

**SCHOOL OF LAW MARKING SCALE – APPROVED 2005**

Nonhonours Courses		Secondary Bands & Aggregation Scores		Primary verbal descriptors for attainment of Intended Learning Outcomes	Honours Courses	Secondary Bands & Aggregation Scores	
Primary Grade	Gloss	Secondary Band*	Aggregation Score		Primary Honours Class	Secondary Band*	Aggregation Score
A	Excellent	1	22	<p><b>UNIVERSITY DESCRIPTOR</b>                      Exemplary range and depth of attainment of intended learning outcomes, secured by discriminating command of a comprehensive range of relevant materials and analyses, and by deployment of considered judgement relating to key issues, concepts and procedures  <b>SCHOOL OF LAW GLOSS ON DESCRIPTOR</b>                      Answers at this level will show a very full knowledge and understanding of the material and of relevant interpretive and critical points. They will be well constructed with clear conclusions, supported by sound arguments. Answers will show some independence of thought. This may mean that the student has produced new arguments of his or her own, but is more likely to be a matter of making arguments from the literature ‘one’s own’ by, for example, using one’s own expression and organisation and one’s own examples. Where relevant the student will show to a high degree the ability to apply legal principles to the solution of problems, and there will be good use of primary and secondary sources, and proper reference to authority.</p>	First	1	22
		2	21			2	21
		3	20			3	20
		4	19			4	19
		5	18			5	18
B	Very Good	1	17	<p><b>UNIVERSITY DESCRIPTOR</b>                      Conclusive attainment of virtually all intended learning outcomes, clearly grounded on a close familiarity with a wide range of supporting evidence, constructively utilised to reveal appreciable depth of understanding  <b>SCHOOL OF LAW GLOSS ON DESCRIPTOR</b>                      Answers at this level will show a full knowledge and understanding of the material and of relevant interpretive and critical points. They will be generally well constructed with clear conclusions, supported by sound arguments. But the answers will generally show less independence of thought and mastery of detail than those in the A band. There may be some errors or misunderstandings in relatively unimportant details. Where relevant the student will show substantial ability to apply legal principles to the solution of problems.</p>	Upper Second	1	17
		2	16			2	16
		3	15			3	15

				There will be substantial use of primary and secondary sources, and proper reference to authority.			
C	Good	1 2 3	14 13 12	<p><b>UNIVERSITY DESCRIPTOR</b> Clear attainment of most of the intended learning outcomes, some more securely grasped than others, resting on a circumscribed range of evidence and displaying a variable depth of understanding</p> <p><b>SCHOOL OF LAW GLOSS ON DESCRIPTOR</b> Answers will show a generally sound knowledge and understanding of the material and of relevant interpretive and critical points. Answers will be less clearly organised than those in the higher bands and there may be some significant errors, omissions or misunderstandings. Where relevant the student will show some ability to apply legal principles to the solution of problems. There should be some use of primary and secondary sources, and reference to authority.</p>	Lower Second	1 2 3	14 13 12
D	Satisfactory	1 2 3	11 10 9	<p><b>UNIVERSITY DESCRIPTOR</b> Acceptable attainment of intended learning outcomes, displaying a qualified familiarity with a minimally sufficient range of relevant materials, and a grasp of the analytical issues and concepts which is generally reasonable, albeit insecure</p> <p><b>SCHOOL OF LAW GLOSS ON DESCRIPTOR</b> Answers will show an adequate level of knowledge and understanding of the material, but they are likely to be lacking in detail and to include significant errors, omissions or misunderstandings. The grasp shown of critical and interpretive points may be insecure and the organisation of the answer may be weak. The student should show awareness of the need to refer to authority and limited ability to apply legal principles to the solution of problems.</p>	Third	1 2 3	11 10 9

E	Weak	1 2 3	8 7 6	<p><b>UNIVERSITY DESCRIPTOR</b> Attainment deficient in respect of specific intended learning outcomes, with mixed evidence as to the depth of knowledge and weak deployment of arguments or deficient manipulations</p> <p><b>SCHOOL OF LAW GLOSS ON DESCRIPTOR</b> Answers at this level will show knowledge and understanding of some of the relevant material, but there will be serious deficiencies. Understanding of critical and interpretive points may be poor. The answer may be badly organised and difficult to follow. The student may be unable to apply legal principles to the solution of problems. The student may not show awareness of the need to refer to authority.</p>	Weak	1 2 3	8 7 6
F	Poor	1 2 3	5 4 3	<p><b>UNIVERSITY DESCRIPTOR</b> Attainment of intended learning outcomes appreciably deficient in critical respects, lacking secure basis in relevant factual and analytical dimensions</p> <p><b>SCHOOL OF LAW GLOSS ON DESCRIPTOR</b> Answers at this level will show knowledge and understanding of very little of the relevant material. Understanding of critical and interpretive points will be poor. The answer may be badly organised and difficult to follow. The student may be unable to apply legal principles to the solution of problems. The student may not show awareness of the need to refer to authority.</p>	Poor	1 2 3	5 4 3
G	Very Poor	1 2	2 1	<p><b>UNIVERSITY DESCRIPTOR</b> Attainment of intended learning outcomes markedly deficient in respect of nearly all intended learning outcomes, with irrelevant use of materials and incomplete and flawed explanation</p> <p><b>SCHOOL OF LAW GLOSS ON DESCRIPTOR</b> Answers at this level will show very serious weaknesses. Very little knowledge will be shown of the relevant material and what is known will have been seriously misunderstood. If there is any attempt at critical and interpretive discussion it will be inappropriate or badly confused. The student may be unable to apply legal principles to the solution of problems. The student may not show awareness of the need to refer to authority.</p>	Very Poor	1 2	2 1

H			0	<b>UNIVERSITY/SCHOOL OF LAW DESCRIPTOR</b> No convincing evidence of attainment of intended learning outcomes, such treatment of the subject as is in evidence being directionless and fragmentary			0
CR	CREDIT REFUSED			<b>UNIVERSITY/SCHOOL OF LAW DESCRIPTOR</b> Failure to comply, in the absence of good cause, with the published requirements of the course or programme; an/or a serious breach of regulations			

\*The Secondary Band indicates the degree to which the work possesses the quality of the corresponding descriptor.

### Supplementary Characteristic Sets

In order to provide more transparency for students and others seeking to translate grades awarded to the quality of candidates' performance, a set of supplementary descriptors has been developed from an assessment guide used at Trinity College, Dublin, in which that institution acknowledges earlier work at St Andrews and Reading. These descriptors identify positive and negative qualities which might be expected to characterise work attracting the corresponding grade. They are not, however, a substitute for the primary verbal descriptors whose relation to the intended learning outcomes remains the basis for the classification of candidates' performance. Like the primary verbal descriptors, these characteristic sets may be adjusted to reflect assessment practice in individual disciplines.

#### *Grade A*

An **excellent** performance is likely to be characterised by several of the following:

- Questions are answered clearly, comprehensively and with appropriate focus;
- Excellent organisation and structure of answers;
- Reasoned arguments developing logical conclusions;
- Insight, imagination, originality and creativity;
- Integration of new information;
- Sound critical thinking;
- Independence of judgment;
- Explanation of relevant theory;
- Citation of relevant evidence;
- Evidence of wide, relevant reading;
- Application of learning to new situations and problem solving;
- Accuracy and absence of errors.

#### *Grade B*

A **very good** performance is likely to be characterised by some, at least, of the following:

- Questions are answered clearly and fully;
- Good organisation and structure of answers;
- Reasoned arguments developing logical conclusions;

- Very good understanding of the subject;
- Clear evidence of relevant reading or research;
- Explanation of relevant theory;
- Citation of relevant evidence;
- Inclusion of highly relevant ideas;
- Use of relevant examples;
- Application of learning to new situations and problem solving;
- Accuracy and absence of significant errors.

Although, distinguishing it from an excellent performance, it might be faulted on grounds of:

- Demonstrating less insight, imagination, originality or creativity;
- Including a less comprehensive presentation, solution or answer;
- Integrating information less successfully;
- Exhibiting less critical thinking;
- Exhibiting less independence of judgment.

### *Grade C*

A **good** performance is likely to be characterised by some, at least, of the following:

- Attempts made to answer questions set;
- Ability to solve some of the problems set;
- Basic to good understanding of the subject;
- Evidence of some relevant reading or research;
- Inclusion of some relevant ideas;
- Inclusion of some relevant examples.

Although, distinguishing it from a very good performance, it might be faulted on grounds of:

- Lacking sufficiently well-structured argument;
- Not offering sufficient evidence to justify assertions;
- Not including sufficient relevant examples;
- Lacking insight, imagination, originality or creativity;
- Offering less in its presentation, solutions or answers;
- Containing some errors.

### *Grade D*

A **satisfactory** performance is likely to be characterised by some, at least, of the following:

- Attempts made to answer questions set;
- Ability to solve some of the problems set;

- Modest evidence of understanding of the subject;
- Modest evidence of relevant reading or research;
- Inclusion of a few relevant ideas;
- Inclusion of a few relevant examples.

And, distinguishing it from a good performance, it might:

- Contain more errors of judgment, fact or application;
- Present arguments which are less well-structured;
- Offer less evidence in support of assertions;
- Offer fewer relevant examples;
- Contain more errors.

#### *Grade E*

A **weak** performance is likely to be characterised by some, at least, of the following:

- Failure to answer the question set though an answer to a similar question may be offered;
- Partial solutions to problems set;
- Little evidence of understanding of the subject;
- Little evidence of relevant reading or research;
- Inclusion of very few relevant ideas;
- Absence of structured argument;
- Little evidence to justify assertions;
- Few relevant examples;
- Several significant errors.

#### *Grade F*

A **poor** performance is likely to be characterised by some, at least, of the following:

- Failure to answer the question set though an answer to a question within the same topic area may be offered;
- Very little evidence of understanding of the subject;
- Very little evidence of relevant reading or research;
- Inclusion of ideas only relevant in a wider consideration of the topic;
- Absence of structured argument;
- Very little evidence to justify assertions;
- Very few relevant examples;
- Many significant errors.

#### *Grade G*

A **very poor** performance is likely to be characterised by some of the following:

- Failure to answer the question set;
- No evidence of understanding of the subject;
- No evidence of relevant reading or research;
- Absence of relevant ideas;
- Absence of structured argument;
- Absence of evidence to justify assertions;
- Absence of relevant examples;
- Many significant errors.

It is distinguished from a Grade 'H' performance by the fact that not all of these characteristics will be present.

*Grade H*

Absence of positive qualities.