

Sector-recognised standards

1. This document contains the sector-recognised standards that relate to general ongoing condition B5 (Sector-recognised standards) as revised with effect from 1 May 2022, and initial condition B8 (Standards).

Part A: Threshold standards for qualifications at all levels¹

A.1: Examples of the typical higher education qualifications at each level

Conventions for qualification titles

2. Public understanding of the achievements represented by higher education qualifications requires transparent and consistent use of qualification titles. The title of any qualification, therefore, should accurately reflect the level of students' achievement, and the volume, nature and field(s) of study undertaken. Qualification titles should not be misleading.
3. To ensure that qualification titles accurately convey information about the level of the qualification:
 - The titles 'honours' (for example, bachelors' degree with honours), 'master' (for example, Master of Arts) and 'doctor' (for example, Doctor of Philosophy) are used only for qualifications that meet, in full, the expectations of the qualification descriptors at Level 6, Level 7 and Level 8 respectively (but see note to the masters' degree qualification descriptor).
 - Titles with the stem 'graduate' (for example, 'graduate diploma') are used for qualifications from courses that typically require graduate entry, or its equivalent, and that meet relevant parts of the qualification descriptors at Level 6.
 - Titles with the stem 'postgraduate' (for example, 'postgraduate diploma') are restricted to qualifications that meet relevant parts of the qualification descriptor at Level 7.

¹ The content of Part A is drawn from 'The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree Awarding Bodies' published in October 2014. See www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/qualifications-frameworks.pdf [PDF].

Qualifications at each level

4. The levels for higher education courses are numbered 4-8, and follow Levels 1-3 which relate to levels of study below higher education, and which are set out in the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF).
5. Table 1 below lists typical higher education qualifications for each level.

Typical higher education qualifications within each level	Level
Doctoral degrees (e.g. PhD/DPhil, EdD, DBA, DClinPsy) ^a	8
Masters' degrees (e.g. MPhil, MLitt, MRes, MA, MSc)	7
Integrated masters' degrees (e.g. MEng, MChem, MPhys, MPharm) ^b	
Primary qualifications (or first degrees) in medicine, dentistry and veterinary science (e.g. MB ChB, MB BS, BM BS ^c ; BDS; BVSc, BVMS) ^d	
Postgraduate diplomas	
Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) ^e /Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE)	
Postgraduate certificates	
Bachelors' degrees with honours (e.g. BA/BSc Hons)	6
Bachelors' degrees ^f	
Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) ^e	
Graduate diplomas	
Graduate certificates	
Foundation degrees (e.g. FdA, FdSc)	5
Diplomas of Higher Education (DipHE)	
Higher National Diplomas (HND) ^g	
Higher National Certificates (HNC) ^g	4
Certificates of Higher Education (CertHE)	

Notes to Table 1

- ^a Professional doctorate programmes include some taught elements in addition to the research dissertation. Practice varies but typically professional doctorates include postgraduate study equivalent to a minimum of three full-time calendar years with study at Level 7 representing no more than one-third of this.
- ^b Integrated masters' degree programmes typically include study equivalent to at least four full-time academic years in England, of which study equivalent to at least one full-time academic year is at Level 7 (i.e. at the level of the qualification). Thus study at

bachelors' level is integrated with study at masters' level and the programmes are designed to meet the qualification descriptor in full at Level 6 and Level 7.

- c These are all abbreviated forms for the degrees of Bachelor of Medicine/Bachelor of Surgery.
- d Primary qualifications in medicine, dentistry and veterinary science typically include study equivalent to at least four full-time academic years in England, of which study equivalent to at least one full-time academic year is at Level 7 (i.e. at the level of the qualification). Thus study at bachelors' level is integrated with study at masters' level and the programmes are designed to meet the qualification descriptor in full at Level 6 and Level 7. For historical reasons the qualifications retain the title 'Bachelor'.
- e The title Postgraduate Certificate in Education is reserved for those PGCE qualifications that are set at Level 7 and align with the qualification descriptor for Level 7. The title Professional Graduate Certificates in Education is used for those PGCE qualifications that are set at Level 6 and align with the qualification descriptor at Level 6.
- f A bachelors' degree without honours includes an Ordinary degree or a Pass degree which consist of a smaller volume of credit and so meet the qualification descriptor in part at Level 6.
- g HNDs and HNCs may either be awarded by degree awarding bodies under a licence from Pearson (which allows them to devise, deliver and award Higher National qualifications themselves), or they may be awarded directly by Pearson. The majority of these qualifications are awarded by Pearson.

A.2: Typical volumes of credit for qualifications at each level

- 6. The award of higher education qualifications is based on the demonstrated achievement of outcomes rather than years of study. Higher education providers are not required to adopt a credit system to define the volume of learning expected of students, although many providers do express their courses by reference to credit. The credit system used in England equates 'credit' with 'learning time', with 10 notional learning hours equating to one credit. This means that the volume of study for a course expressed in credit provides an indication of the approximate learning time for a student.
- 7. Volume of study can therefore be used as an indicator of the range and depth of students' learning and can, as a consequence, distinguish between types of qualifications at the same level. For example, the title 'diploma' generally indicates a smaller volume of learning than a 'degree' but a larger volume than a 'certificate'. A range of diplomas and certificates are offered by higher education providers.
- 8. Table 2 below sets out the typical credit values associated with courses leading to common higher education qualifications. The values shown in column 3 are the minimum that are typically associated with a qualification (with any minimum or maximum at a specified level shown in parentheses).

Table 2: Typical credit values associated with higher education qualifications

Typical higher education qualifications within each level	Level	Typical credit values
PhD/DPhil	8	Not typically credit rated
Professional doctorates (if credit rated) (e.g. EdD, DBA, DClinPsy)		540 (360 at Level 8)
Research masters' degrees (e.g. MRes, MPhil)	7	Not typically credit rated
Taught masters' degrees (e.g. MA, MSc)		180 (150 at Level 7)
Integrated masters' degrees (e.g. MEng, MChem, MPhys, MPharm)		480 (120 at Level 7)
Primary (or first) qualifications in medicine (e.g. BM BS), dentistry (e.g. BDS) and veterinary science (e.g. BVSc)		Not typically credit rated
Postgraduate diplomas		120 (90 at Level 7)
Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)		60 (40 at Level 7)
Postgraduate certificates		60 (40 at Level 7)
Bachelors' degrees with honours (e.g. BA/BSc Hons)	6	360 (90 at Level 6)
Bachelors' degrees		300 (60 at Level 6)
Postgraduate Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)		60 (40 at Level 6)
Graduate diplomas		80 (80 at Level 6)
Graduate certificates		40 (40 at Level 6)
Foundation degrees (e.g. FdA, FdSc)	5	240 (90 at Level 5)
Diplomas of Higher Education (DipHE)		240 (90 at Level 5)
Higher National Diplomas (HND)		240 (90 at Level 5)
Higher National Certificates (HNC)	4	120 (60 at Level 4)
Certificates of Higher Education (CertHE)		120 (90 at Level 4)

A.3: Qualification descriptors

9. Qualification descriptors set out the generic outcomes and attributes expected for the award of a particular type of qualification (for example a bachelors' degree with honours). They describe the minimum acceptable level of achievement that a student has to demonstrate to be eligible for an award. They are 'generic' because they describe the outcomes and attributes expected from any subject of study, rather than from any particular subject, and so are applicable across subjects and modes of study.

10. The qualification descriptors set out below describe the threshold academic standard for those qualification types in terms of the levels of knowledge and understanding and the types of abilities that holders of the relevant qualification are expected to have.

11. The qualification descriptors are in two parts. The first part is a statement of outcomes, achievement of which is assessed and which a student should be able to demonstrate for the award of the qualification. This is a statement of the threshold academic standard for the qualification. This part is of particular relevance to providers in designing, approving, assessing and reviewing academic programmes. The second part of the descriptor is a statement of the wider abilities that a typical student would be expected to have developed. It assists providers to understand the general capabilities expected of holders of the qualification.
12. Each qualification descriptor sets out the outcomes for the typical or main qualification type at each level. At most levels there is more than one type of qualification that may be achieved (for example postgraduate diplomas and certificates in addition to master's degrees at Level 7). Within each level, the various types of qualifications involve different volumes of learning (for example master's degrees entail more learning than postgraduate certificates). As a consequence, there are differences in the range and nature of outcomes and attributes expected of students. Not all of the qualification types at each level therefore meet all of the expectations of the qualification descriptor. Where a qualification type has a smaller volume of learning than the main qualification type, the qualification descriptor for the degree is used as a reference point and the sub-degree qualification is expected to meet the descriptor in part. This is also the approach taken for individual modules, where credit is awarded for completion of a smaller volume of learning than the main qualification type.

A.3.1 Descriptor for a higher education qualification at Level 4: Certificate of Higher Education

13. The descriptor provided for this level is for any Certificate of Higher Education, which should meet the descriptor in full. This qualification descriptor should also be used as a reference point for other qualifications aligned with Level 4.
14. Certificates of Higher Education are awarded to students who have demonstrated:
 - knowledge of the underlying concepts and principles associated with their area(s) of study, and an ability to evaluate and interpret these within the context of that area of study
 - an ability to present, evaluate and interpret qualitative and quantitative data, in order to develop lines of argument and make sound judgements in accordance with basic theories and concepts of their subject(s) of study.
15. Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:
 - evaluate the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems related to their area(s) of study and/or work
 - communicate the results of their study/work accurately and reliably, and with structured and coherent arguments

- undertake further training and develop new skills within a structured and managed environment.

16. And holders will have:

- the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of some personal responsibility.

17. Holders of a Certificate of Higher Education will have a sound knowledge of the basic concepts of a subject, and will have learned how to take different approaches to solving problems. They will be able to communicate accurately and will have the qualities needed for employment requiring the exercise of some personal responsibility. The Certificate of Higher Education may be a first step towards obtaining higher level qualifications.

A.3.2 Descriptor for a higher education qualification at Level 5: Foundation degree

18. The descriptor provided for this level is for any foundation degree which should meet the descriptor in full. This qualification descriptor should also be used as a reference point for other qualifications at Level 5, including Diplomas of Higher Education and Higher National Diplomas.

19. Foundation degrees are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- knowledge and critical understanding of the well-established principles of their area(s) of study, and of the way in which those principles have developed
- ability to apply underlying concepts and principles outside the context in which they were first studied, including, where appropriate, the application of those principles in an employment context
- knowledge of the main methods of enquiry in the subject(s) relevant to the named award, and ability to evaluate critically the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems in the field of study
- an understanding of the limits of their knowledge, and how this influences analyses and interpretations based on that knowledge.

20. Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- use a range of established techniques to initiate and undertake critical analysis of information, and to propose solutions to problems arising from that analysis
- effectively communicate information, arguments and analysis in a variety of forms to specialist and non-specialist audiences and deploy key techniques of the discipline effectively

- undertake further training, develop existing skills and acquire new competences that will enable them to assume significant responsibility within organisations.

21. And holders will have:

- the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and decision-making.

22. The foundation degree is an example of a qualification that meets, in full, the expectations of the qualification descriptor.

23. Holders of qualifications at this level will have developed a sound understanding of the principles in their field of study, and will have learned to apply those principles more widely. Through this, they will have learned to evaluate the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems. Their studies may well have had a vocational orientation, for example HNDs, enabling them to perform effectively in their chosen field. Holders of qualifications at this level will have the qualities necessary for employment in situations requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and decision-making.

A.3.3 Descriptor for a higher education qualification at Level 6: Bachelors' degree with honours

24. The descriptor provided for this level is for any bachelors' degree with honours which should meet the descriptor in full. This qualification descriptor should also be used as a reference point for other qualifications at Level 6, including bachelors' degrees, and graduate diplomas.

25. Bachelors' degrees with honours are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- a systematic understanding of key aspects of their field of study, including acquisition of coherent and detailed knowledge, at least some of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of defined aspects of a discipline
- an ability to deploy accurately established techniques of analysis and enquiry within a discipline
- conceptual understanding that enables the student:
 - to devise and sustain arguments, and/or to solve problems, using ideas and techniques, some of which are at the forefront of a discipline
 - to describe and comment upon particular aspects of current research, or equivalent advanced scholarship, in the discipline
- an appreciation of the uncertainty, ambiguity and limits of knowledge
- the ability to manage their own learning, and to make use of scholarly reviews and primary sources (for example, refereed research articles and/or original materials appropriate to the discipline).

26. Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- apply the methods and techniques that they have learned to review, consolidate, extend and apply their knowledge and understanding, and to initiate and carry out projects
- critically evaluate arguments, assumptions, abstract concepts and data (that may be incomplete), to make judgements, and to frame appropriate questions to achieve a solution – or identify a range of solutions – to a problem
- communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences.

27. And holders will have:

- the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring:
 - the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility
 - decision-making in complex and unpredictable contexts
 - the learning ability needed to undertake appropriate further training of a professional or equivalent nature.

28. Holders of a bachelor's degree with honours will have developed an understanding of a complex body of knowledge, some of it at the current boundaries of an academic discipline. Through this, the holder will have developed analytical techniques and problem-solving skills that can be applied in many types of employment. The holder of such a qualification will be able to evaluate evidence, arguments and assumptions, to reach sound judgements and to communicate them effectively.

29. Holders of a bachelor's degree with honours should have the qualities needed for employment in situations requiring the exercise of personal responsibility, and decision-making in complex and unpredictable circumstances.

A.3.4 Descriptor for a higher education qualification at Level 7: Masters' degree

30. The descriptor provided for this level is for any masters' degree which should meet the descriptor in full. This qualification descriptor should also be used as a reference point for other qualifications at Level 7, including postgraduate certificates and postgraduate diplomas.

31. Masters' degrees are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- a systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study or area of professional practice

- a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship
- originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline
- conceptual understanding that enables the student:
 - to evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline
 - to evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses.

32. Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences
- demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level
- continue to advance their knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level.

33. And holders will have:

- the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring:
 - the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility
 - decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations
 - the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development.

34. Much of the study undertaken for masters' degrees is at, or informed by, the forefront of an academic or professional discipline. Successful students show originality in the application of knowledge, and they understand how the boundaries of knowledge are advanced through research. They are able to deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, and they show originality in tackling and solving problems. They have the qualities needed for employment in circumstances requiring sound judgement, personal responsibility and initiative in complex and unpredictable professional environments.

A.3.5 Descriptor for a higher education qualification at Level 8: Doctoral degree

35. The descriptor provided for this level is for any doctoral degree which should meet the descriptor in full. This qualification descriptor should also be used as a reference point for other Level 8 qualifications.
36. Doctoral degrees are awarded to students who have demonstrated:
 - the creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline, and merit publication
 - a systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of an academic discipline or area of professional practice
 - the general ability to conceptualise, design and implement a project for the generation of new knowledge, applications or understanding at the forefront of the discipline, and to adjust the project design in the light of unforeseen problems
 - a detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry.
37. Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:
 - make informed judgements on complex issues in specialist fields, often in the absence of complete data, and be able to communicate their ideas and conclusions clearly and effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences
 - continue to undertake pure and/or applied research and development at an advanced level, contributing substantially to the development of new techniques, ideas or approaches.
38. And holders will have:
 - the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and largely autonomous initiative in complex and unpredictable situations, in professional or equivalent environments.
39. Doctoral degrees are awarded for the creation and interpretation, construction and/or exposition of knowledge which extends the forefront of a discipline, usually through original research.
40. Holders of doctoral degrees are able to conceptualise, design and implement projects for the generation of significant new knowledge and/or understanding. Holders of doctoral degrees have the qualities needed for employment that require both the ability to make informed judgements on complex issues in specialist fields and an innovative approach to tackling and solving problems.

Part B: Classification descriptors for Level 6 bachelors' degrees²

41. Classification descriptors set out the generic outcomes and attributes expected for the award of a bachelors' degree with a particular classification. They build on the threshold standards set out above in the descriptor for a bachelors' degree with honours (see A.3.3) and describe the minimum acceptable level of achievement that a student has to demonstrate to be eligible for a particular classification. They are 'generic' because they describe the outcomes and attributes expected from any subject of study for that classification, rather than from any particular subject, and so are applicable across subjects and modes of study.
42. The classification descriptors also describe the outcomes and attributes that would demonstrate that a student has not met the expected standard for the award of an honours degree.
43. The classification descriptors set out below describe the standard for each classification in terms of the levels of knowledge and understanding and the types of abilities that holders of the relevant classification are expected to have. A graduate can be expected to have demonstrated the skills and attributes attached to their respective classification, as set out in Table 3.

Table 3: Typical skills and attributes for each classification for Level 6 bachelors' honours

Not successful	Third-class honours (3rd)	Lower second-class honours (2.2)	Upper second-class honours (2.1)	First-class honours (1st)
The student did not achieve the required course learning outcomes and: did not consistently demonstrate sufficient knowledge and understanding, cognitive, practical and transferable skills did not consistently	The student achieved all their required course learning outcomes and: demonstrated knowledge and understanding, cognitive, practical and transferable skills demonstrated initiative and	The student achieved all their required course learning outcomes and: demonstrated strong knowledge and understanding, cognitive, practical and transferable skills demonstrated initiative and	The student achieved all their required course learning outcomes and: demonstrated thorough knowledge and understanding, cognitive, practical and transferable skills demonstrated good initiative and	The student achieved all their required course learning outcomes and: consistently demonstrated advanced knowledge and understanding, cognitive, practical and transferable skills consistently demonstrated

² The content of this Part is drawn from the degree classification descriptions for bachelors' degrees adopted by the UKSCQA in June 2019. See [ukscqa.org.uk/2019/10/10/higher-education-sector-announces-new-initiatives-to-protect-value-of-uk-degrees/](https://www.ukscqa.org.uk/2019/10/10/higher-education-sector-announces-new-initiatives-to-protect-value-of-uk-degrees/).

Not successful	Third-class honours (3rd)	Lower second-class honours (2.2)	Upper second-class honours (2.1)	First-class honours (1st)
demonstrate adequate initiative and personal responsibility did not consistently demonstrate ability to reflect on their work did not consistently demonstrate problem-solving skills	exercised personal responsibility demonstrated some ability to reflect on their work demonstrated problem-solving skills	personal responsibility demonstrated an ability to reflect on their work demonstrated strong problem-solving skills	personal responsibility demonstrated an ability to reflect critically on their work demonstrated thorough problem-solving skills	exceptional initiative and personal responsibility consistently demonstrated ability to reflect critically and independently on their work consistently demonstrated exceptional problem-solving skills

44. Bachelors' degree courses vary in their content and the way students are assessed. A higher education provider may therefore give the different areas of the classification outcomes in Table 4 different weight for different subjects and courses. For example, numeracy and digital skills may not be as applicable to some arts courses as creativity skills, while the reverse may be the case for some Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) courses.
45. The outcomes in Tables 4-8 express a holistic view of the outcomes a graduate would be expected to demonstrate for each classification. They present a detailed articulation of how the typical skills and attributes acquired by graduates set out in Table 3 above apply across the following different areas:
- Knowledge and understanding
 - Cognitive skills
 - Practical skills
 - Transferable skills
 - Professional competences (where appropriate).
46. 'Knowledge and understanding' is defined as a systematic extensive and comparative understanding of key aspects of the field of study, including coherent and detailed knowledge of the subject and critical understanding of theories and concepts, at least some of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of defined aspects of a discipline (see Table 4).

47. ‘Cognitive skills’ is defined as a conceptual understanding of a level that is necessary to devise and sustain arguments, and/or to solve problems and comment on research and scholarship in the discipline, with an appreciation of the uncertainty, ambiguity and limits of knowledge (see Table 5).
48. ‘Practical skills’ is defined as an ability to manage one’s individual learning and to deploy accurately established techniques of analysis and enquiry within a discipline or as necessary for the discipline (see Table 6).
49. ‘Transferable skills’ is defined as personal and enabling skills appropriate to the discipline, including the ability to communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences, the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility and decision-making in complex and unpredictable contexts (see Table 7).
50. ‘Professional competences’ (to the extent that they are expressed by the course learning outcomes) covers specific professional requirements and the learning ability needed to undertake appropriate further training of a professional or equivalent nature. Where the award of a qualification requires an assessment of professional competencies, no award will be made if a student does not meet them (see Table 8).

Outcomes a graduate would be expected to demonstrate for each classification in different areas

Table 4: Knowledge and understanding

Not successful	3rd (pass or threshold)	2.2	2.1	1st
The student's knowledge and understanding of the subject is inadequate, without the required breadth or depth, with deficiencies in key areas.	The student has demonstrated a depth of knowledge and understanding in key aspects of their field of study, sufficient to deal with terminology, facts and concepts.	The student has demonstrated a sound breadth and depth of subject knowledge and understanding, if sometimes balanced towards the descriptive rather than the critical or analytical.	The student has demonstrated sophisticated breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding, showing a clear, critical insight.	The student has shown exceptional knowledge and understanding, significantly beyond the threshold expectation of a graduate at this level and beyond what has been taught.
The student has demonstrated inadequate understanding of subject-specific theories, paradigms, concepts and principles, including their limitations and ambiguities.	The student has demonstrated an understanding of subject-specific theories, paradigms, concepts and principles.	The student has consistently demonstrated an understanding of subject-specific theories, paradigms, concepts and principles as well as more specialised areas.	The student has demonstrated a thorough understanding of subject-specific theories, paradigms, concepts and principles and a sound understanding of more specialised areas.	The student has demonstrated an exceptional understanding of subject-specific theories, paradigms, concepts and principles, and in-depth knowledge, if not mastery of a range of specialised areas.
The student has not produced sufficient evidence of background investigation, analysis, research, enquiry and/or study using established	The student has conducted general background investigation, analysis, research, enquiry and/or study using established	The student has conducted background investigation, analysis, research, enquiry and/or study using established techniques accurately, and can	The student has conducted thorough background investigation, analysis, research, enquiry and/or study using established techniques accurately, and	The student has conducted independent, extensive and appropriate investigation, analysis, research, enquiry and/or study well beyond the usual range, together

Not successful	3rd (pass or threshold)	2.2	2.1	1st
research, enquiry and/or study.	techniques, with the ability to extract relevant points.	critically appraise academic sources.	possesses a well-developed ability to critically appraise a wide range of sources.	with critical evaluation, to advance work and/or direct arguments.

Table 5: Cognitive skills

Not successful	3rd (pass or threshold)	2.2	2.1	1st
The student has displayed an over-reliance on set sources. They have not demonstrated an adequate ability to select and evaluate reading and research.	The student has demonstrated the ability to select, evaluate and comment on reading, research and primary sources.	The student has selected, evaluated and commented on reading, research and primary sources, sometimes beyond the set range.	The student has thoroughly selected, critically evaluated and commented on reading, research and primary sources, usually beyond the set range.	The student has demonstrated an exceptional ability to select, consider, evaluate, comment on and synthesise a broad range of research, primary sources, views and information and integrate references.
The student's arguments and explanations are weak and/or poorly constructed, and they are not able to critically evaluate the arguments of others or consider alternative views.	The student has shown the ability to devise and sustain an argument, with some consideration of alternative views, and can explain often complex matters and ideas.	The student has argued logically, with supporting evidence, and has demonstrated the ability to consider and evaluate a range of views and information. They have clearly and consistently	The student has demonstrated the ability to make coherent, substantiated arguments, as well as the ability to consider, critically evaluate and synthesise a range of views and information. They have demonstrated a thorough, perceptive and	The student has made consistent, logical, coherently developed, and substantiated arguments, and demonstrated the ability to systematically consider, critically evaluate and synthesise a wide range of views and information. They have

Not successful	3rd (pass or threshold)	2.2	2.1	1st
		explained complex matters and ideas.	thoughtful interpretation of complex matters and ideas.	demonstrated sophisticated perception, critical insight and interpretation of complex matters and ideas.
The student has shown a limited ability to solve problems and/or make decisions.	The student has demonstrated an ability to solve problems, applying a range of methods to do so, and the ability to make decisions in complex and unpredictable circumstances.	The student has consistently solved complex problems, selecting and applying a range of appropriate methods, and can make decisions in complex and unpredictable circumstances.	The student has demonstrated thorough problem-solving skills, selecting and justifying their use of a wide-range of methods, and can make decisions in complex and unpredictable circumstances with a degree of autonomy.	The student has demonstrated a wide range of extremely well-developed problem-solving skills, as well as a strong aptitude for decision-making with a high degree of autonomy, in the most complex and unpredictable circumstances.
The student has shown little or no real creativity.	The student has produced some creative work.	The student has consistently demonstrated creativity.	The student has shown a high level of creativity and originality throughout their work.	The student has demonstrated exceptional creative flair and originality.

Table 6: Practical skills

Not successful	3rd (pass or threshold)	2.2	2.1	1st
The student has not demonstrated sufficient evidence of discipline-specific skills development or application.	The student has demonstrated evidence of developing and applying discipline-specific specialist skills.	The student has consistently demonstrated the development and informed application of discipline-specific specialist skills.	The student has demonstrated a capable and effective application of discipline-specific specialist skills.	The student has demonstrated an accomplished and innovative application of discipline-specific specialist skills.
The student has attempted practical tasks/processes but followed a limited, procedural or mechanistic formula, and they contain errors, with little or no independence.	The student has completed practical tasks and/or processes accurately and with a degree of independence.	The student has consistently completed practical tasks/processes mainly independently in an accurate, well-coordinated and proficient way.	The student has performed practical tasks and/or processes autonomously, with accuracy and coordination.	The student has autonomously completed practical tasks and/or processes with a high degree of accuracy, coordination and proficiency.
The student has demonstrated a lack of technical, creative and/or artistic skills in most, or key, areas.	The student has demonstrated technical, creative and/or artistic skills.	The student has consistently demonstrated well-developed technical, creative and/or artistic skills.	The student has a thorough command of highly-developed relevant technical, creative and/or artistic skills.	The student has a full range of exceptional technical, creative and/or artistic skills.

Not successful	3rd (pass or threshold)	2.2	2.1	1st
The student has not presented their research findings clearly or effectively, and their gathering, processing and interpretation of data is unsatisfactory.	The student has presented their research findings, in several formats, and has gathered, processed and interpreted data effectively.	The student has consistently presented their research findings effectively and appropriately in many formats, and has gathered, processed and interpreted data efficiently and effectively.	The student has presented thorough research findings perceptively and appropriately in a wide range of formats, and has gathered, processed and interpreted a wide range of complex data efficiently and effectively.	The student has presented research findings perceptively, convincingly and appropriately in a wide range of formats, and has gathered, processed and interpreted a wide range of complex data efficiently and effectively.

Table 7: Transferable skills

Not successful	3rd (pass or threshold)	2.2	2.1	1st
The student is not able to sufficiently express ideas and convey clear meaning verbally, electronically and/or in writing, uses inaccurate terminology, with many errors in spelling, vocabulary and syntax. They have been unable to demonstrate consistently basic numeracy and digital literacy skills.	The student can communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions verbally, electronically and in writing, with clear expression and style. They have also demonstrated numeracy and digital literacy skills.	The student can consistently and confidently communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions verbally, electronically and in writing. They show a clear, coherent, expressive style, with a range of vocabulary. They have consistently demonstrated strong numeracy and digital literacy skills.	The student can communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions with a high-degree of proficiency verbally, electronically and in writing. They have a clear, fluent and expressive style with appropriate vocabulary. They have a high standard of numeracy and digital literacy skills.	The student can communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to an accomplished level verbally, electronically and in writing. They have shown an accurate, fluent, sophisticated style. They possess exceptional numeracy and digital literacy skills.

Not successful	3rd (pass or threshold)	2.2	2.1	1st
The student has made infrequent contributions to group discussions and/or project work.	The student has demonstrated a capability of making useful contributions to group discussions and/or project work.	The student has consistently demonstrated the capability to make coherent and constructive contributions to group discussions and/or project work.	The student has demonstrated the capability to make strong, valuable contributions to group discussions and/or project work, with an understanding of team and leadership roles.	The student has demonstrated the capability to make clear, authoritative and valuable contributions to group discussions and/or project work, with exceptional teamwork and leadership skills.
The student has demonstrated little or no ability to manage their learning and work with minimal or no supervision.	The student has shown an ability to manage their learning and work with minimal or no supervision.	The student has consistently shown an ability to systematically manage their learning, and work without supervision.	The student has shown a strong ability to systematically manage their learning, and work without supervision.	The student has shown an exceptional ability to manage their learning on their own initiative, and work without supervision.
The student has not demonstrated adequate initiative or personal responsibility.	The student has demonstrated initiative and/or personal responsibility.	The student has consistently demonstrated initiative and/or personal responsibility.	The student has consistently demonstrated well-developed initiative and/or personal responsibility.	The student has demonstrated exceptional initiative and/or personal responsibility.
The student has shown little or no ability to reflect on their work.	The student has demonstrated the ability to reflect on their work.	The student has consistently demonstrated a well-developed ability to reflect on their work.	The student has demonstrated the ability to reflect critically on their work.	The student has demonstrated an exceptional ability to reflect critically and independently on their work.

Table 8: Professional competences

Not successful	3rd (pass or threshold)	2.2	2.1	1st
The student has not demonstrated achievement of professional competence when assessed against the requirements of a professional, statutory or regulatory body (PSRB).		The student has demonstrated achievement of professional competence when assessed against the requirements of a PSRB.		
The student has failed to adhere to the appropriate rules and/or conventions set by regulators or the industry.		The student has adhered to the appropriate rules and/or conventions set by regulators or the industry.		