

## Criteria for grading assessed essays

Essential elements required for **ALL** essays

- 1 **Relevance:** it directly answers the question
- 2 **Understanding** of the topic
- 3 **Evidence** of the use of appropriate material (e.g. books, journal articles, etc.)
- 4 **Organisation** of material into a coherent structure: introduction, argument and evidence, conclusion
- 5 **Clear style**, including accurate spelling, clear sentence construction and punctuation\*
- 6 **References**
- 7 **Bibliography**
- 8 **Use of own words**, except where directly quoting from another source
- 9 **Language:** avoidance of inappropriate slang, racist or sexist language

\*with due allowance made for students registered as dyslexic

### The following features are deemed to be evidence of quality

- 1 Evaluation and analysis of a wide range of material and sources
- 2 Ability
  - to understand
  - to discuss critically abstract ideas, theories and concepts
- 3 Argument - well formulated, substantiated, and with evidence of critical and independent thought

### Grading

#### First Class (above 70%)

A first class essay will typically demonstrate **excellence** in the following:

- accurate integration of a wide range of material and resources
- high level of critical analysis and independent judgement
- quality of arguments in response to the question
- sources fully and accurately identified
- originality of exposition or treatment

in addition to incorporating all of the elements required of all essays (above)

#### Second Class, First Division or 2.1 (60-69%)

There will be **very good** use of **many** or **most** of the aspects outlined in the first class essay, but certain features may be less fully realised. Thus, for example, a typical 2.1 essay will

- include a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of all relevant issues
- display a very good level of independent and critical judgement
- involve conceptual analysis in relation to certain issues of the argument
- in addition to incorporating all of the elements required of all essays (above)

#### Second Class, Second Division or 2.2 (50-59%)

There will be **good** use of **some** of the features of the first class essay, although several elements will be only partially realised. Thus, for example, a typical 2.2 essay

will display some independent thought (e.g. through the use of original examples), but

may have uneven coverage of relevant issues, with some explored in more detail than others

may lack sustained conceptual analysis, tending to accept uncritically the principal arguments in an area

will include most of the elements required of all essays, but not all, for example, there may be some confusion in the use of terms

the referencing may be inaccurate or inconsistent

there may be use of inappropriate language

### **Third Class (40-49%)**

There will be a **satisfactory** use of a **limited** number of the features outlined for the first class essay, but significant elements will be underdeveloped. Thus, for example, a typical third class essay may

display little evidence of independent thought and critical judgement

include a partial and rather superficial coverage of the key issues

lack critical analysis

while some of the elements required of all essays are present, they are not necessarily adequate. The essay may display, for example, a satisfactory grasp of the topic, be relevant to the question, but it may

it may be poorly structured

it may include some waffle (i.e. deploying lots of words without meaning very much

the language may lapse into colloquialism

references may be inadequate and inaccurate

### **Fail (below 40%)**

There will be an **inadequate** use of a **significant** number of the features outlined for the first class essay. A typical Fail essay may be characterized by the following:

major inaccuracies and omissions

offers unsubstantiated opinion

demonstrates no evidence of critical judgement

there may be an attempt to respond to the question, but the essay as a whole will not answer it

may be badly written

there may be no references

there may be little evidence of reading