

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

Grade Descriptors for Years 1, 2 and 3

The following descriptors

- are relative to year level; that is, the criteria are applied with progressively greater rigour against work in the higher years.
- require proper discipline-appropriate citation and documentation of source material at all years and at all grade levels.

Students should note that an essay may not always show all the features of a given grade, or may sometimes contain features of more than one grade, and that some assessment tasks (practical assignments in particular) may rely more on some features of a grade than another, or may not use all of the criteria. Your tutor can explain how a final grade was arrived at.

A+ 90 – 100%

- Truly exceptional work
- At later year levels, showing evidence of capacity for postgraduate research.
- Displays genuine originality and sophistication of thought. Informed, up-to-date, also highly independent and persuasive.
- Exceptionally advanced conceptually and/or analytically.
- Methodologically sophisticated.
- Shows evidence of wide, enterprising and relevant reading, both primary and secondary.
- Expression lucid and perhaps elegant, and presentation scholarly and professional.
- May have potential for publication.

A 80 – 89%

- Outstanding work
- At later year levels, showing potential for postgraduate research.
- Displays intellectual sophistication and some capacity for original thought.
- Informed, up-to-date, sustains a clear, cogent and persuasive argument.
- Advanced conceptually and/or analytically.
- Shows evidence of wide reading which has been effectively assimilated.
- Considerable methodological skills.
- Expression and presentation scholarly and professional.

B 70 – 79%

- Strong to very strong work.
- Highly competent in conceptual, discursive and interpretive areas. Evidence of insight into topic and material.
- Informed by diligent and intelligent research.
- Shows awareness of methodological issues relevant to the topic, but does not pursue these rigorously or in detail.
- Sustains an argument and/or interpretation.
- Evidence of thinking which goes beyond lectures and tutorial discussion.
- Expression and presentation very competent throughout.

C 60 – 69%

- Competent in skills of argumentation and interpretation.
- Sound use of sources.
- Can organise material but argument may lack clarity, or be very derivative, or be poorly structured. Alternatively, it may be good work which goes astray at crucial points.
- Adequate research and assimilation of relevant background material.
- Generally dependent upon lecture and tutorial material.
- Command of writing and presentation skills adequate.

D 50 – 59%

- Adequate and passable.
- Lacks sophistication but has some understanding of the material and basic skills of argumentation and interpretation.
- May be poorly structured.
- Work will tend to be derivative and uneven in quality.
- Writing generally but not always grammatical.
- Presentation weak.

N 45 – 49%

- Poor quality work which might achieve pass standard with further effort.
- Has some preliminary understanding of the material and relevant issues, but is unable to marshal a coherent argument or to develop detailed interpretation.
- May not understand the material or the question. The response may not be relevant to the question or project.
- May be extensively paraphrased or very derivative.
- May be under-length.
- Expression often ungrammatical, presentation skills very poor.

N 44 and below:

- Very poor quality work. Unacceptable.
- Little or no evidence of effort or of basic academic or technical skills.
- Negligible grasp of the material or of relevant issues.
- Expression poor to the point of being illiterate.
- Very badly presented.