**5.2 Grading criteria**

The following grading criteria, based on the University’s undergraduate marking/ grading descriptors, indicate the marks and classifications to be awarded for various standards of written work. Your work will be marked in percentages, with the exception of those few modules that just need Pass/fail As each subject has its own emphases and as assignments may vary in their approach (e.g. essays, reports, projects etc.) so descriptions offered here are inevitably generalised and will need to be interpreted and adapted to the specifics of each assignment. Sometimes you will be issued with supplementary grading criteria which are specific to the particular task you have been set.

**UNDERGRADUATE GRADING CRITERIA**

**FIRST (1)**

**Outstanding (80-100%)**

An outstanding response to the task: **all learning outcomes/assessment criteria have been achieved to an exceptionally high level**. The work demonstrates most or all of the following characteristics beyond that expected for work at the given level of study within the discipline:

* Exceptional display of understanding, exploration, insight and/or research
* All specifications for the assessment task, including word limit/time limit where appropriate, have been strictly adhered to
* The organisation, structure and standard of presentation of the work, including referencing where appropriate, are exemplary throughout
* The work has been approached and/or executed/performed in an original way
* Inspirational, innovative and authoritative - evidence of intellectual rigour, independence of judgement and insightful contextualisation including relevant theory/literature/artefacts/performance
* Evidence of very high quality analysis, synthesis, evaluation and critical appraisal
* Consistently displays very high levels of initiative, personal responsibility, decision-making and achievement

**Excellent (70%-79%)**

An excellent response to the task: **all learning outcomes/assessment criteria have been achieved to a high standard and many at an exceptionally high level.** The work demonstrates most or all of the following characteristics in relation to those expected at the given level of study within the discipline:

* In-depth understanding, exploration, insight and/or research
* All specifications for the assessment task, including word limit/time limit where appropriate, have been adhered to
* The organisation, structure and standard of presentation of the work, including referencing where appropriate, are excellent throughout.
* The work has been approached and/or executed/performed in an original way
* Insightful contextualisation, including relevant theory/literature/artefacts/performance
* Evidence of high to very high quality analysis, synthesis, evaluation and critical appraisal
* Demonstrates high levels of initiative, personal responsibility, decision-making and achievement

**UPPER SECOND (2.1)**

**Good/Very good (60-69%)**

A good to very good response to the task: **all learning outcomes/assessment criteria have been met fully at a good or very good standard**. The work demonstrates most or all of the following characteristics in relation to those expected at the given level of study within the discipline:

* Good to very good understanding and exploration, some insight and/or thorough research
* No significant inaccuracies, misunderstandings or errors
* The specifications for the assessment task, including word limit/time limit where appropriate, have been adhered to
* The work is well organised, coherent and the standard of presentation, including referencing where appropriate, is at least good
* The work has been approached and/or executed/performed in a comprehensive and appropriate way
* Appropriate contextualisation, including relevant theory/literature/artefacts/performance
* Evidence of high quality analysis, synthesis, evaluation and critical appraisal
* Demonstrates good levels of initiative, personal responsibility, decision-making and achievement

**LOWER SECOND (2.2)**

**Sound/competent (50-59%)**

A sound, competent response to the task**: all learning outcomes/assessment criteria have been met and some may have been achieved at a good standard**. The work demonstrates most or all of the following characteristics in relation to those expected at the given level of study within the discipline:

* Sound understanding and exploration, some insight and/or appropriate research
* No significant inaccuracies and/or misunderstandings
* No significant aberrations from the specifications for the assessment task, including word limit/time limit where appropriate
* The work is suitably organised[[1]](#footnote-1) and the standard of presentation, including referencing where appropriate, is at least sound
* The work has been approached and/or executed/performed in a standard way
* Sound analysis, synthesis, evaluation and critical appraisal

**THIRD (3)**

**Adequate but weak (40-49%)**

An adequate, but weak response to the task**: all learning outcomes/assessment criteria have just been met.** The work demonstrates most or all of the following characteristics in relation to those expected at the given level of study within the discipline:

* Adequate understanding and/or exploration of major ideas with little insight and/or minimal research
* Some minor inaccuracies and/or misunderstandings
* Some minor aberrations from the specifications for the assessment task, including word limit/time limit where appropriate
* The work is largely descriptive[[2]](#footnote-2), some parts of the work are disorganised and the standard of presentation, including referencing where appropriate, is barely adequate
* The work has been approached and/or executed/performed in a basic and/or poor way
* Some, but limited, evidence of analysis, synthesis, evaluation and critical appraisal

**FAIL**

**Marginal fail (35-39%)**

An unsatisfactory response to the task. **One or more of the learning outcomes/assessment criteria just fail to reach the minimum standard to pass the module.** The work may display some strengths but these are marginally outweighed by several weak features in relation to the expectations for the given level of study within the discipline, such as:

* Limited understanding and/or exploration of major ideas with very little insight and/or minimal research
* Some significant inaccuracies and/or misunderstandings
* Insufficient attention paid to some of the assessment criteria and some significant aberrations from the specifications for the assessment task[[3]](#footnote-3)
* The work is too descriptive, parts of the work are disorganised and unclear and the standard of presentation, including referencing where appropriate, is poor
* The work has been approached and/or executed/performed in a poor way
* Insufficient evidence of analysis, synthesis, evaluation and critical appraisal
* Little evidence of initiative, personal responsibility, decision-making and achievement

NOTE: Where the assessment for a module comprises a number of tasks (e.g. a piece of coursework and an examination), and a student receives a mark between 35% and 39% for one of the tasks, they may still pass the module, providing that they pass the other task, and achieve an overall average mark of at least 40%.

**Weak fail (30-34%)**

An unsatisfactory response to the task. **One or more of the learning outcomes/assessment criteria clearly fail to reach the minimum standard to pass the module.** The work may display some strengths but these are outweighed by several weak features in relation to the expectations for the given level of study within the discipline, such as:

* Limited understanding and/or exploration of major ideas with very little insight and/or minimal research
* Some significant inaccuracies and/or misunderstandings
* Insufficient attention paid to some of the assessment criteria and some significant aberrations from the specifications for the assessment task[[4]](#footnote-4)
* The work is too descriptive, parts of the work are disorganised and unclear and the standard of presentation, including referencing where appropriate, is poor
* The work has been approached and/or executed/performed in a poor way
* Insufficient evidence of analysis, synthesis, evaluation and critical appraisal
* Little evidence of initiative, personal responsibility, decision-making and achievement

NOTE: Where the assessment for a module comprises a number of tasks (e.g. a piece of coursework and an examination), and a student receives a mark below 35% for one of the tasks, they will not pass the module, regardless of how well they perform in the other tasks.

**Unsatisfactory (10-29%)**

An unsatisfactory response to the task. **Most of the learning outcomes/assessment criteria have not been met.** Any strengths of the work are heavily outweighed by many weak features in relation to the expectations for the given level of study within the discipline, such as:

* Very limited understanding and/or exploration of major ideas with little or no insight and/or minimal research
* Several significant inaccuracies and/or misunderstandings
* Insufficient attention paid to several of the assessment criteria and some serious deviations from the specifications for the assessment task[[5]](#footnote-5)
* The work is mainly descriptive and the standard of presentation including referencing where appropriate is very poor
* The work has been approached and/or executed/performed inadequately
* Little evidence of analysis, synthesis, evaluation and critical appraisal
* Little to no evidence of initiative, personal responsibility, decision-making and achievement

**Unsatisfactory (0-9%)**

An unsatisfactory response to the task. **Almost none of the learning outcomes/assessment criteria have been met.** The work fails to meet the requirements in relation to those expected at the given level of study within the discipline, exemplified by most or all of the following:

* Almost no understanding and/or exploration of ideas
* Many serious inaccuracies and/or misunderstandings
* No attention paid to all or most of the assessment criteria and/or to the specifications for the assessment task[[6]](#footnote-6)
* Very poor standard of presentation including referencing where appropriate
* The work has been approached and/or executed/performed inadequately
* No evidence of analysis, synthesis, evaluation and critical appraisal
* No evidence of initiative, personal responsibility, decision-making and achievement
1. Clearly presented but with little development [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Although generally coherent there is some lack of clarity of thought or expression. Poor quality in at least one area [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Such as not keeping to the word limit/time limit and/or minor elements of the work missing [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Such as not keeping to the word limit/time limit and/or minor elements of the work missing [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Such as not keeping to the word limit/time limit and/or major elements of the work missing [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. As footnote 5 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)