

Assessment marking guide for BIO and BMD modules

Grade	Evidence of Comprehension	Breadth and Depth of Knowledge	Irrelevant material / errors	Synthesis and Balance	Independent Study and Academic Best Practice
A++ 100%	Outstanding, evidence of deep insight, more than expected at this level	Outstanding, more than expected at this level. Could not be better in the allotted space	Absent or minimal	Outstanding synthesis, more than expected at this level. Highly original ideas	Demonstrates independent interpretation and synthesis of material from multiple appropriate sources correctly referenced, using own wording and structure; superb presentation
A+ 90%	Exceptional understanding illustrated by a comprehensive, logical and detailed presentation of concepts	Extensive, as much as could be expected at this level. Goes well beyond taught knowledge	Absent or minimal	Astute selection and juxtaposition of ideas giving a well-balanced synthesis of novel ideas and information	
A 80%	Excellent understanding shown of relevant concepts, expressed clearly and logically	Almost as much as could be expected at this level. Goes beyond taught knowledge	Absent or minimal	Good selection and juxtaposition of novel ideas giving a well-balanced synthesis of information	
A- 75%	Very good understanding shown of relevant concepts, expressed clearly and logically	All key points; comprehensive and accurate. Goes beyond taught knowledge in places	Minimal	Evidence of synthesis of novel ideas, balanced content	
B+ B B- 68% 65% 62%	Very good understanding illustrated by an organised, direct response to the question	All or nearly all key points, comprehensive and accurate	Some minor errors and/or some tangential material	Tending to description rather than synthesis although balance is appropriate. Some originality	Shows understanding and interpretation through use of own words and phrasing; sources of information appropriate and correctly cited; well presented
C+ C C- 58% 55% 52%	Good understanding illustrated by an organised, direct response to the question	More than half of the key points, but some notable omissions	Some minor errors and tangential material	Descriptive text with some imbalance in content	Shows understanding and interpretation through use of own words & phrasing; uses appropriate sources of information although there may be errors in style, weaknesses in presentation
D+ D 48% 45%	Not a direct response to the question	Some key points but similar numbers of omissions	Some errors and tangential material	Imbalanced collection of content, no synthesis	May tend to borrow phrasing (but short of plagiarism) and/or citations given but limited and not always appropriate; poorly presented
D- 42%	Poor comprehension and/or muddled organisation. Enough understanding to merit a pass	Major omissions; no key points; basic facts only. Enough information to pass, however	Major factual errors; frequently irrelevant	Poor balance, no synthesis	May tend to borrow phrasing from other sources (but short of plagiarism); poor citations; poor presentation
F+, F, 35%, 30%	Very little - insufficient to pass	Some points correct but not enough to merit a pass	Extensively irrelevant or wrong	Very poor	Minimal or no appropriate support. Very poor presentation and / or very short.
F-, F-- 20% 10%	Minimal to none	A few very minor points correct	Extensively irrelevant or wrong	Extremely poor or none	Minimal or no appropriate support. Very poor presentation and / or very short.
0	Nothing of relevance	Nothing of relevance	Nothing of relevance	None	Minimal or no appropriate references given

The following will be taken into consideration when making an academic judgement on the work and awarding a grade and providing feedback:

1. The grade is awarded for the work as a whole. Although all five columns of the scheme are important, the judgement should be balanced as, for example, an otherwise excellent essay that does not directly answer the question should not get an 'A' grade overall even though 4 of the 5 columns would sit as an A. Similarly, a brilliantly argued, but poorly presented essay would be considered better than a brilliantly presented, but poorly argued one.
2. The grading takes into account the time in which the work was expected to be completed. This would especially affect presentation, but would also involve issues like referencing and structure. Less emphasis should be placed on areas like these if the work was to have been completed in a limited time.
3. The grade is awarded appropriately to the academic/progression level. We expect generally better material at higher levels (5 and 6) than lower ones (3 and 4). This is especially true of Synthesis and Balance which are expected to develop in higher levels, and Academic Best Practice where we are more forgiving at lower levels. In short, work that is considered an excellent A or A+ grade essay for level 4, would not get this grade at level 6.
4. It is to be understood that there is a threshold to cross in order to receive 'A' grades (first class). The submitted work must go above the material taught to students and show at least some evidence of original thought and deep understanding and knowledge.
5. It is to be understood that there is a threshold to pass in order to receive a pass mark of 'E' or above (>40%). The work must demonstrate enough understanding and knowledge to meet the learning outcomes of the assignment to 'pass' which are not outweighed by other deficiencies in the work.
6. This marking guide does not specify whether references have to be given, but certain criteria assume that students are responsible for demonstrating evidence of outside reading and identifying sources of information used in the work. This may be formal in-text citations and a reference list at the end of the work, or any indicator in the writing of independent research. For example, something like 'a recent study by Chinese scientists on gene 475 in a mouse model found...'.
7. There is no fixed penalty for going over a given word count or similar limit, but a judgement should be made as to how badly this affects the work under academic best practice. Something that is 50% over the word limit can be expected to be judged more harshly than one that is 5% over.
8. Only the values given here are given to students as marks for their work (i.e., if an 'E' grade is awarded this is 42%, it is not any value from 38% to 44%). The exception is where there are late penalties or similar adjustments applied.