

COMMON GRADING SCHEME (Long Answer Questions)

The common grading scheme (CGS) applies to all courses, except where published Award & Assessment Regulations incorporate the 10-point scheme.

This is the marking scheme for individual pieces of work and not the degree classification scheme. The latter is calculated through the aggregation of marks from the full range of assessments undertaken by a candidate.

Each mark has a short descriptor and a full definition of what is to be expected of an answer that is assigned that mark. For the more commonly used grades, there is a core descriptor of the essential grade (e.g. upper second) and enhancer/detractor points which would place the mark in the 'high' or 'low' range of the 'class'. Only those percentages that appear with descriptors in the marking scheme are to be used; percentages that fall between these **must not** be used.

Application of the Scheme

The CGS applies to:

- long answer (essay style) and “descriptive style” short answer questions;
- problem-solving questions that require an essay style answer; and
- project reports (library and research)

Short answer and problem-solving questions that require lists, short phrase responses or calculations continue to use the 0 – 10 marking scheme. MCQs, EMQs, OSCEs, supervisor marks, oral presentations and rotations have more direct approaches to the allocation of marks which are satisfactory and are not covered by this scheme.

In writing examination questions and key-word answers, question-setters must provide a brief explanation of the philosophy behind their question and what they are expecting in the answer. Generic approaches of this sort will be more important in assessing understanding of concepts rather than facts and it will also enable credit to be given for 'reading around'.

In giving guidance to students on how to answer questions, guidance with respect to allocation of time spent answering sections of the question, rather than marks for individual sections, will be of more value to the student writing an answer, and staff setting questions are recommended to adopt this approach.

Providing all other descriptors for a particular mark have been satisfied, the absence of evidence of wider reading (beyond course work materials) in long answers written under examination conditions should not prevent that mark from being awarded. The descriptors indicate how marks should be allocated according to the standard of a piece of work in three different categories; “selection and coverage of material”, “understanding” and “structure, clarity and presentation”. If the marks in the three different categories are not the same, the median of the three categorical marks should be allocated as the overall mark for the piece of work. This will ensure that the mark is a synthesis of the different aspects of the work and appears on the 17-point scale. Where an answer comprises entirely or almost entirely incorrect information, no credit will be given for Structure, Clarity and Presentation.

Descriptor	Long Answer Questions	Mark	BSc Class	BVM/VN/MSc /CertAVP Grade
No Answer	<p>Selection & Coverage of Material Nothing presented or completely incorrect information or containing nothing at all of relevance.</p> <p>and / or</p> <p>Understanding of Concepts & Critical Ability None evident. No evidence of wider reading of an appropriate nature.</p> <p>and / or</p> <p>Structure, Clarity and Presentation None or extremely poor.</p>	0	Fail	Fail
Extremely Poor Answer	<p>Selection & Coverage of Material Hardly any information or information that is almost entirely incorrect or irrelevant.</p> <p>and / or</p> <p>Understanding of Concepts & Critical Ability No or almost no understanding evident. No, or almost no, evidence of wider reading of an appropriate nature.</p> <p>and / or</p> <p>Structure, Clarity and Presentation None or very poor.</p>	15	Fail	Fail
Very Poor Answer	<p>Selection & Coverage of Material Very limited amount of information that is correct and relevant.</p> <p>and / or</p> <p>Understanding of Concepts & Critical Ability If any, extremely limited evidence of understanding. No, or almost no, evidence of wider reading of an appropriate nature.</p> <p>and / or</p> <p>Structure, Clarity and Presentation Very poor.</p>	27	Fail	Fail
Poor Answer	<p>Selection & Coverage of Material Little information that is correct and relevant.</p> <p>and / or</p> <p>Understanding of Concepts & Critical Ability If any, very limited evidence of understanding. There may be evidence of very limited wider reading of an appropriate nature.</p> <p>and / or</p> <p>Structure, Clarity and Presentation Poor.</p>	35	Fail	Fail
Clearly Deficient Answer	<p><i>As for 45 but with a greater number, and/or more significant, omissions/inaccuracies/errors, flaws in understanding, presentation and/or communication of information. There may be less evidence of wider reading of an appropriate nature.</i></p>	42	Third	Fail

Descriptor	Long Answer Questions	Mark	BSc Class	BVM/VN/MSc /CertAVP Grade
Deficient Answer	<p>Selection & Coverage of Material Superficial coverage of topic that is descriptive and flawed by many important omissions and/or significant errors.</p> <p>and / or</p> <p>Understanding of Concepts & Critical Ability Some evidence of understanding but not of original thought or critical analysis. Where relevant, evidence of limited wider reading of an appropriate nature.</p> <p>and / or</p> <p>Structure, Clarity and Presentation Some disorganisation in structure, lack of organisation, and/or deficiencies in clarity of expression.</p>	45	Third	Fail
Marginally Deficient Answer	<i>As for 45 but with fewer, and/or less significant, omissions/inaccuracies/errors, flaws in understanding, presentation and/or communication of information. There may be more evidence of wider reading of an appropriate nature.</i>	48	Third	Fail
Adequate Answer	<i>As for 55 but with more numerous, and/or more significant omissions/inaccuracies/errors, flaws in understanding, presentation and/or communication of information. If relevant there may be less evidence of wider reading of an appropriate nature.</i>	52	2:ii	Pass
Sound Answer	<p>Selection & Coverage of Material Basic coverage of main aspects of topic but with some significant omissions/inaccuracies/errors.</p> <p>Understanding of Concepts & Critical Ability Statements supported by facts but limited evidence of critical ability or powers of argument. If relevant, evidence of sufficient wider reading of an appropriate nature.</p> <p>Structure, Clarity and Presentation In general, organised and logical presentation with adequate clarity of expression.</p>	55	2:ii	Pass
Very Sound Answer	<i>As for 55 but with fewer, and/or less significant omissions/inaccuracies/errors and more evidence of critical ability and/or powers of argument and clarity of expression. If relevant, there may be more evidence of wider reading of an appropriate nature.</i>	58	2:ii	Pass
Quite Good Answer	<i>As for 65 but with more, and/or more significant, omissions/inaccuracies/errors and less evidence of critical ability. There may be less evidence of wider reading of an appropriate nature.</i>	62	2:i	Pass
Good Answer	<p>Selection & Coverage of Material Good coverage of relevant material and clear evidence of critical judgement in selection of information. Few or no significant omissions or errors.</p> <p>Understanding of Concepts & Critical Ability Thorough grasp of concepts and evidence of synthesis of information and critical ability. If relevant, evidence of sufficient, or some more extensive, wider reading of an appropriate nature.</p> <p>Structure, Clarity and Presentation Logical and organised structure with clarity of expression.</p>	65	2:i	Merit
Very Good Answer	<i>As for 65 but with fewer, and/or less significant, omissions/inaccuracies/errors. More evidence of critical judgement likely. There may be more evidence of wider reading of an appropriate nature.</i>	68	2:i	Merit

Descriptor	Long Answer Questions	Mark	BSc Class	BVM/VN/MSc /CertAVP Grade
Extremely Good Answer	<p>Selection & Coverage of Material Question answered fully and accurately. Few errors and/or omissions and none of significance.</p> <p>Understanding of Concepts & Critical Ability Thorough grasp of concepts with evidence of powers of critical analysis, argument and original thinking. If relevant, evidence of extensive wider reading of an appropriate nature.</p> <p>Structure, Clarity and Presentation Logical and organised structure with clarity of expression.</p>	75	First	Distinction
Excellent Answer	<i>As for 75 but demonstrating an authoritative grasp of concepts with sustained powers of argument, and frequent insights. Virtually no errors or omissions and none of significance.</i>	82	First	Distinction
Outstanding Answer	<i>As for 82 but with strong evidence of independent thinking throughout and no omissions or factual errors.</i>	90	First	Distinction
Exceptional Answer	<p>Selection & Coverage of Material Exceptional depth of coverage with no identifiable errors or omissions.</p> <p>Understanding of Concepts & Critical Ability Exceptional powers of analysis, argument, synthesis and insight. Considerable evidence of extensive wider reading of an appropriate nature.</p> <p>Structure, Clarity and Presentation Flawless.</p>	100	First	Distinction