# Generic University Criteria1 for Assessment of Taught Programmes

1. The assessment criteria below provide generic threshold and marking descriptors that characterise what is expected of our students at each level of their curriculum. The descriptors essentially set out an increasing level of challenge, complexity and independent learning in relation to the knowledge, skills and attributes of a St Mary’s graduate. The criteria and descriptors draw upon good practice in the sector, the SEEC2 guidelines and QAA’s Framework for Higher Education3 (2014), and complement the QAA Subject Benchmark Statements4.
2. The criteria and descriptors should be used by Programme teams to develop and inform their own subject-specific marking criteria and when devising programme and module level intended learning outcomes. Student engagement with module level assessment and marking criteria is vital in developing their understanding of how assessment tasks relate to learning outcomes, and thereby appreciating what is expected of them by way of the types of learning as they progress through their programmes of study.
3. When providing students with feedback on assignments it is very helpful to address each of the assessed learning outcomes and in doing so establish targets with the student for how they could achieve the higher mark band.
4. When assessing an assignment for a student to pass, all or the majority of the learning outcomes must have been achieved at the threshold level. The final mark will be determined by the majority fit of assessed outcomes. For example, a student may have one or two features of their work judged to be in the 70-79% mark boundary but the majority of assessed criteria are considered to fit the 60-69% set of descriptors. Therefore the student would be awarded a mark in the 60-69& mark boundary.
5. The descriptors**5** for the University’s generic assessment criteria are indicated at Table 1 below:

# Table 1 - Descriptors of each assessment criterion:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Knowledge and****Understanding** | **Intellectual skills** | **Scholarly practices** | **Enquiry and research skills** | **Professional and life skills** |
| Knowledge and | Analysis, synthesis, creativity, | Including use of relevant literature, | Including research-related | Including skills in creativity, digital |
| comprehension of the | deployment of structured | academic writing, academic | skills, and communicating | practices, working with others and |
| subject or field of enquiry | reasoning supported by | integrity, appropriate academic | findings in a style appropriate | as part of a group, presentation |
|  | evidence; focus on topic, critical | conventions including referencing | for a given audience and | skills, project management skills |
|  | reflection and drawing | protocols and adherence to word- | context | and acting on critical reflection of |
|  | conclusions | length or time limits |  | own practice |

1. Use of the Generic University Criteria and adoption at Programme level should be read in conjunction with the University’s Academic Regulations6

1 For descriptors of assessment criteria refer to Table 1

2 <http://www.seec.org.uk/seec-credit-level-descriptors-2010/>Accessed 05.02.16

3 <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/qualifications-frameworks.pdf>Accessed 23.02.16

4 <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code/subject-benchmark-statements>Accessed 05.02.16

5 Definitions derived from SEEC level descriptors, <http://www.seec.org.uk/seec-credit-level-descriptors-2010/>Accessed 05.02.16

# Generic University Criteria7 8for Assessment of Taught Programmes

**University Assessment Criteria – FHEQ Level 7**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Grading criteria** | **Knowledge and Understanding** | **Intellectual skills** | **Scholarly practices** | **Enquiry and research skills** | **Professional and life skills** |
| 0-39Fail | Demonstrates little knowledge or understanding of the fieldDemonstrates significant weaknesses in the knowledge base, and/or simply reproduces knowledge without evidence of understanding | Very little or no critical ability Poor, inconsistent analysis | Failure to evidence or discuss/apply appropriate examples of literature relating to current research and advanced scholarship in the fieldReferences to literature/evidence and use of academic conventions are flawed, and/or inconsistent Argument absent, or lacking any clarity and/or logic | Demonstrates little or no skill in selected techniques applicable to own research or advanced scholarshipLacks any understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge | Significant weaknesses evident in key areas such as communication, problem- solving and project managementInability to adaptInability to work flexibly, independently and/or as part of a team |
| 40-49 | Demonstrates knowledge of the field and awareness of current evidence and issues, but with some notable weaknessesLacks knowledge and understanding of some key areas | Some appropriate analysis, but some significant inconsistencies which affect the soundness of argument and/or conclusionsDemonstrates very limited critical ability | Can evidence and discuss/apply examples of literature relating to current research but lacks critical engagementReferences to appropriate literature/evidence and use of academic conventions are insufficient and/or inconsistentArgument is attempted, but lacks in clarity and/or logic | Demonstrates some skill in selected techniques applicable to own research or advanced scholarship, but with significant areas of weaknessLacks sufficient understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge | Demonstrates generally effective employability skills, including communication and problem-solving, but with some problematic areas of weakness Limited ability to adaptAbility to work flexibly, independently and/or as part of a team, but with areas of weakness |
| 50-59Pass | Demonstrates a sound knowledge and understanding of materialwithin a specialised field of study | Provides evidence of relevant and sound analysis within thespecialised area, with some | Can evaluate critically examples of literature relating to currentresearch and advanced | Demonstrates understanding of and skillsin selected techniques | Shows a consistently good level of employability skills, includingteam working, project |

6 <http://staffnet.stmarys.ac.uk/academic-services/QualityAssuranceAndProgrammeAdministrationRegistry/Pages/Academic-Regulations.aspx>

\* These assessment criteria are generic and apply to all discipline areas at the relevant level across the University. Each Programme supplements these with its own discipline-specific criteria, in line with the appropriate subject benchmarks and other relevant requirements: this applies to the conferment of degrees and the marking of individual assessment tasks.

7 For descriptors of assessment criteria refer to Table 1

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Demonstrates an understanding of current theoretical and methodological approaches and how these affect the way the knowledge base is interpreted | ability to evaluate criticallyIs able to analyse complex issues and make appropriate judgements | scholarship in the fieldMakes consistently sound use of appropriate academic conventions and academic honestyAble to communicate argument, evidence and conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences | applicable to own research or advanced scholarshipShows some originality in the application of knowledge, and some understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline | management, IT/computer literacy, creativity and flexibility Demonstrates capabilities to support effective communication in a range of complex and specialised contextsShows consistent ability in tackling and solving demanding problemsCan plan and direct own learningDemonstrates ability to advance own knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skillsDemonstrates the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development |
| 60-69Merit | Produces work with a well-defined focusDemonstrates a systematic knowledge, understanding and critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of the academic discipline, field of study or area of professional practice | Is able to evaluate methodologies critically and, where appropriate, to propose new hypothesesIs able to deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, making sound judgements in the absence of complete data | Is able to evaluate critically a range of literature relating to current research and advanced scholarship in the disciplineMakes consistently good use of appropriate academic conventions and academic honestyAble to communicate very effectively arguments, evidence and conclusions to specialist and non-specialist audiences | Displays a comprehensive understanding of and skills in techniques applicable to own research or advanced scholarshipShows originality in the application of knowledge, together with a good understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline | Shows a high level of employability skills, including team working, project management, IT/computer literacy, creativity and flexibility Demonstrates very effective communication in a range of complex and specialised contextsDemonstrates self-direction and some originality in tackling and solving demanding problemsCan act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level Demonstrates the skills and attitudes needed to advance own knowledge andunderstanding, and to develop new skillsDemonstrates the independentlearning ability required for |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |  |  | continuing professional development |
| 70-79Distinction | Produces work of exceptional standard, reflecting outstanding knowledge and understanding of materialDisplays exceptional mastery of a complex and specialised area of knowledge and skills, with an exceptional critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights at the forefront of the field | Shows outstanding ability to evaluate methodologies critically and, where appropriate, to propose new hypothesesIs able to deal with a range of complex issues both systematically and creatively, making excellent judgements in the absence of complete data | Is able to evaluate critically, with exceptional insight, a range of literature relating to current research and advanced scholarship in the disciplineMakes consistently excellent use of appropriate academic conventions and academic honestyAble to communicate at a very high level arguments, evidence and conclusions to specialist and non-specialist audiences | Employs advanced skills to conduct research and, where appropriate, advanced technical or professional activity, accepting accountability for related decision makingDisplays an exceptional grasp of techniques applicable to own research or advanced scholarshipShows originality in application of knowledge, and excellent understanding of how established techniques of enquiry create and interpret knowledge in the discipline | shows a very high level of employability skills, including team working/leadership, project management, IT/computer literacy, creativity and flexibilityDemonstrates very high level communication skills in a range of complex contexts, and ability to write at publishable standard Demonstrates autonomy and notable originality in tackling and solving demanding problemsShows a high level of consistency and autonomy in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level Demonstrates the skills and attitudes needed to advance own knowledge andunderstanding, and to develop new skills to a high level Demonstrates the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development |
| 80-100Distinction | This work meets and often exceeds the standard for distinction, as described in the 70-79 band, across *all* sub-categories of criteria: knowledge and understanding of subject; cognitive skills; research skills; use of research-informed literature; and skills for life and professional employment.This work is of publishable quality, with only very minor amendments, and would be likely to receive that judgement if submitted to a peer-reviewed journal.Work is of such a quality that the student is clearly highly capable of doctoral research in the discipline and, in principle, should be prioritised for a postgraduate research grant. |

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