

Using the generic assessment and grading criteria grids

The University has for many years provided a generic assessment and grading criteria matrix which describes the typical performance for each classification point of an award. Programmes have used these directly or adapted them to their specific disciplinary needs. These grids do not exclude other marking criteria and schemes, or represent the full extent of feedback on an assignment.

The revised criteria can fulfil three purposes, depending how they are implemented:

1. They can assist with reliability of marking and feedback across disciplines, a programme or within a module, where a number of markers are involved with an assignment.
2. They provide a way of communicating expectations for assessment tasks and how these will be marked.
3. They can provide a way of feeding back to students a more detailed profile of their performance, reducing the burden on markers by avoiding repetitious comments; thus facilitating more timely and effective feedback.

The generic matrix can be adapted within a discipline or programme to provide statements which are tuned to the language of the discipline. Criteria are clustered under SIX headings. The suite under each heading should provide for most of the types of assessment deployed across the University. ***It is not intended that all the criteria within a suite would ever be used for a single assessment item or that all headings would necessarily appear in every assessment grid.***

The matrix and its descriptors have been developed to take account of feedback from staff and students involved in assessment across all undergraduate programmes.

Using the matrix

1. The first task is to select the most appropriate set of criteria for the assignment under consideration. This should be done with reference to the learning outcomes which determine what the assignment is testing.
2. There are SIX clusters of criteria (you may omit whole clusters if appropriate) and it is expected that you will select one or more criteria from the selected clusters to provide feedback on achievement within that assignment. If you select too many it becomes difficult to manage, too few and you will not indicate to students what you are assessing and where they are succeeding.
3. Once you have selected the criteria for the assignment you will need to adapt the grid to include only the required criteria. This can be done by deleting the redundant rows from a master file.
4. If the module has more than one assignment, different criteria grids may be necessary to reflect the learning outcomes for each assignment.
5. The customised grid could be integrated into the module handbook (on Bb) at the outset.
6. Markers can illustrate the student's level of achievement within a particular criterion by shading in the box below the appropriate level of achievement. The intention is to illustrate strengths and weaknesses through a profile, rather than trying to allocate marks for each criterion.
7. Further written comments can be added as required to an additional feedback sheet.