

Keele University – Generic Assessment Criteria Level-7 (PGT)

Descriptor	Detailed Descriptor*	Position within Band	Mark	PGT Degree Classification
Exceptional	Work that could not be bettered at taught postgraduate level.		100	DISTINCTION
	As for 'outstanding' but underpinned by originality and/or novel ideas in thinking and a strong critical appreciation of the topic. No improvement could reasonably be expected.	Middle	95	
		Lower	90	
Outstanding	Work that is typically characterised by evidence of the following:	Middle	85	DISTINCTION
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An outstanding level of knowledge and understanding of complex issues, key concepts and principles at the forefront of the discipline • Outstanding awareness of subject and/or practice • Outstanding evidence of original, independent and critical thought • A strong, well-structured argument that is convincing and well supported by an outstanding range of sources and/or evidence • Pushes the boundaries of existing knowledge • Evidence of extensive and discriminating reading/use of source material, accurately used in support of the work • Clearly structured, robust and persuasive arguments, lucidly written, uses clear and accurate expression 	Lower	80	
Excellent	Work that is typically characterised by evidence of the following:	Upper	78	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An excellent level of knowledge and understanding of complex issues, key concepts and principles at the forefront of the discipline • Excellent awareness of subject and/or practice 			

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of original, independent, and critical thought • A strong, well-structured argument that is convincing and well-supported by a wide range of sources and/or evidence • Explores the boundaries of existing knowledge • Evidence of extensive and discriminating reading/use of source material, accurately used in support of the work • Clearly structured, robust and persuasive arguments, lucidly written, uses clear and accurate expression 	Middle	75	
		Lower	72	
Good/Very Good (Work which is, on balance, 'very good' should be awarded a mark of 68)	<p>Work that is typically characterised by evidence of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A good or very good level of knowledge and understanding of key concepts and principles • Good or very good awareness of subject and/or practice • Able to describe and use a range of major concepts, theories and methodologies in a good or very good level of detail • Strong arguments which offer good analysis of key issues • Use of a broad/wide range of sources and/or evidence to support work • May contain some minor errors and/or minor areas for improvement • Clearly structured, robust and persuasive arguments, lucidly written, uses clear and accurate expression 	Upper	68	MERIT
		Middle	65	
		Lower	62	
Reasonable	Work that is typically characterised by evidence of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A reasonable level of knowledge and understanding of key concepts and principles • Sufficient awareness of subject and/or practice 	Upper	58	PASS

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to describe and use a range of major concepts, theories and methodologies • Some critical judgement offered • Arguments offer some analysis of key issues, but they may lack coherence and / or supporting evidence • Evidence of familiarity with the key sources and/or evidence but may contain questionable interpretation of critical materials • May contain some errors and/or areas for improvement • Organisation and clarity of writing are of sufficient standard for the reader to engage easily • Needs some improvement in one or more areas 	Middle	55	
		Lower	52	
Fail (Some reasonable elements but needs improvements before meeting pass threshold at PGT level)	<p>Unsatisfactory work that is typically characterised by evidence of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A limited level of knowledge and understanding of a restricted range of issues. Poorly conceived and poorly directed to the question/task • Shows some understanding of empirical or theoretical issues but is not able to develop them further • Some evidence of argument but contains irrelevant or unrelated elements. Arguments may be superficial/shallow • Some familiarity with basic reading material but little evidence of the use of sources and/or evidence, or over reliance on very basic resources • Likely to contain repetition, inconsistencies and/or some major errors • Organisation and clarity of writing may be limited, but will be sufficient for the reader to engage with most aspects of the work • Needs some improvement before meeting pass threshold at PGT level 	Upper	48	FAIL
		Middle	45	
		Lower	42	

Fail (Needs significant improvement before meeting pass threshold)	<p>Unsatisfactory work at PGT level that is typically characterised by evidence of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A very limited level of knowledge and understanding of a restricted range of issues. Poorly conceived and poorly directed to the question/task • Limited understanding of empirical or theoretical issues but is not able to develop them further • Limited evidence of argument and/or contains irrelevant or unrelated elements. • Limited familiarity with basic reading materials and little evidence of the use of sources and/or evidence, or over reliance on very basic resources • Likely to contain repetition, inconsistencies and/or some major errors • Organisation and clarity of writing may be limited, but will be sufficient for the reader to engage with most aspects of the work • Needs significant improvement to meet pass threshold at PGT level 	Upper	38	FAIL
		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.		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 for Level 7 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	Distinction
60-69	Merit
50-59	Pass
0-49	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 therefore be any whole number up to 100 and is not limited to one of the marks on the scale.

Does the 24-points 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 or not the 24-point mark scale applies to that 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. Generic Level 7 marking criteria have been developed following recognition that there are some important differences between postgraduate and undergraduate work, including mark scales and classification banding, but also expectations surrounding the quality of the work produced at Level 7. Close similarities between the marking descriptors have been maintained wherever relevant across Levels 3-7.
2. Keele's generic assessment criteria for Level 7 were implemented in the 2018/19 academic year. The original criteria were introduced after extensive consultation. These 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. The updates to the Level 7 criteria are in line with those made for the Level 3-6 criteria.
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 module marks 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. In the case of ‘Integrated’ degrees, it is expected that work undertaken at level 7 will be marked using the level 7 generic marking criteria. As the generic marking criteria are used to determine module marks for level 7, the overall classification for an integrated degree which also involves the use of marking criteria for modules at levels 4- will be determined by following the appropriate Keele degree classification algorithm, available on the University’s website at <https://www.keele.ac.uk/sas/academicservices/degreeclassification/>
8. The criteria have been carefully cross referenced with Keele’s PGT regulations - in particular, colleagues should note:
 - 10% is the threshold mark for determining “non-engagement with studies” ([Regulation C7](#))
 - 45% is the threshold mark for “compensation” of an overall module mark for PGT students ([Regulation D5](#)).