

PROPOSED MARKING CRITERIA FOR EXAMINATION ANSWERS

The proposed marking scheme is based on a modification of other structured marking schemes suggested for the assessment of essay questions within UCD, including that suggested by the Senate of the NUL

The following major points should be considered in assessing an answer:

- (i) Addressing the question
- (ii) Knowledge and understanding of the topic posed in the question
- (iii) Structure and presentation of answer
- (iv) Evidence of reading of relevant literature
- (v) Evidence of independent thinking.

The characteristics of answers meeting these criteria are listed below by classification, mark band, and a simple descriptor. The criteria are not of equal weighting; e.g. if the answer does not address the question, the answer automatically fails.

Note on use of English: When marking examination scripts, it is important to remember that many of our students do not speak English as their native language. Clarity of presentation and logical communication of the answer may be achieved by a variety of means including the use of diagrams, flow charts, tables, sketches of histological material, arrows and sequentially logical bullet points. When an answer is clearly presented by any or a combination of these means, the student should be awarded the appropriate grade. Students should not lose marks simply because their style of English prose appears "non-fluent".

First Class; 80% ; outstanding

Each of the characteristics listed below is present to a high degree, and none is inadequate or defective. The student reveals a very high standard of comprehension.

- (i) The question is addressed closely and correctly, without irrelevant material.
- (ii) Full knowledge and understanding of the topic is evident, given the time available to write the answer: free of errors (other than perhaps a few trivial misstatements). Where used, diagrams and graphs are accurate and carefully labeled.
- (iii) The answer is constructed clearly and logically, and ideally prefaced by an initial paragraph to indicate its subsequent structure.
- (iv) There is good evidence of having read relevant literature to supplement lecturer notes, which are themselves accurately cited
- (v) The answer contains a critical analysis of the question, well-founded by relevant evidence in favour of a chosen or personal point of view. should the question warrant it (that is, questions of the type "Discuss ..." or 'Evaluate...')

First Class; 70-79% ; excellent

The characteristics listed in the 80% category are present to varying degrees, but are lacking consistency of quality under all five headings. If an answer is defective in more than two of these characteristics, it should not be placed in this category, but in a lower one.

Upper Second Class; 65-69% ; very good

- (i) The question is addressed adequately, without irrelevant material
- (ii) The answer shows a good understanding of the question, but is marred by occasional (few) errors. Where used, diagrams or graphs are generally accurate.
- (iii) The answer is constructed clearly and logically.
- (iv) Some evidence of reading beyond lecture notes, which are themselves cited reasonably accurately, however.
- (v) The answer is competent (and generally accurate) in the reproduction of received ideas and there is some evidence of a critical viewpoint on the question.

Lower Second Class; 60-64% ; satisfactory

- (i) The question is addressed adequately and contains the essential core of information required. The answer may contain some irrelevant material but is mostly logical in presentation
- (ii) Diagrams or graphs contain a significant number of minor inaccuracies.
- (iii) Answer may lack clarity.

(iv) Little evidence of reading beyond lecture notes, but reproduction of those notes is reasonably precise.

(v) Shows a little independent thinking

Pass; 50-59% ; fair

(i) A reasonable but incomplete understanding of the question is evident. Not all aspects of the question are addressed in the answer, which may also contain irrelevant material.

(ii) Correct information may be patchy and interspersed with some major errors. Diagrams or graphs are only marginally accurate.

(iii) Organisation of answer may be somewhat confused and not clearly presented.

(iv) No evidence of reading beyond lecture notes and the content is reproduced inaccurately.

(v) No evidence of independent thinking.

Fail; below 50%

45-49% ; poor

Only some aspects of the question are addressed in the answer. The answer may have digressions on irrelevant materials; nonetheless some relevant material is present. Some significant errors in information relevant to question: deficiency in understanding on some crucial points. Poorly structured and presented. No evidence of reading; contents of relevant lecture notes reproduced in a partial or garbled manner at best. No evidence of independent thinking.

40-44% ; very poor

Clear evidence that many aspects of the question have eluded the student. The answer contains irrelevant materials with little evidence that the student appreciates their significance. Some information relevant to the broad topic of the question, although it does not directly address the question: poor understanding of material required. Answer garbled with no clear structure. No evidence of reading; contents of relevant lecture notes very poorly utilised in the answer. No evidence of independent thinking.

30-39%

The main point of the question set has eluded the student, but the answer shows some understanding of the general subject area with little or no information relevant to the question. This may include an answer prepared for an expected question that did not materialise.

20-29%

Totally inadequate answer to the question set. Some of the irrelevant material produced is correct within its own context, but not related to the question.

0%

No attempt at an answer whatsoever.