



UNIVERSAL CONVENTIONS AND PROCEDURES

Academic Year 2025/26

Indicative Assessment Descriptors

1 Implementation

The Conventions are reviewed annually and apply for the academic year 2025/26.

2 Undergraduate Courses [except Masters level within Integrated Masters]

Liverpool Hope University implements a 21-point marking scale. Each point on the scale falls into a level of performance that aligns with degree classifications as detailed in the scale.

The mark assigned to an assessment depends upon the match to the descriptors detailed in this convention. A marker will consider the work alongside the descriptors and initially assign whether the assessment matches the descriptors for a first-class honour, second class honours etc. All of the descriptors need not be matched absolutely. The marker may then assign a mark in the upper, middle or lower parts of the classification based on the extent to which the work meets the characteristics detailed in the descriptors.

This process of aligning assessments with a point on the standard scale will be carried out for all qualitative assessments. The overall block mark will be determined from the weighted aggregate of the assessments.

Some assessments, e.g., multiple-choice tests are marked answer by answer and the overall mark assigned will reflect the quantification of correct/incorrect answers. The 21-point mark scale does not apply to these tasks, any mark between 0 and 100 can be assigned. Marks will not be rounded to match the closest point on the scale.

For portfolio assessments made up of multiple tasks each assessment will be classified as either qualitative (marked on the standard point scale) or quantitative (marked from 0-100). The final mark for the portfolio will be determined from the weighted aggregate of the tasks. The standard 21- point scale does not apply to the overall portfolio.

The following additional requirement applies to all Undergraduate assessments:

Where subject specific assessment criteria do not cover technical proficiency in English the following guidance will be applied:

The University expects students to submit assessments which are of a high-quality including in relation to clarity of expression. Students are advised to proof read their assessments before submission in order to identify and eliminate errors. Where the academic quality and precision remains, students will not be unnecessarily penalised for insignificant errors in syntax, spelling, grammar or presentation.

Feedback given to students will include appropriate signposting to support with academic writing where necessary. This guidance does not affect any alternative learning needs assessed through learning support plans.

Whether the 21-point mark scale applies to an assessment must be clearly explained in the course handbook and on moodle as appropriate. The following descriptors are intended to provide a shared understanding of the University expectations that support both academic tutors and students at all stages of their studies.

Undergraduate FHEQ Levels 3,4,5,6

Descriptor	Mark	As appropriate to the level of study, work that is typically characterised by the following:
First Class Honours Outstanding	100 Upper 92 Mid 88 lower	Little improvement could reasonably be expected Knowledge & understanding: outstanding in relevant foundational concepts and principles; demonstrates comprehension appropriate to these foundation principles; Subject specific/professional practice skills: an exceptionally high ability in applying key process skills/professional practice skills, including a clearly demonstrated originality to apply them to limitations of theoretical concepts; Argument, analysis & reflection: a clearly-demonstrated ability to use interpretive cognitive skills (evaluation of information and ideas, using highly appropriate skills, methods and procedures) in a diverse range of contexts. Outstanding ability to apply knowledge and analyse information in order to make reasoned judgements; Communication: very high level of competence with well-structured argument throughout; Presentation: outstanding, work professionally presented, and communicated with meticulous attention to detail. Referencing: references accurate, reliable and precise, thoughtful background reading where appropriate. <u>A mark of 100 may be awarded if work could not be bettered at this level</u>

First Class Honours Excellent;	84 Upper	Only minor improvements could reasonably be expected:
First class honours	76 mid	Knowledge & understanding: excellent knowledge and comprehension of relevant theories, fundamental concepts and principles.; Demonstrating excellent understanding and evidence of reasoned judgements appropriate to the level. Subject specific/professional practice skills: an excellent ability in applying key process skills/professional practice skills, including the ability to apply them to limitations of theoretical concepts. There are outstanding elements emerging.
	70 lower	Argument, analysis & reflection: a clearly-demonstrated ability to use interpretive cognitive skills (analysis, synthesis, evaluation and problem solving) in a diverse range of contexts. Excellent ability to apply knowledge and analyse information in order to make reasoned judgements; Communication: high level of competence with well-structured and coherent argument throughout; Presentation: highly competent, work very well presented and communicated with attention to detail. Referencing: accurate, reliable and appropriately referenced, indicative of thoughtful background reading where appropriate. Work in the lower part of the band shows characteristics of first-class achievement but is more secure in some aspects than others meaning that the final mark reflects both excellent and very good standards of performance overall.

Uppers second class honours Very Good	68 Upper	The work may need some improvement in one or more aspects. Knowledge & understanding: Demonstrates good/very good knowledge and comprehension of relevant theories, fundamental concepts and principles; showing understanding and the ability to make some lines of judgement appropriate to these foundation principles;
	64 Mid	Subject specific/professional practice skills: a good/very good level of ability in applying key process skills/professional practice skills, including some ability to utilise them to examples of limitations of theoretical concepts;
	60 Lower	Argument, analysis & reflection: a good/very good ability to accesses and interpretive cognitive skills (analysis, synthesis, evaluation and problem solving) in a number of contexts. Very good ability to apply knowledge and analyse information in order to make reasoned judgements; Communication: good/ very good level of competence with well-structured and coherent argument throughout; Presentation: accurate and appropriate work, well presented and communicated; Referencing: reliably referenced, indicative of background reading where appropriate. Work in the lower part of the band shows characteristics of upper second-class achievement but is more secure in some aspects than others meaning that the final mark reflects both good and very competent standards of performance overall.

Lower second-class honours Satisfactory	58 Upper	Work requires improvement overall and may contain some significant errors but is sound in the essential elements. Knowledge & understanding: Demonstrates competent knowledge and comprehension of relevant theories; competent in fundamental concepts and principles; Subject specific/professional practice skills: sound application of key process skills/professional practice skills, including some limited ability to apply them to examples of limitations of theoretical concepts; Argument, analysis & reflection: competent in ability to access and interpret appropriate information, some evidence of, using higher cognitive skills (analysis, synthesis, evaluation and problem solving). Shows reasonable application of knowledge and analyses of information in order to make reasoned judgements
	54 Mid	Communication: competent communication with some limited evidence of an argument apparent. Presentation: Work is accurate and appropriate in the main, clearly presented and communicated. Referencing: References generally accurate with minor deficiencies, but may have limitations in some aspects and largely indicative of lower level background reading.
	50 Lower	Work at the lower end of the band shows characteristics of lower second-class achievement but is more secure in some aspects than others meaning that the final mark reflects both competent and adequate standards of performance overall.

Third class honours Threshold Pass	48 Upper	Work that has exceeded the threshold but requires major improvement. Knowledge & understanding Demonstrates satisfactory knowledge and comprehension of some of the relevant theories, adequate in some of the fundamental concepts and principles but with flaws which may be significant apparent;
	45 Mid	Subject specific/professional practice skills: application of some of the key process skills/professional practice skills, but with evidence of flaws and errors in some aspects. Argument, analysis & reflection: limited ability to access and interpret appropriate information using cognitive skills (analysis, synthesis, evaluation and problem solving) and in a restricted range of contexts; evidence of description and repetition rather than analysis.
	40 Lower	Communication: satisfactory communication but with little evidence of a structured argument apparent. Organisation and clarity may be limited. Presentation: satisfactorily presented and communicated, with weaknesses in attention to detail. Referencing: some use of referencing, where appropriate, inconsistent, a narrow range of sources and errors present; limitations and largely indicative of lower level background reading. May only just be acceptable. At the lower end of the band work may have only very marginally exceeded the threshold standard.

Fail	Upper 38 Mid 32 Lower 28	Significant improvement is required. The work has failed to reach threshold standards. Knowledge & understanding failure to demonstrate knowledge and comprehension of relevant theories; inadequate in the majority of fundamental concepts and principles, significant flaws and omissions apparent; Subject specific/professional practice skills: inadequate and limited ability in application of some of the key process skills/professional practice skills, with clear weaknesses and significant omissions. Argument, analysis & reflection: minimal evidence of the use of higher cognitive skills (analysis, synthesis, evaluation and problem solving); argument analysis and reflection are largely missing or inaccurate; a limited ability to apply knowledge and analyse information in order to make reasoned judgements Communication: may contain serious weaknesses; little evidence of an argument apparent. Presentation: inadequately presented and communicated, weak or inaccurate; Referencing: references inaccurate and inconsistent, little or no evidence of appropriate referencing. At the lower end of the band the work is unsatisfactory with major flaws and weaknesses.
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Unclassified Submission	Upper 22	The work is substantially below the threshold standard and shows little or any understanding of the assessment brief. If the work is submitted but does not address the question the mark of 0 will be used to indicate an incorrect answer of no merit against the task set.
	Mid 12	
	Lower 0	

3 Postgraduate Courses including Level M of Integrated Masters Awards

The mark assigned to an assessment depends upon the match to the descriptors detailed in this convention. A marker will consider the work alongside the descriptors and initially assign whether the assessment matches the descriptors for a Distinction, Merit or Pass. All of the descriptors need not be matched absolutely. The marker may then assign a mark in the upper, middle or lower parts of the classification based on the extent to which the work meets the characteristics detailed in the descriptors.

This process of aligning assessments with a point on the standard scale will be carried out for all qualitative assessments. The overall block mark will be determined from the weighted aggregate of the assessments.

Some assessments, e.g., multiple-choice tests are marked answer by answer and the overall mark assigned will reflect the quantification of correct/incorrect answers. The 21-point mark scale does not apply to these tasks, any mark between 0 and 100 can be assigned. Marks will not be rounded to match the closest point on the scale.

For portfolio assessments made up of multiple tasks each assessment will be classified as either qualitative (marked on the standard point scale) or quantitative (marked from 0-100). The final mark for the portfolio will be determined from the weighted aggregate of the tasks. The standard point scale does not apply to the overall portfolio.

The following additional requirement applies to all Postgraduate Taught assessments:

Where subject specific assessment criteria do not cover technical proficiency in English the following guidance will be applied:

The University expects students to submit assessments which are of a high-quality including in relation to clarity of expression. Students are advised to proof read their assessments before submission in order to identify and eliminate errors. Where the academic quality and precision remains, students will not be unnecessarily penalised for insignificant errors in syntax, spelling, grammar or presentation.

Feedback given to students will include appropriate signposting to support with academic writing where necessary. This guidance does not affect any alternative learning needs assessed through learning support plans.

Whether the 21-point mark scale applies to an assessment must be clearly explained in the course handbook and on moodle as appropriate. The following descriptors are intended to provide a shared understanding of the University expectations that support both academic tutors and students at all stages of their studies.

Descriptor	Mark	Work that is typically characterised by the following:
Distinction Outstanding	100 Upper 92 Mid 88 Lower	An exceptional work showing outstanding standard of performance and achievement overall with little improvement possible: • Authoritative and independent handling of complex material, demonstrating highly developed knowledge; • understanding and application of theoretical issues and concepts; • at times exploring at, or beyond, the boundaries of current understanding; • convincing and well-focused, sophisticated analysis/argument, developed with depth and precision of thought and evidence; • well-structured and lucid presentation appropriate to the audience and discipline; • well-developed insight and capacity for individual thought; • originality in approach and application; • evidence of extensive and in-depth reading; • a high degree of skill in handling quotations, references, footnotes, bibliographical material; • where appropriate: authoritative handling of data (including appropriate analytical techniques); • where appropriate: demonstration of a full appreciation of research design and the ability to give a comprehensive critique of the methodology used. A mark of 100 may be awarded if work could not be bettered at this level
Distinction Excellent	Upper 84 Mid 76 Lower 70	An excellent standard of performance and achievement overall; at the higher end of the band elements of the work may have outstanding features: • Authoritative handling of complex material, demonstrating well developed knowledge; • understanding and application of theoretical issues and concepts; • convincing and focused analysis/argument, developed with depth and precision of thought and evidence; • well-structured and lucid presentation; • well-developed insight and capacity for individual thought; • imagination in approach and application; • evidence of extensive and in-depth reading; • a high degree of skill in handling quotations, references, footnotes, bibliographical material; • where appropriate: authoritative handling of data (including appropriate analytical techniques); • where appropriate: demonstration of a full appreciation of research design and the ability to give a comprehensive critique of the methodology used. Work in the lower part of the band shows characteristics of achievement at Distinction level but more secure in some aspects than others meaning that the final mark reflects both excellent and very good standards of performance overall.
Merit	Upper 68 Mid 64 Lower 60	A good/very good standard of performance and achievement overall: • Skilled handling of material, demonstrating a sound knowledge, understanding and application of theoretical issues and concepts; • the ability to structure material and formulate an argument logically, along with an effective and mature written style; • coherent and soundly structured presentation; • evidence of wide and in-depth reading; • skill in handling quotations, references, footnotes, bibliographical material;

		• where appropriate: skilled handling of data, demonstrating sound use of statistics; • where appropriate: ability to give detailed criticisms of the methods used and to appreciate research design. Work in the lower part of the band shows characteristics of merit level achievement but is more secure in some aspects than others meaning that the final mark reflects both good/very good and competent standards of performance overall.
Pass	Pass Upper 58 Mid 54 Lower 50	A competent standard of performance and achievement overall: • Satisfactory handling of material, indicating a general knowledge, understanding and application of the main theoretical issues and concepts; • the ability to formulate an argument logically, along with a competent written style; • there may be over-reliance on secondary sources; • the level of critique is limited at least in some aspects of the argument • a reasonably lucid and adequately structured presentation; • evidence of wide reading; • ability to use quotations, references, footnotes, bibliographical material; • where appropriate: satisfactory handling of data demonstrating awareness of analytical techniques; • where appropriate: satisfactory critique of methodology, some appreciation of research design.
Fail	Upper 48 Mid 38 Lower 32	In general, the student has not reached the standard required to Pass at Level M[7], as evidenced by at least some of the characteristics listed below: Typical characteristics: • Insufficient knowledge, understanding and application of course material; • failure to meet the objectives of the assignment; • a lack of balance and adequately developed arguments; • evidence that the student has little understanding of how to structure arguments, present evidence and use concepts; • insufficient critical analysis; • insufficient appropriate use of sources and data; • poor literacy skills &/or inadequate referencing skills. A mark of 48 F can be compensated if the overall module outcome reaches the minimum threshold.
Unclassified Submission	Upper 22 Mid 12 Lower 0	The work is substantially below the threshold standard and shows little or any understanding of the assessment brief. If the work is submitted but does not address the question the mark of 0 will be used to indicate an incorrect answer of no merit against the task set.

