

Mark Scheme Guidance Notes:

We use standardised mark schemes for Humanities and Social Sciences and STEM placements – different versions of the mark scheme are available for Key Stages 2-3 and Key Stages 4-5. Across our mark schemes, we measure three key outcomes: written communication, subject knowledge, and critical thinking. Further information about how to use the mark schemes is provided below.

1. How do I approach the marking process?

When reading the pupil's work try to identify aspects in the work that show evidence of the skills described in the mark scheme. Use this process to make a **holistic judgement** of the grade in which the work best fits in each column.

Consider whether the work falls within each grade boundary. You can score any mark within the ranges below:

Marks	Grade
0-39	Working towards a pass
40-49	3 rd
50-59	2:2
50-69	2:1
70+	1 st

For example, for subject knowledge if you think it is a 2:1, decide the mark that you want to award within this grade boundary. You may find it helpful to think about whether the assignment is a low, mid or high 2:1 before assigning a specific mark.

The overall mark will be based on an average mark across the three criteria of the mark scheme: subject knowledge, critical thinking, and written communication. We will ask you to submit marks for each of the three criteria as well as the overall grade.

2. What do I do if an assignment has an uneven profile?

A rule of thumb when work is a little uneven is to give the benefit of the doubt to the pupil and grade upwards.

Where a piece of work has an uneven profile e.g. very strong on one aspect and very weak on another within a grade boundary, we recommend that you still make a best fit holistic judgment of what you think is the right grade for the essay.



3. What if aspects of the mark scheme do not apply to the assignment that I have set?

As you are marking work by pupils that you have taught, you may find occasions where you treat some aspects of the mark scheme with less weight than others. Use your professional judgement to make these decisions but stick as closely to the mark scheme as you can. Some examples are provided below:

Referencing: If you have taught a particular style of referencing conventions, make sure you award marks based on how you have taught pupils to reference.

Critical thinking: The two main critical thinking skills that this mark scheme assesses are analysis and evaluation (detailed in the mark scheme). However, we understand that for certain subjects the relevance of these two skills may vary. **For example**, you might set an assignment question that gives students the opportunity to demonstrate their analysis skills but not evaluation skills. In these instances, use the criteria from the mark scheme that relate to your assignment question; ensuring that you still use the full range of marks available. **Using the example described above**, if a pupil meets all the criteria of a 1st based on the analysis descriptors, then the pupil should receive a mark for critical thinking within the 1st boundary.

4. The mark scheme is quite broad, how do I use the mark scheme to give pupils detailed feedback?

The mark scheme has been designed to give you flexibility in your teaching and marking, so that you can focus on the skills that are most important within your subject. In the mark scheme, there are three broad outcomes that you will be using to mark assignments (subject knowledge, critical thinking, and written communication). For each of the three outcomes, you should identify which skills you have focused on most with your pupils. For example, for written communication, you may have focused on writing structure and less on key terms. Another example is, for critical thinking you may have taught pupils how to evaluate arguments but not spent much time on analysing arguments or ideas. Therefore, your feedback should reflect the skills that you have taught during the course. If you are delivering your own course, this is something that you would have identified in your backwards planning process.

In addition, you should use the mark scheme to formulate aspects of your feedback, but you should also provide wider feedback based on the knowledge and skills that you have taught pupils throughout your course. For example, you could use the 'Essay Writing Reflection' (Tutorial 5) to structure some of your feedback.