

# **Study Regulations for Postgraduate Taught Programmes**

## **Annex 1: Conceptual Equivalents Scales/Descriptors Guidance**

### **Guidance Notes**

- i. The use of the conceptual equivalents descriptors is mandatory for all assessments, unless answers are clearly either right or wrong, for example multiple choice and numerical assessments.
- ii. In the case of assessments where the descriptors are not sufficient as assessment criteria, Schools may devise additional criteria using the language of, and mapped to, the descriptors.
- iii. For the calibration of assessment criteria, the scale can be considered either as a set of discrete marks or as defined bands of marks. However, for less quantitative assessments, the use of discrete marks is mandatory when marking assessments.
- iv. Successive sets of descriptors subsume lower sets within each level and across each band. A piece of work identified as falling within a given class or mark range should include some or most, but not necessarily all, of the relevant descriptors.
- v. The full marking scale should be utilised.
- vi. It is expected that at all levels there will be an effective use of language and an acceptable level of written expression.
- vii. The scale should be applied at the level of the assessed component of the module or, where appropriate, at the level of individual questions/sections of an examination. The use of the discrete marks in this way may produce an overall module mark that does not correspond to a discrete mark on the scale. The overall mark should not be altered where this is the case.

Exemptions from the above, for example due to the requirements of professional or statutory bodies, require approval by the Education Committee (Quality and Standards).

The Secretary to the Board of Examiners should record in the minutes that due consideration has been given to the conceptual equivalents scale.

## Postgraduate Taught Conceptual Equivalents Scale

Module Descriptor	Mark Band	Criteria	Determinator within grade band
A (Outstanding)	80–100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Thorough and systematic knowledge and understanding of <i>module content</i>;</li> <li>ii. Clear grasp of issues involved, with evidence of innovative and original use of learning resources</li> <li>iii. Knowledge beyond <i>module content</i></li> <li>iv. Clear evidence of independence of thought and originality</li> <li>v. Methodological rigour</li> <li>vi. High critical judgement and confident grasp of complex issues</li> </ul>	Originality of argument
A (Clear)	70–79	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Methodological rigour</li> <li>ii. Originality</li> <li>iii. Critical judgement</li> <li>iv. Use of additional learning resources.</li> </ul>	Methodological rigour
B	60–69	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Very good knowledge and understanding of <i>module content</i></li> <li>ii. Well argued answer</li> <li>iii. Some evidence of originality and critical judgement</li> <li>iv. Sound methodology</li> <li>v. Critical judgement and some grasp of complex issues</li> </ul>	Extent of use of additional or non-core learning resources

<b>Module Descriptor</b>	<b>Mark Band</b>	<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Determinator within grade band</b>
C	50–59	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Good knowledge and understanding of the <i>module content</i></li> <li>ii. Reasonably well argued</li> <li>iii. Largely descriptive or narrative in focus</li> <li>iv. Methodological application is not consistent or thorough</li> </ul>	Understanding of the main issues
Marginal Fail	40–49	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Lacking methodological application</li> <li>ii. Adequately argued</li> <li>iii. Basic understanding and knowledge</li> <li>iv. Gaps or inaccuracies but not damaging</li> </ul>	Relevance of knowledge displayed
Weak Fail	0–39	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Little relevant material and/or inaccurate answer or incomplete</li> <li>ii. Disorganised</li> <li>iii. Largely irrelevant material and misunderstanding</li> <li>iv. No evidence of methodology</li> <li>v. Minimal or no relevant material</li> </ul>	Weakness of argument

*Module content* should be interpreted as the topic or area of research being undertaken in the study in keeping with the learning outcomes for the module.

The above criteria can be applied to both taught modules at M-level and the M-level dissertation (ignoring reference to *module content*).