


College of Science and Engineering

Extended Common Marking Scheme

Commentary on the use of the General Descriptors for use by Schools

1	<p>Introduction</p> <p>The Extended Common Marking Scheme</p> <p>The Extended Common Marking Scheme is part of the Undergraduate Regulations</p> <p> Undergraduate Regulations</p> <p>The General Descriptors</p> <p>The purpose of the General Descriptors is to describe the gradings and classifications used in the Extended Common Marking Scheme in a generic way for the College of Science and Engineering (College) to allow comparability of performance between Schools.</p> <p>The General Descriptors are intended to apply to the marking of all forms of qualitative work at Junior and Senior Honours, including Undergraduate Masters. The guidance below is intended to assist Schools in interpreting the General Descriptors for different forms of assessment (e.g. essays and examinations).</p>
2	<p>Specific Descriptors for Schools / Subject areas</p> <p>Each School (or discipline/programme within a School) should produce Specific Descriptors which interpret the General Descriptors in the context of the discipline/programme and the type of assessment.</p> <p>The Specific Descriptors must be consistent with the General Descriptors in terms of grade titles and mark bands. Not all elements of assessment will be relevant to all Specific Descriptors but, where they are relevant, must be consistent with those in the General Descriptors. It is permitted for Specific Descriptors to add an element of assessment that is not in the General Descriptors. The Specific Descriptors should be published beforehand, so that students are aware of the criteria against which their piece of work will be marked.</p> <p>In drafting Specific Descriptors, Schools may choose to specify a weighting between the various elements of assessment to show how they will be aggregated. Such a weighting will vary with the nature of the subject and the type of assessment. For example, in a course paper it is expected that there will a greater emphasis on breadth of material, more engagement with and critical appraisal of the literature and a more refined presentation. In an examination a concise focused answer is required with less emphasis on the breadth of literature incorporated and less sophistication in the expression and presentation. In many cases, markers will use their experience to weight the different elements of assessment and suggest an overall mark without involving arithmetic calculations. Schools (or discipline / programme within a School) may wish to propose an aggregation model for their Specific Descriptors, depending on the type of assessment and the learning outcomes being tested.</p> <p>The Descriptors do not include reference to learning outcomes, as these are</p>

considered less relevant for classifying students. All students who pass a course are assumed to have achieved the learning objectives.

The Descriptors should be interpreted in the light of expectations at the appropriate level, and hence are applicable to all Honours levels (SCQF levels 9, 10 and 11). See SCQF web pages for more details:

[SCQF Descriptors](#)

The element of assessment “*focus on the subject*” provides guidance in a case where a student does not answer the question asked, but the answer shows some general knowledge and understanding relevant to the learning outcomes of the course.

Descriptors are intended to be applied at the level of the individual unit of assessment, e.g. an examination question.

There are not separate Descriptors for students with disabilities, as their circumstances will be addressed by other mechanisms. The interpretation of the guidelines in particular cases may, however, be influenced by Learning Profiles or by Special Circumstances.

3 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 serious thought in critically evaluating and integrating the evidenced and ideas. Deals confidently with the complexities and subtleties of the arguments. 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	<p>Very Good [2(i)]</p> <p>Knowledge: Very good range of up-to-date material, perhaps with some gaps, handled in a professional way.</p> <p>Understanding and handling of key concepts: Shows a firm grasp of the subject and current theory but there may be gaps.</p> <p>Focus on the subject: Clear focus on the subject with no or only trivial deviation.</p> <p>Critical analysis and discussion: Shows initiative, the ability to think clearly, critically evaluate ideas, to bring different ideas together, and to draw sound conclusions.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Structure: Clear and coherent showing logical, ordered thought.</p> <p>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.</p>
C	50-59	<p>Good [2(ii)]</p> <p>Knowledge: Sound but limited. Inaccuracies, if any, are minor.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Focus on the subject: Addresses the subject with relatively little irrelevant material.</p> <p>Critical analysis and discussion: Limited critical analysis and evaluation of sources of evidence.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Structure: Reasonably clear and coherent, generally presenting ideas and information in a logical way.</p> <p>Presentation: Generally well presented but there may be minor flaws for example in figures, tables, referencing technique and standard of English.</p>
D	40-49	<p>Pass [3rd]</p> <p>Knowledge: Basic; may have factual inaccuracies and omissions.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Focus on the subject: Addresses the subject but may deviate from the core issues.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Literature synthesised, analysed and referenced: Basic and limited. May lack appropriate citations and evidence of independent reading.</p> <p>Structure: Lacks clarity of structure. Shows poor logical development of arguments.</p>

		<p>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).</p>
E	30-39	<p>Marginal Fail</p> <p>Knowledge: Poor and inadequate. Content too limited, there may be inaccuracies.</p> <p>Understanding and handling of key concepts: Poor and inadequate; does not show sufficient understanding. Concepts omitted or poorly expressed.</p> <p>Focus on the subject: Does not adequately address the subject.</p> <p>Critical analysis and discussion: Poor and inadequate. May be no real attempt to critically evaluate the work.</p> <p>Literature synthesised, analysed and referenced: Poor and inadequate; appropriate literature citations lacking or trivial.</p> <p>Structure: A lack of coherence or poor structure.</p> <p>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).</p>
F	20-29	<p>Clear Fail</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Understanding and handling of key concepts: Very poor, may be confused.</p> <p>Focus on the subject: Does not address the subject.</p> <p>Critical analysis and discussion: Extremely limited or omitted. May be confused.</p> <p>Literature synthesised, analysed and referenced: Extremely limited or omitted.</p> <p>Structure: Confusing or no attempt to order the material in a systematic way.</p> <p>Presentation: Writing style and presentation may be unacceptable.</p>
G	10-19	<p>Bad Fail</p> <p>Knowledge: Serious lack of knowledge. Irrelevant or erroneous material may be included.</p> <p>Understanding and handling of key concepts: None or trivial evidence of understanding.</p> <p>Focus on the subject: Does not address the subject.</p> <p>Critical analysis and discussion: May be no coherent discussion.</p> <p>Literature synthesised, analysed and referenced: May be omitted.</p> <p>Structure: Confusing or no attempt to order the material in a systematic way.</p> <p>Presentation: Writing style and presentation may be unacceptable.</p>
H	0-9	<p>Very Bad Fail</p> <p>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.</p>

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DOCUMENT CONTROL	
Date approved	November 2005
Approving authority	College Teaching and Learning Committee
Consultation undertaken	
Date of commencement	Academic year 2005/06
Amendment dates	01 September 2013, 3 November 2015
Date for next review	September 2014
Section responsible for policy maintenance & review	Academic Affairs, College Office, College of Science and Engineering
Related Policies, Procedures Guidelines & Regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
Policies superseded by this Policy	Guidance: Procedures for authorising a change of taught degree programme (for a current student)