

UCD Module Grade Descriptors



Policy owner Assessment, UCD Registry **Approval date** University Programmes Board,
and body 27 November 2018

1. Purpose

Grade descriptors act as guidelines for students and academic staff. The grade descriptors below have been approved by the university to provide general guidance and should be adapted to the particular needs of the examiners and the relevant module assessment.

Grade	Criteria more relevant to module levels 0, 1 and 2 in the categories of knowledge, understanding and application	Additional criteria more relevant to module levels 3 and 4 in the categories of analysis, synthesis and evaluation
A+	<p>Outstanding A comprehensive, very well-structured, highly focused and concise response to the assessment task, consistently demonstrating</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an exceptionally extensive and detailed knowledge of the subject matter • a highly-developed ability to apply this knowledge to the task set • evidence of extensive background reading and demonstration of synthesis of this material • clear, fluent, stimulating and original expression • excellent presentation (spelling, grammar, graphical) with essentially no presentation errors 	<p>An exceptionally deep and systematic engagement with the assessment task, with consistently impressive demonstration of a comprehensive mastery of the subject matter and discerning judgement, reflecting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a deep and broad knowledge and highly-developed critical insight, as well as effective synthesis of extensive reading • a critical comprehensive and perceptive appreciation of the relevant literature or theoretical, technical or professional framework • an exceptional ability to organise, analyse and succinctly present arguments fluently and lucidly with a high level of critical analysis, supported by very convincingly deployed evidence, citation or quotation • a highly-developed capacity for original, creative and logical thinking
A	<p>Excellent A comprehensive, highly-structured, focused and concise response to the assessment task, consistently demonstrating</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an extensive and detailed knowledge of the subject matter • a highly-developed ability to apply this knowledge to the task set • evidence of extensive background reading • clear, fluent, stimulating and original expression • excellent presentation (spelling, grammar, graphical) with minimal or no presentation errors 	<p>A deep and systematic engagement with the assessment task, with consistently impressive demonstration of a comprehensive mastery of the subject matter, reflecting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a deep and broad knowledge and critical insight as well as extensive reading • a critical and comprehensive appreciation of the relevant literature or theoretical, technical or professional framework • an exceptional ability to organise, analyse and present arguments fluently and lucidly with a high level of critical analysis, amply supported by evidence, citation or quotation; • a substantial capacity for original, creative and logical thinking

<p>B</p>	<p>Very Good A thorough and well-organised response to the assessment task, demonstrating</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a broad knowledge of the subject matter • considerable strength in applying that knowledge to the task set • evidence of substantial background reading • clear and fluent expression • quality presentation with few presentation errors 	<p>A substantial engagement with the assessment task, demonstrating</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a thorough familiarity with the relevant literature or theoretical, technical or professional framework • well-developed capacity to analyse issues, organise material, present arguments clearly and cogently well supported by evidence, citation or quotation • some original insights and capacity for creative and logical thinking
<p>C</p>	<p>Good An adequate and competent response to the assessment task, demonstrating</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adequate but not complete knowledge of the subject matter • omission of some important subject matter or the appearance of several minor errors • capacity to apply knowledge appropriately to the task albeit with some errors • evidence of some background reading • clear expression with few areas of confusion • writing of sufficient quality to convey meaning but some lack of fluency and command of suitable vocabulary • good presentation with some presentation errors 	<p>An intellectually competent and factually sound answer with, marked by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • evidence of a reasonable familiarity with the relevant literature or theoretical, technical or professional framework • good developed arguments, but more statements of ideas • arguments or statements adequately but not well supported by evidence, citation or quotation • some critical awareness and analytical qualities • some evidence of capacity for original and logical thinking
<p>D</p>	<p>Satisfactory An acceptable response to the assess with</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • basic grasp of subject matter, but somewhat lacking in focus and structure • main points covered but insufficient detail • some effort to apply knowledge to the task but only a basic capacity or understanding displayed • little or no evidence of background reading • several minor errors or one major error • satisfactory presentation with an acceptable level of presentation errors 	<p>An acceptable level of intellectual engagement with the as task showing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • some familiarity with the relevant literature or theoretical, technical or professional framework • mostly statements of ideas, with limited development of argument • limited use of evidence, citation or quotation • limited critical awareness displayed • limited evidence of capacity for original and logical thinking
<p>D-</p>	<p>Acceptable The minimum acceptable standard of response to the assessment task which</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • shows a basic grasp of subject matter but may be poorly focussed or badly structured or contain irrelevant material • has one major error and some minor errors • demonstrates the capacity to complete only moderately difficult tasks related to the subject material • no evidence of background reading • displays the minimum acceptable standard of presentation (spelling, grammar, graphical) 	<p>The minimum acceptable level of intellectual engagement the assessment task with</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the minimum acceptable appreciation of the relevant literature or theoretical, technical or professional framework • ideas largely expressed as statements, with little or no developed or structured argument • minimum acceptable use of evidence, citation or quotation • little or no analysis or critical awareness displayed or is only partially successful • little or no demonstrated capacity for original and logical thinking

FM	<p>Unacceptable A response to the assessment task which is unacceptable, with</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a failure to address the question resulting in a largely irrelevant answer or material of marginal relevance predominating • a display of some knowledge of material relative to the question posed, but with very serious omissions / errors and/or major inaccuracies included in answer • solutions offered to a very limited portion of the problem set • an answer unacceptably incomplete (e.g. for lack of time) • a random and undisciplined development, layout or presentation • unacceptable standards of presentation, such as grammar, spelling or graphical presentation • evidence of substantial plagiarism 	<p>An unacceptable level of intellectual engagement with the assessment task, with</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no appreciation of the relevant literature or theoretical, technical or professional framework • no developed or structured argument • no use of evidence, citation or quotation • no analysis or critical awareness displayed or is only partially successful • no demonstrated capacity for original and logical thinking
-----------	--	--

2. Related documents

[UCD Academic Regulations \(https://sisweb.ucd.ie/usis/!W_HU_MENU.P_PUBLISH?p_tag=GD-DOCLAND&ID=123\)](https://sisweb.ucd.ie/usis/!W_HU_MENU.P_PUBLISH?p_tag=GD-DOCLAND&ID=123)

3. Version history

Approval Body	Date	Summary of revisions
UPB	27 November 2018	Revisions made to UCD module grade descriptors arising from recommendations made by the ACEC Grade Scales Working Group to ensure they are in line with the new university Academic Regulations