical way.

Presentation: Generally well presented but there may be minor flaws for example in figures, tables, referencing technique and standard of English.

D 40-49 Pass [3rd]

Knowledge: Basic; may have factual inaccuracies and omissions.

Understanding and handling of key concepts: Superficial; there may be some gaps in understanding. Lacks detail, elaboration or explanation of the key concepts and ideas; some may have been omitted.

Focus on the subject: Addresses the subject but may deviate from the core issues.

Critical analysis and discussion: Limited or lacking. The arguments and conclusions may be weak or lack clarity with unsubstantiated statements. The emphasis is likely to be more on description than analysis.

Literature synthesised, analysed and referenced: Basic and limited. May lack appropriate citations and evidence of independent reading.

Structure: Lacks clarity of structure. Shows poor logical development of arguments.

Presentation: Inadequate; may show flaws in the overall standard of presentation or in specific areas such as figures, referencing technique and standard of English (e.g. repeated minor spelling, punctuation or grammatical errors).

E 30-39 Marginal Fail

Knowledge: Poor and inadequate. Content too limited, there may be inaccuracies.

Understanding and handling of key concepts: Poor and inadequate; does not show sufficient understanding. Concepts omitted or poorly expressed.

Focus on the subject: Does not adequately address the subject.

Critical analysis and discussion: Poor and inadequate. May be no real attempt to critically evaluate the work.

Literature synthesised, analysed and referenced: Poor and inadequate; appropriate literature citations lacking or trivial.

Structure: A lack of coherence or poor structure.

Presentation: Overall standard of presentation may be poor. May be problems in specific areas such as writing style and expression (making it hard to follow the content), errors in referencing technique, and poor standard of English (spelling, punctuation and grammar).

F 20-29 Clear Fail

Knowledge: Very poor. Irrelevant or erroneous material may be included. May be very limited in scope consisting, for example, of just a few good lines.

Understanding and handling of key concepts: Very poor, may be confused.

Focus on the subject: Does not address the subject.

Critical analysis and discussion: Extremely limited or omitted. May be confused.

Literature synthesised, analysed and referenced: Extremely limited or omitted.

Structure: Confusing or no attempt to order the material in a systematic way.

Presentation: Writing style and presentation may be unacceptable.

G 10-19 Bad Fail

Knowledge: Serious lack of knowledge. Irrelevant or erroneous material may be included.

Understanding and handling of key concepts: None or trivial evidence of understanding.

Focus on the subject: Does not address the subject.

Critical analysis and discussion: May be no coherent discussion.

Literature synthesised, analysed and referenced: May be omitted.

Structure: Confusing or no attempt to order the material in a systematic way.

Presentation: Writing style and presentation may be unacceptable.

H 0-9 Very Bad Fail

The presented work is of very little relevance, if any, to the subject in question. It is incomplete or inadequate in every respect. A blank answer must be awarded zero.