

Study Regulations for Undergraduate 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.

Undergraduate Conceptual Equivalents Scale

Conceptual Equivalent	Discrete Mark	Grade Band	Level 1 (FHEQ Level 4) criteria	Level 2 (FHEQ Level 5) criteria	Level 3 (FHEQ Level 6) criteria	Level 4 (FHEQ Level 7) criteria
Exceptional I	97	95-100	Excellent answer which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is comprehensive and accurate. • Is presented in a clear and cogent manner. • Makes full reference to appropriate material. • Makes effective use of language. • Displays some of the following characteristics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Integration of a wide range of learning resources. ○ Originality of exposition or treatment. ○ Evidence of insight. ○ Critical evaluation. 	Exceptional and exemplary work showing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A good degree of criticality. • An in-depth knowledge and understanding across all the relevant areas. • Very thorough coverage of the topic. • Significant evidence of wide use of learning resources. 	Exceptional and exemplary work showing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A very high level of critical analysis. • A very high level of insight in the conclusions drawn. • An in-depth knowledge and understanding across a wide range of relevant areas including areas at the forefront of the discipline. • Very thorough coverage of the topic. • Confidence in the appropriate use of learning resources to support arguments made. 	Exceptional and exemplary work showing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thorough and systematic understanding of module content. • Clear grasp of issues involved, with evidence of innovative use and original use of learning resources. • Knowledge beyond module content. • Clear evidence of independence of thought and originality. • High critical judgement and confident grasp of complex issues.
High/Excellent I	92	90-94				
Definite I	87	85-89				
	82	80-84				
	77	75-79				
			Excellent answer showing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A degree of independence of thought and critical judgement. • A thorough understanding of the main issues involved. • Knowledge and understanding beyond module content. • A degree of originality. • Evidence of a wide use of learning resources. 	Excellent and outstanding answer showing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considerable independence of thought and critical judgement with sustained critical analysis. • A well-developed ability to analyse concepts and ideas at an abstract level. • A thorough understanding of all the main issues involved and their relevance. • A substantial degree of originality. • Substantial evidence of wide, relevant and critical use of learning resources. • Good understanding of complex and problematic areas of the discipline. 	Excellent and outstanding answer showing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Methodological rigour. • Originality. • Critical judgement. • Use of additional learning resources. 	

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Low I	72	70-74			<p>Excellent answer showing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A good level of independence of thought and critical judgement and a level of critical analysis. • A developed ability to analyse concepts and ideas. • An understanding of all the main issues involved and their relevance. • A degree of originality. • Evidence of wide, relevant and critical use of learning resources. • An understanding of the complexity and scope of the discipline. 	
High 2.1	68	67-69	<p>Very good answer which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is generally accurate and reasonably detailed. • Displays a good understanding of the main principles and a reasonable grasp of details. • Shows strong and coherent argumentation. 	<p>Very good answer which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is generally accurate and reasonably detailed. • Displays a good understanding of the main principles and a reasonable grasp of details. • Shows strong and coherent argumentation. 	<p>Very good, comprehensive answer showing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good understanding of relevant wider issues. • Well-developed arguments with evidence of independent thought. • A good understanding of module material coupled with the ability to relate this to new ideas and concepts. • Evidence of wide and relevant use of learning resources. • Synthesis / integration of material from other modules/experience as well as the current module. • Evidence of independent/autonomous learning. 	<p>Very good, comprehensive answer showing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very good knowledge and understanding of module content. • Well-argued answer. • Some evidence of originality and critical judgement. • Sound methodology. • Critical judgement and some grasp of complex issues.
Definite/Solid 2.1	65	64-66				
Low/Clear 2.1	62	60-63				

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High 2.2	58	57-59	<p>Good answer which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is reasonably accurate and well informed, albeit with some minor omissions or inaccuracies. Is limited to the main issues and based on a limited range of learning resources. Makes some reference to appropriate material. Makes acceptable use of language, with some minor inaccuracies. 	<p>Good answer showing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reasonably developed arguments. Knowledge of the main issues involved at this level. A satisfactory understanding of module material. Little reference to resources outside module material. 	<p>Good answer showing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ability to draw reasonable conclusions. Knowledge and awareness of the main issues. A satisfactory understanding of module material. Little reference to resources outside module material. 	<p>Good answer showing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good knowledge and understanding of the module content. Reasonably well argued. Largely descriptive or narrative in focus. Methodological application is not consistent or thorough.
Definite/Solid 2.2	55	54-56				
Low/Clear 2.2	52	50-53				
High 3 rd	48	47-49	<p>Adequate answer which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Displays evidence of understanding of the main principles in broad terms. May contain important inaccuracies or omissions. May lack a coherent structure. May answer the question indirectly or may lack supporting evidence. Makes minimal reference to relevant material. 	<p>Adequate answer which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows weak to fair understanding of main issues. Makes no reference to resources outside module material. Makes arguments that are weak. Has a low but acceptable level of written expression. 	<p>Adequate answer which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows fair understanding of main issues. Shows little familiarity with resources outside module material. Makes arguments that are not strong. Has a low but acceptable level of written expression. 	<p>Adequate answer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lacking methodological application. Adequately argued. Basic understanding and knowledge. Gaps or inaccuracies but not damaging.
Definite 3 rd	45	44-46				
Low 3 rd	42	40-43				
			<p>Shows poor use of language, although the meaning is understandable.</p>	<p>Passable (just acceptable) answer which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is weak in material and understanding of module content. Contains significant omissions and/or inaccuracies. Recognises the aim of the question and has attempted to answer it. 	<p>Passable (just acceptable) answer which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contains some relevant material. Contains significant omissions and/or inaccuracies. Recognises the aim of the question and has attempted to answer it. 	

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Marginal Fail	37	35-39	<p>Marginally failing answer which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Displays a very limited understanding of the aim of the question. • Is sparse in material and lacking in organisation. • Contains material that is inappropriately used or of limited relevance. • Proceeds by way of assertions unsupported by appropriate evidence. • Shows poor use of language with significant grammatical and other errors. 	<p>Marginally failing answer which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meets some of the necessary requirements. • Has some major inaccuracies. • Shows limited knowledge of the main issues. 	<p>Marginally failing answer which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meets some of the necessary requirements. • Has some major inaccuracies. • Shows limited understanding of the module content. 	<p>Failing answer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little relevant material and/or inaccurate answer or incomplete. • Disorganised. • Largely irrelevant material and misunderstanding. • No evidence of methodology. • Minimal or no relevant material
Weak Fail	29	25-34	<p>Unsatisfactory, poor answer which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows a complete lack of understanding of the question. • Provides very little of any relevance and value to the question. • Makes an incoherent argument. • Shows poor use of language with significant grammatical and other errors. 	<p>Unsatisfactory answer which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meets very few of the necessary requirements. • Shows some recognition of the meaning of the question. • Shows little familiarity with the main issues. • Indicates that knowledge is vague and skimpy. • Has many major inaccuracies. 	<p>Unsatisfactory answer which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fails to meet most of the necessary requirements. • Shows little understanding of the major issues. • Indicates that knowledge is vague and skimpy. • Has many major inaccuracies. 	
Poor Fail	19	15-24		<p>Poor answer in which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are few points relevant to the question. • The bulk of the answer is irrelevant/inaccurate. • There are major misunderstandings of the material. 	<p>Poor answer in which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are few points relevant to the question. • The bulk of the answer is irrelevant/inaccurate. • There are major misunderstandings of the material. 	

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Little of Merit	7	1-14		<p>Answer meeting almost none of the necessary requirements with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimal material of value to the question asked. Minimal recognition of the question 	<p>Answer meeting almost none of the necessary requirements with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimal material of value to the question asked. Minimal recognition of the question. 	
Nothing of Merit	0	0	<p>Nil Submission; or, answer meeting none of the necessary requirements with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No material of value to the question asked. No recognition of the question. 	<p>Nil Submission; or, answer meeting none of the necessary requirements with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No material of value to the question asked. No recognition of the question. 	<p>Nil Submission; or, answer meeting none of the necessary requirements with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No material of value to the question asked. No recognition of the question. 	<p>Nil Submission; or, answer meeting none of the necessary requirements with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No material of value to the question asked. No recognition of the question.