Appendix B – Grade Descriptors and categorical marking scheme

The broad grade descriptors / performance indicators detailed below must be read in conjunction with relevant module documentation, including the Grading Guidance provided for each Year / Part of the programmes. Module tutors may make some minor amendments or adjustments to provide greater clarity where alternative forms of assessment are used. If you have any concerns please contact, the module tutor or programme lead.

First class	70 - 100	First class qualities include relevance (a high degree of focus on the question), accuracy of interpretation, originality and insightfulness of analysis, critical reflection, wide reading, coherence of structure, and clarity of expression. These factors will be present to varying degrees in a first class answer.
100	Outstanding 1st	An assessment that could not be bettered within the time available.
90	Excellent 1st	Distinguished by substantial scholarship and, in some cases, originality.
85	Very good 1st	An answer that includes almost all the first class qualities.
78	Good 1st	An answer showing a great deal of insight into the question, and one which indicates wide reading beyond the reference lists provided in course handouts.
72	Low 1st	An answer showing substantial evidence of most of the first class qualities, demonstrating a comprehensive coverage of the subject matter and relevant literature, a very strong analysis, and no major inaccuracies of interpretation.
Upper second class	60 - 69	Upper second class qualities include a good degree of focus on the question and accuracy of interpretation, evidence of reading of the core literature and some insightful analysis. Although not necessarily original, the answer will articulate a clear and well-supported viewpoint on the key issues being discussed. The work will be well-structured and relatively clearly expressed.
68	High 2:1 Very good	Displays all upper second qualities, but narrowly misses first class, most commonly in areas of insight or breadth of additional reading.
65	Mid 2:1 Good	An answer that displays most of the upper second class qualities. There will be clear evidence of reading of relevant literature and key issues will be interpreted accurately, although the answer may not be entirely comprehensive, or may be let down by one or two weaker components such as coherency of structure.
62	Low 2: Capable	An answer which displays some of the upper second class qualities. There will be evidence of reading of relevant literature and key issues will be interpreted mostly accurately, although the answer may be let down by one or two weaker components such as coherency of structure, coverage of key issues and readings.
Lower second class	50 - 59	Lower second class qualities include a good degree of relevance, coverage of the topic and accuracy of interpretation. There is evidence of reading, but it is limited in extent. Coherence of structure, clarity of analysis and degree of insight and critical reflection are also limited.
58	High 2:2 Competent	Displays all of the lower second class qualities, but fails to demonstrate much reading. Structure is present, but may not be the most suitable. Typically, such an answer may cover the course material and be correct, but display a lower level of clarity in comprehension and analysis than a low 2:1.
55	Mid 2:2 Satisfactory	An answer that displays most of the lower second class qualities, largely relevant and accurate and covering the topic, but with limited coverage of the literature and limited insight.
52	Low 2:2 Adequate	Some of the required qualities are significantly lacking. The structure may be weak, or there may be little evidence of reading. An answer at this level may be let down by significant sections which are not relevant to the question, or by some inaccuracy of interpretation.
Third class	40 - 49	Work with severe shortcomings in presentation, relevance, analysis and structure. Though there may be some evidence of basic knowledge of the literature, it is likely to be superficial and/or inaccurate.
48	High 3rd Rudimentary	An answer that is relevant to the question and demonstrates some of the key points, but with little or no evidence of reading, and possibly large segments of inappropriate material. The answer demonstrates little or no insight and is weakly structured.
45	Mid 3rd Weak	An answer that is only partly relevant to the question and covers only some of the key issues, with little or no evidence of reading, and possibly large segments of inappropriate material. The answer demonstrates little or no insight and is weakly structured.

42	Low 3rd Very weak	An answer that demonstrates only a rudimentary understanding of the key issues, with little focus on the question, little or no evidence of reading, and possibly large segments of inappropriate material. The answer demonstrates little or no insight and is weakly structured.
Fail	**0 - 39**	**Poor answers with serious omissions or errors. A distinction is made between answers at the higher end of this range, which typically demonstrate a serious weakness in argument and/or a lack of knowledge and understanding, and answers at the lower end, which are simply deemed inadequate.**
38	Bare 'qualifying fail' Poor	Answers with serious omissions or errors, but with some material relevant to the question. There is evidence that the question has been understood in part, but that there is only a fragmented and shallow acquaintance with the subject. Work at this level will demonstrate serious weakness in argument, and/or a serious lack of knowledge and understanding.
30	Low 'qualifying fail' Inadequate	Little substance or understanding, but with a vague knowledge of the correct answer.
18	'Non-qualifying fail' Unsatisfactory	Some relevant facts but an inadequate structure and approach leading to a jumble of disorganised material. This grade is also appropriate for an answer which is wholly tangential to the question, or to a very short answer (less than one side), without promise of being better had it been longer.
0	Wholly unsatisfactory	Virtually nothing of relevance to the answer, lacking any real structure.