**SPIR Undergraduate Marking Criteria**

Notes for students:

* These criteria have been written to promote a shared understanding of marking criteria between students and staff in SPIR. Students should refer to these criteria when preparing their work and can ask staff to explain what particular criteria mean in different contexts.
* Different assignments at different levels may place greater emphasis on some of these criteria than others and may set more precise expectations of what it means to meet them.
* As a result, while the criteria have been divided into seven categories, no fixed numerical weighting is assigned to any category. How performance in each category translates into overall performance will vary according to the demands of the assessment, the level of the student, and the judgement of the marker. It is possible for an assignment to meet the criteria for a particular mark in many categories but fail to achieve that mark overall. Likewise, it is possible for an assignment to fail to meet the criteria for a given mark in many categories but for the assignment still to achieve that mark overall based on strong performance in particular categories.

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|  | **Addressing the Task** | **Research** | **Knowledge and Understanding** | **Quality of Argument** | **Structure** | **Communication and Presentation** | **Representation of Sources** |
| 80+  FIRST CLASS  (A) | You give a detailed and thoughtful response to the task. Material is carefully selected for the purpose, and its relevance to the task is clearly explained. | You have used a wide variety of high-quality sources which demonstrate extensive research. You draw material from beyond the reading list where appropriate. | The assignment shows detailed and in-depth familiarity with relevant factual and/or conceptual knowledge. You synthesise and apply this knowledge accurately to demonstrate deep understanding of an issue or problem related to the module content | You make a coherent and sophisticated argument that is very well supported with evidence. Your argument engages critically with debates in the field, and also shows independence of mind. | The structure is coherent and logical. Content is explicitly introduced, well organised, and flows easily, coming to a clear conclusion. The organisation of the material is clearly explained with excellent signposting of the links between the different parts of the assignment. | The work is exceptionally well-presented. The communication style is clear, confident, fluent and concise. | There are no deficiencies in referencing and bibliography. The assignment is thoroughly referenced at every relevant point. |
| 70-79  FIRST CLASS  (A) | You give a comprehensive response to the task. The relevance of all the material is clear. | You have used a variety of high-quality sources. | The assignment shows a sound grasp of relevant empirical and/or theoretical knowledge. You synthesise and apply this knowledge to demonstrate clear and accurate understanding of an issue or problem related to the module content. | You make a coherent and sustained argument that is well supported with evidence and critically engages with debates in the field. | The structure is clear and coherent. Content is introduced effectively, flows well throughout and concludes clearly. The organisation of the material is clearly explained. The structure is well-signposted. | The work is very well presented. Communication is clear, confident and concise. . There are few, if any, syntactical, grammatical or spelling errors. | There are very few deficiencies in the referencing and bibliography. There is an extensive spread of different references throughout the assignment. |
| 6569  UPPER SECOND CLASS  (B) | You address the task clearly and purposefully. While there may be some descriptive content, this is concise and relevant | You have used a variety of appropriate sources, including the most important sources from the reading list. | The assignment shows a good grasp of relevant empirical and/or theoretical knowledge. You apply this knowledge to demonstrate accurate understanding of an issue or problem related to the module content. | Your argument is coherent, supported with evidence, and draws on established positions within the field. | The structure is mostly clear and coherent. Content is introduced and concluded explicitly. Organisation of the material is appropriate and effort is made to explain it. . There are some attempts to signpost the structure. | The work is presented to a good standard, but there are some minor syntactical, spelling or grammar errors. In places, the clarity of expression and communication could be improved. | There may be some minor  deficiencies in referencing and bibliography. There is an appropriate spread of different references throughout the assignment. |
| 60-64  UPPER SECOND CLASS  (B) | You address the task but there may be some lack of clarity and purpose. There may be reliance on descriptive material. | You have used a variety of appropriate sources including some from the reading list. | The assignment shows familiarity with relevant empirical and/or theoretical knowledge. You apply this knowledge to demonstrate understanding of an issue or problem related to the module content. | Your argument is largely coherent, draws on relevant positions in the field, and some evidence is given to support it. | There is a structure but it may not be fully coherent and clear. Content is introduced and concluded. Organisation of the material is mostly appropriate though may not be fully explained. There are some attempts to signpost the structure. | The work is presented to a good standard, but there are some syntactical, spelling or grammar errors. The style or clarity of expression and communication could be improved. | There are some minor  deficiencies in referencing and bibliography. There is a spread of different references throughout the assignment. |
| 50-59  LOWER SECOND CLASS  (C) | You address the task in places, but there may be some over-reliance on descriptive material. Some material may be irrelevant. The assignment may be slightly too long or short. | You have used some appropriate sources from the reading list, but some important ones are missing. There may be an over-reliance on a few sources or on textbook summaries. | The assignment shows a grasp of some relevant empirical and/or theoretical knowledge, but this may be incomplete or partially inaccurate. You attempt to apply this knowledge to demonstrate a limited understanding of an issue or problem related to the module content. There may be some mistakes/misunderstandings. | You have attempted to construct standard argument in places, but it may lack support from evidence, or lack coherence and consistency. | There is some structure but it lacks clarity and coherence in places. Material may not be effectively introduced or concluded. The structure has poor signposting. | The work suffers from some deficiencies in presentation e.g. grammatical mistakes, awkward expressions, lack of clarity. The style of communication and expression may not be fully effective. | There are some  deficiencies in the referencing and bibliography. The assignment overly cites a few sources and some references are missing key details. |
| 40-49  PASS: THIRD CLASS(D/E) | You make attempts to address the task, but miss significant aspects of it. Some content is irrelevant. The assignment may be too long or short. | You have used an insufficient number of sources from the reading list. The assignment draws on poor quality sources. | The assignment shows only a very basic familiarity with relevant empirical and/or theoretical knowledge. There is little or no attempt to apply knowledge to the issue or problem, and thus evidence of understanding of the module content is lacking. There may be significant mistakes/misunderstandings. | You make little, if any, attempt to construct an argument or support it with evidence. The assignment serves as a summary of accounts found within the field. | The structure of the work lacks coherence. Material is not effectively introduced or concluded. There is barely any signposting. | The work suffers from deficiencies in presentation e.g. grammatical mistakes, awkward expressions, lack of clarity. Some parts of the assignment may not make sense. | There are many  deficiencies in the referencing and bibliography. The assignment overly cites a few sources and may have missing references. |
| 30-39  FAIL (F) | You do not address the task requirements. The assignment contains a lot of irrelevant material. Assignments in this category are often much too long or short. | You have mostly not used sources from the reading list and instead rely on poor quality sources. | The assignment shows little or no familiarity with relevant empirical and/or theoretical knowledge. There is no attempt to apply knowledge to the issue or problem, and thus little or no evidence of understanding of the module content. There are major mistakes/misunderstandings. | There is no discernible argument within the assignment. | The work is poorly structured Content is disorganised and hard to follow. Material is not introduced or concluded.. There is no signposting of structure. | There are major deficiencies in written communication. Significant parts of the assignment do not make sense. | There are many significant deficiencies in the referencing and bibliography. Some references are absent. |
| 1-29  FAIL (F) | You do not complete the task. The material is largely irrelevant. Assignments in this category are often much too long or short. | There is very little evidence of research, with all of the key literature absent. | The assignment shows no familiarity with relevant empirical and/or theoretical knowledge. There is no attempt to apply knowledge to the issue or problem, and thus evidence of understanding of the module content is lacking.. There are major mistakes and errors. | There is no argument within the assignment. | The work has very little, if any, structure. Content is poorly organised, incoherent, and difficult to follow. There is no signposting. | The assignment is difficult to understand and there are major deficiencies in the accuracy and clarity of the writing. | There are serious deficiencies in the referencing and bibliography. There are very few, if any, accurate references in the assignment. |

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