

**Faculty of Social Sciences & Law**

**

Student Handbook

for Taught Students

2023/24

This Handbook relates to the 2023/24 session and does not commit the University in respect of subsequent sessions.

You are advised to keep this handbook during your

studies for your information.

Please also see the University Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught Programmes:

<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/assessment/codeonline.html>

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# Introduction

This Handbook provides basic information relevant to your studies in the Faculty of Social Sciences and Law. You will receive school and/or programme handbooks at School induction, which contain more specific information on your programme, assessment methods, and other general information. Schools may also provide information on their local website or via the virtual learning environment, Blackboard ([www.ole.bris.ac.uk](http://www.ole.bris.ac.uk)).

The Faculty of Social Sciences and Law consists of seven Schools:

• School of Economics

• Business School (Accounting and Finance; Management)

• School of Education

• University of Bristol Law School

• School for Policy Studies

• School of Sociology, Politics and International Studies

• School of Geographical Sciences (Human Geography only)

Links to School websites can be found at <https://www.bristol.ac.uk/fssl/>

For information relating to the Library ([www.bristol.ac.uk/library/](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/library/)) or IT Services ([www.bristol.ac.uk/it-services/](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/it-services/)), please consult their individual websites.

**All programmes of study are governed by the University’s *Regulations and Code of Practice:***

<https://www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/assessment/codeonline.html>

## Key Dates

Term and vacation dates can be found here - [Dates | About the University | University of Bristol](https://www.bristol.ac.uk/university/dates/)

## The Faculty

The Faculty Education Team office is contactable by phone and in person - [Contact | Faculty of Social Sciences and Law | University of Bristol](https://www.bristol.ac.uk/fssl/contact/)

## Faculty Committees

There are several decision-making Committees within the Faculty, which mirror University Committees.

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| **Faculty Board**  The highest decision-making body within the Faculty and is responsible for overseeing all major Faculty academic decisions and priorities. It ratifies reports and recommendations of policy from individual Faculty committees and discusses policy and items referred by the Senate. | **Faculty Examination Board**  This Board formally approves all final examination results for taught programmes and ensures there is consistent treatment of extenuating circumstances and plagiarism/cheating penalties for students within the Faculty. It also monitors student progress, students on suspension and extension of study, and withdrawals. |
| **Faculty Studies Committees**  These committeesconsider academic policy within a quality assurance context and it oversees the new and revised programme and unit proposals. They are also responsible for high-quality teaching provision in the Faculty. They advise Faculty Board on all aspects of teaching and research policy. | **Faculty Student-Staff Liaison Committee**  These committees are chaired by the Faculty undergraduate and postgraduate student representatives and meet three times a year. Membership of the committees is two student representatives from each School and the Faculty Education Director. The purpose of the committees is to discuss academic and pastoral matters that affect students. |
| **Faculty Curriculum Committee**  This committee holds responsibility for all curriculum approval activity including academic scrutiny and oversight of curriculum developments at undergraduate and taught postgraduate level. | |

## Official Documents

You can find information on how to obtain transcripts and other documents (such as Student Status Letters or council Tax Exemption Letters) here: [Results, Transcripts, Certificates and Verifications | Directory of Professional Services | University of Bristol](https://www.bristol.ac.uk/directory/exams/cert-verif-results/)

## Students’ Union and Representation

We encourage students to take an active role within the Faculty by becoming student representatives. The Students’ Union runs training sessions and organises elections for representatives at School and Faculty level. These representatives attend the relevant Faculty committees as appropriate and the Student-Staff Liaison Committee.

The Students’ Union also works to provide community and opportunities for all students at the University. You can find more information about Bristol SU here: <https://www.bristol.ac.uk/study/postgraduate/student-life/union/>.

# Student Wellbeing

Looking after your physical, mental and emotional health will help you make the most of your time here. A range of support and services are provided by the university, and for more information, you can visit:

Students’ Health Service - <https://www.bristol.ac.uk/students-health/>Student Wellbeing Service - <https://www.bristol.ac.uk/students/support/wellbeing/>Multifaith Chaplaincy - <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/chaplaincy/>

# Disability Services

Disability Services provide confidential information, advice and guidance to prospective and current students with a range of disabilities, learning difficulties and other physical or mental health conditions. They offer tailored case-by-case disability-related support and identify if there is any support we can offer, such as mentoring, study skills and exam support. They can also advise on sources of funding for disability-related study support. For more information, visit their website at <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/disability-services/>.

# Academic Integrity

The University takes pride in the development of your academic scholarship. We want you to develop the key research skills of independent thought, critical thinking, and an ability to engage with and reference other people’s ideas. These skills illustrate academic integrity and demonstrate trust, respect, fairness, and honesty in your work.

When these values are not displayed, poor academic integrity questions the quality and value of your degree. The University therefore takes cases of academic misconduct very seriously. For more information on academic integrity, you can visit this page: <https://www.bristol.ac.uk/students/support/academic-advice/academic-integrity/> .

# Complaints and Appeals

In the Faculty of Social Sciences and Law, we try very hard to make decisions which are fair, and which take proper account of the personal circumstances of each student. Inevitably, however, sometimes things go wrong and you may disagree with a decision that affects you. For this reason, the University has a system for dealing with student grievances and appeals.

For information on making a complaint, please visit this page: <https://www.bristol.ac.uk/students/support/complaints/> .

For information on making an academic appeal, please visit this page: <https://www.bristol.ac.uk/students/support/academic-advice/academic-appeal/> .

## Bristol SU Academic Advice

Bristol SU Academic Advice is a free, confidential advice service provided by Bristol Students' Union. This service specialises in academic advice but can also signpost students and provide information for other queries. More information is available on their website: <https://www.bristolsu.org.uk/advice-support>.

# Medical and Other Exceptional Circumstances

It is possible that at some point you will suffer some disruption to your studies through illness or other circumstances, whether relational or financial. For more advice on what to do in these situations, you can consult this  
page: <https://www.bristol.ac.uk/students-health/absent/.>

You can also read section 12 of the Regulations and Code of Practice regarding [exceptional circumstances](https://www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/assessment/codeonline.html).

# Assessment and Examination Procedures

The University *Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught Programmes* (Rules for Assessment, Progression and the Award of the Qualification):  [http://www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/assessment/codeonline.html](http://www.bris.ac.uk/esu/assessment%20) governs the way that assessment and progression are conducted for taught programmes within the Faculty. Also, the University’s *Examination Regulations* cover examinations and the procedure for dealing with student cases of plagiarism and cheating as well as student appeals.

You will need to be familiar with the above Regulations, the Faculty guidance (below) and School guidance during your studies.

# Assessment in the Faculty

The Faculty’s taught programmes are assessed and classified in line with the University’s *Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught Programmes* which is available at <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/assessment/codeonline.html>

## School and Faculty Examination Boards

School and Programme Boards of Examiners’ meetings normally take place in the Summer and Autumn terms and at dates specified in school handbooks. These Boards moderate and agree on student marks for examinations and assignments, award credit points to students, recommend the award and degree classification.

The Faculty Examination Board normally ratifies final taught postgraduate awards for full-time students so that students can graduate at the Spring degree congregations. The Board also ratifies final awards for part-time taught postgraduates and those students exiting with a Certificate or Diploma, throughout the year and considers penalty recommendations from Faculty plagiarism panels to ensure consistency of treatment.

# Faculty Prizes

Prizes are awarded annually, at the end of each academic year, to outstanding students in the Faculty. The prizes are awarded by the Faculty Progression Examination Board based upon nominations from Heads of Schools and School Boards of Examiners. Individual Schools may also award prizes, and you can consult your School for further details about these.

Below is the list of Faculty Prizes:

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| **Alumni Achievement Award** | Two £1000 prizes awarded to the two best first-year undergraduate students in the Faculty. |
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| **Dean’s Prizes** | Awarded, usually in the form of a book token or Amazon Gift Card, to the best first-year undergraduate students in each School. |
|  |  |
| **Evelyn Miller-Barstow Prizes** | Awarded to undergraduates in the Schools of Social Sciences for good work during the second year of study. |

# Information for ESRC-funded Studentship (1+3) Holders (SWDTP)

## Information and Guidance

ESRC studentship-holders who have questions or queries about their awards should first read the ESRC’s guidance which is available from the ESRC website: <https://esrc.ukri.org/skills-and-careers/doctoral-training/esrc-students/>

Further information on the award payments (including sick leave and maternity leave payments) can be found in the ESRC Postgraduate Funding Guide:

<https://esrc.ukri.org/skills-and-careers/doctoral-training/prospective-students/postgraduate-funding-guide/>

Forms and information regarding applying for SWDTP funds (Such as Overseas Fieldwork and Institutional Visits) and placement enquiries can be found on the SWDTP website: [http://www.swdtp.ac.uk/](http://www.swdtp.ac.uk)

Information around the requirements for RTSG and expenses payments can be found in the SWDTP handbook: <http://www.swdtp.ac.uk/information-for-current-students/>.

## Contacts

* For University of Bristol related queries, including Je-S:

*Please contact the Faculty Education Team at* [*fssl-pgr@bristol.ac.uk*](mailto:fssl-pgr@bristol.ac.uk)

* ESRC regulatory enquiries:

*Please contact the SWDTP Hub at* [*fssl-pgr@bristol.ac.uk*](mailto:fssl-pgr@bristol.ac.uk)

* For payment enquiries:

Please contact [*fssl-pgr@bristol.ac.uk*](mailto:fssl-pgr@bristol.ac.uk)

**Please note:** the ESRC does not permit studentship-holders to contact the ESRC directly.

## Satisfactory Academic Progress

The ESRC and the University expect ESRC studentship-holders to make excellent progress in their 1 + 3 (MRes + PhD) programme. The University’s Annual Progress Monitoring and Progression Review procedures are designed to monitor the performance of research students. **Please note that continuation on an ESRC studentship is subject to satisfactory academic progress**.

Any issues which interrupt a student’s progress, such as suspension, maternity leave, long-term illness or failure to make progress, MUST be reported to the Faculty immediately so that appropriate advice can be given.

## Changes to Studentships Which Impact on Funding or Submission Dates

Any change to an ESRC studentship, which impacts on funding, must be approved by the ESRC **in advance**. Applications for Extension or Suspension should be submitted as normal via your School. It is the student’s responsibility to speak to the SWDTP before submitting a request. Email: [*fssl-pgr@bristol.ac.uk*](mailto:fssl-pgr@bristol.ac.uk)

In the case of suspensions, stipend payments will be suspended for the period of suspension of studies.

Examples, where approval must be sought in advance, include:

* Extensions and Suspensions of study
* Delays in progression from the MRes/MSc (1+3) to the PhD (+3)
* Maternity leave (and adoption leave)

## Payment of Awards

The University’s Student Funding Office will issue cheques and BACS payments to ESRC studentship-holders and deals with any payment queries. Each ESRC studentship-holder has a finance account against which is recorded additional expenditure e.g. RTSG, overseas fieldwork expenses.

Further details about the RTSG can be found at: <https://www.swdtp.ac.uk/funding-for-current-students/>

# Marking and Assessment Criteria

**Level 6 Marking and Assessment Criteria (Third / Final Year)**

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| 1st (70+) | For essay-based subjects:     * Excellent comprehension of the implications of the question and critical understanding of the theoretical & methodological issues. * A critical, analytical, and sophisticated argument that is logically structured and well-supported. * Evidence of independent thought and ability to ‘see beyond the question’. * Evidence of reading widely beyond the prescribed reading list and creative use of evidence to enhance the overall argument. * Extremely well presented: minimal grammatical or spelling errors; written in a fluent and engaging style; exemplary referencing and bibliographic formatting. * An excellent level of skill in problem solving, which demonstrates powers of critical analysis (NB: where problem solving is an important key learning outcome).     For mathematical subjects:     * Perfect, or near-perfect answers to a high proportion of the parts of the questions attempted, and a firm grasp of the central issues covered. * Answers are presented fluently and logically. * Explanations, where required, show evidence of an excellent comprehension of the material. * Interpretations, where required, often display a strong critical appreciation of the material. * Excellent use of common standard mathematical notation and conventions. |
| 2:1 (60–69) | For essay-based subjects:     * Very good comprehension of the implications of the question and fairly extensive and accurate knowledge and understanding. * Very good awareness of underlying theoretical and methodological issues, though not always displaying an understanding of how they link to the question. * A generally critical, analytical argument, which shows attempts at independent thinking and is sensibly structured and generally well-supported. * Clear and generally critical knowledge of relevant literature; use of works beyond the prescribed reading list; demonstrating the ability to be selective in the range of material used, and the capacity to synthesise rather than describe. * Very well presented: no significant grammatical or spelling errors; written clearly and concisely; fairly consistent referencing and bibliographic formatting. * A very good ability to apply principles effectively in the solution of factual problems and to deal with problems in an orderly manner, with realism and discrimination (NB: where problem solving is an important key learning outcome).     For mathematical subjects:     * A very good knowledge of much of the important material, possibly excellent in places, but with a limited account of some significant topics, or with some omissions/misunderstandings. * There is a good fluency and logical structure to the answers. * Explanations, where required, show evidence of good comprehension of the material though there may be some limited understanding of some areas. * Interpretations, where required, show some evidence of a critical appreciation of the material. * Good use of common standard mathematical notation and conventions. |
| 2:2 (50–59) | For essay-based subjects:   * Generally clear and accurate knowledge, though there may be some errors and/or gaps and some awareness of underlying theoretical/methodological issues with little understanding of how they relate to the question. * Some attempt at analysis but a tendency to be descriptive rather than critical. * Tendency to assert/state opinion rather than argue on the basis of reason and evidence; structure may not be entirely clear or logical. * Good attempt to go beyond or criticise the ‘essential reading’ for the unit; but displaying limited capacity to discern between relevant and non-relevant material. * Adequately presented: writing style conveys meaning but is sometimes awkward; some significant grammatical and spelling errors; inconsistent referencing but generally accurate bibliography. * A fairly efficient attempt at solving problems, but a tendency to overlook one or two points (NB: where problem solving is an important key learning outcome).     For mathematical subjects:     * A reasonably good knowledge of several important topics, possibly showing some good understanding in places, but with a limited account of some significant topics, or with some significant omissions/misunderstandings. * There is a discernible fluency and logical structure to the much of the answers. * Explanations, where required, show evidence of good comprehension of the material though there may be some limited understanding of some areas. * Interpretations, where required, are generally standard but may in parts show some evidence of a critical appreciation of the material. * Limited use of common standard mathematical notation and conventions. |
| 3rd (40–49) | For essay-based subjects:   * Limited knowledge and understanding with significant errors and omissions and generally ignorant or confused awareness of key theoretical/ methodological issues. * Largely misses the point of the question, asserts rather than argues a case; underdeveloped or chaotic structure; evidence mentioned but used inappropriately or incorrectly. * Very little attempt at analysis or synthesis, tending towards excessive description. * Limited, uncritical, and generally confused account of a narrow range of sources * Poorly presented: not always easy to follow; frequent grammatical and spelling errors; limited attempt at providing references (e.g., only referencing direct quotations) and containing bibliographic omissions. * Identifies relevant areas for focusing problem solving but makes significant mistakes in solutions indicative of either a lack of discrimination or an understanding of a principle (NB: where problem solving is an important key learning outcome).     For mathematical subjects:     * A reasonable spread of relevant knowledge but showing a good grasp of only a minority of the material. Some questions may be answered well, others will have major omissions or misunderstandings. Some questions may not be attempted at all. * There is some evidence of a logical structure though it is not evident throughout. * Explanations, where required, are short and display a limited understanding of the material. Some explanations are not given. * Interpretations, where required, are poor and do not show critical appreciation of the material. * Very limited use of common standard mathematical notation and conventions. |
| Marginal  Fail  (35–39) | For essay-based subjects:   * Unsatisfactory level of knowledge and understanding of subject; limited or no understanding of theoretical/methodological issues. * Very little comprehension of the implications of the question and lacking a coherent structure. * Lacking any attempt at analysis and critical engagement with issues, based on description or opinion. * Little use of sources and what is used reflects a very narrow range or are irrelevant and/or misunderstood. * Unsatisfactory presentation: difficult to follow; very limited attempt at providing references (e.g., only referencing direct quotations) and containing bibliographic omissions. * Some identification of relevant areas for focusing problem solving but makes significant mistakes in solutions indicative of either a lack of discrimination or an understanding of a principle (NB: where problem solving is an important key learning outcome).     For mathematical subjects:   * Considerable deficiencies, or very partial attempts at questions, across large parts of the topics set, but with some relevant material at places. * There is little evidence of a logical structure to the answers. * Explanations, where required, are poor or missing. * Interpretations, where required, are weak or missing and show almost no critical appreciation of the material. * Limited or no use of common standard mathematical notation and conventions. |
| Outright  Fail  (0–34) | For essay-based subjects:     * Very limited, and seriously flawed, knowledge and understanding. * No comprehension of the implications of the question and no attempt to provide a structure. * No attempt at analysis. * Limited, uncritical, and generally confused account of a very narrow range of sources. * Very poorly presented: lacking any coherence, significant problems with spelling and grammar, missing or no references and containing bibliographic omissions. * Little awareness of the points in a problem (NB: where problem solving is an important key learning outcome).     For mathematical subjects:   * For mathematical subjects, substantial deficiencies, or no attempt, across large parts of the topics set, but with a little relevant material at places. * There is little or no logical structure to the answers. * Explanations, where required, are poor or missing. * Interpretations, where required, are missing or wrong and show no critical appreciation of the material. * Very limited or no use of common standard mathematical notation and conventions. |

**Level 5 Marking and Assessment Criteria (Second Year)**

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| 1st (70+) | For essay-based subjects:     * Excellent knowledge and understanding of the subject and understanding of theoretical & methodological issues. * A coherent argument that is logically structured and supported by evidence. * Demonstrates a capacity for intellectual initiative/ independent thought and an ability to engage with the material critically. * Use of appropriate material from a range of sources extending beyond the reading list * High quality organisation and style of presentation (including referencing); minimal grammatical or spelling errors; written in a fluent and engaging style. * A very high level of skill in problem solving, which demonstrates powers of critical analysis (NB: where problem solving is an important key learning outcome).     For mathematical subjects:     * Perfect, or near-perfect answers to a high proportion of the parts of the questions attempted, and a firm grasp of the central issues covered. * Answers are presented fluently and logically. * Explanations, where required, show evidence of an excellent comprehension of the material. * Interpretations, where required, often display a strong critical appreciation of the material. * Excellent use of common standard mathematical notation and conventions. |
| 2:1 (60–69) | For essay-based subjects:     * Very good knowledge and understanding of the subject and displays awareness of underlying theoretical and methodological issues. * A generally critical, analytical argument that is reasonably well structured and well-supported. * Some critical capacity to see the implications of the question, though not able to ‘see beyond the question’ enough to develop an independent approach. * Some critical knowledge of relevant literature; use of works beyond the prescribed reading list; demonstrating some ability to be selective in the range of material used and to synthesise rather than describe. * Well presented: no significant grammatical or spelling errors; written clearly and concisely; fairly consistent referencing and bibliographic formatting. * A very good ability to apply principles effectively in the solution of factual problems and to deal with problems in an orderly manner, with realism and discrimination (NB: where problem solving is an important key learning outcome).     For mathematical subjects:     * A very good knowledge of much of the important material, possibly excellent in places, but with a limited account of some significant topics, or with some omissions/misunderstandings. * There is a good fluency and logical structure to most of the answers. * Explanations, where required, show evidence of good comprehension of the material though there may be some limited understanding of some areas. * Interpretations, where required, show some evidence of a critical appreciation of the material. * Some good use of common standard mathematical notation and conventions. |
| 2:2 (50–59) | For essay-based subjects:     * Good comprehension of the subject, though there may be some errors and/or gaps, and some awareness of underlying theoretical/methodological issues with little understanding of how they relate to the question. * Capacity for argument is limited with a tendency to assert/state opinion rather than argue on the basis of reason and evidence; structure may not be evident. * Tendency to be descriptive rather than critical, but some attempt at analysis. * Some attempt to go beyond or criticise the ‘essential reading’ for the unit; displaying limited capacity to discern between relevant and non-relevant material. * Adequately presented: writing style conveys meaning but is sometimes awkward; some significant grammatical and spelling errors; inconsistent referencing but generally accurate bibliography. * An efficient attempt at solving problems, but a tendency to overlook a number of points (NB: where problem solving is an important key learning outcome).     For mathematical subjects:     * A reasonably good knowledge of several important topics, possibly showing some good understanding in places, but with a limited account of some significant topics, or with some significant omissions/misunderstandings. * There is fluency and logical structure to some of the answers. * Explanations, where required, show evidence of good comprehension of the material though with limited understanding in some areas. * Interpretations, where required, are generally standard but may in parts show some evidence of a critical appreciation of the material. * Limited use of common standard mathematical notation and conventions. |
| 3rd (40–49) | For essay-based subjects:     * Limited knowledge and understanding with significant errors and omissions and generally ignorant or confused awareness of key theoretical/ methodological issues. * Largely misses the point of the question, asserts rather than argues a case; underdeveloped or chaotic structure; evidence mentioned but used inappropriately or incorrectly. * Very little attempt at analysis or synthesis, tending towards excessive description. * Limited, uncritical, and generally confused account of a narrow range of sources * Satisfactorily presented: but not always easy to follow; frequent grammatical and spelling errors; limited attempt at providing references (e.g., only referencing direct quotations) and containing bibliographic omissions. * Attempts to Identify relevant areas for focusing problem solving but makes significant mistakes in solutions indicative of either a lack of discrimination or an understanding of a principle (NB: where problem solving is an important key learning outcome).     For mathematical subjects:     * A reasonable spread of relevant knowledge but showing a good grasp of only a minority of the material. Some questions may be answered well, others will have major omissions or misunderstandings. Some questions may not be attempted at all. * There may be some evidence of a logical structure to the answers in some areas. * Explanations, where required, are short and display a limited understanding of the material. Some explanations are not given. * Interpretations, where required, are poor and do not show critical appreciation of the material. * Very limited use of common standard mathematical notation and conventions. |
| Marginal  Fail  (35–39) | For essay-based subjects:     * Shows very limited understanding and knowledge of the subject and/or misses the point of the question. * Incoherent or illogical structure; evidence used inappropriately or incorrectly. * Unsatisfactory analytical skills. * Limited, uncritical, and generally confused account of a very narrow range of sources. * Unsatisfactory presentation e.g., not always easy to follow; frequent grammatical and spelling errors and limited or no attempt at providing references and containing bibliographic omissions. * Limited attempt to Identify relevant areas for focusing problem solving but makes significant mistakes in solutions indicative of either a lack of discrimination or an understanding of a principle (NB: where problem solving is an important key learning outcome).     For mathematical subjects:   * Considerable deficiencies, or very partial attempts at questions, across large parts of the topics set, but with some relevant material at places. * There is little evidence of a logical structure to the answers. * Explanations, where required, are poor or missing. * Interpretations, where required, are weak or missing and show almost no critical appreciation of the material. * Limited or no use of common standard mathematical notation and conventions. |
| Outright  Fail  (0–34) | For essay-based subjects:     * Shows little or no knowledge and understanding of the subject, no awareness of key theoretical/ methodological issues and/or fails to address the question. * Unsuccessful or no attempt to construct an argument and an incoherent or illogical structure; evidence used inappropriately or incorrectly. * Very poor analytical skills. * Limited, uncritical, and generally confused account of a very narrow range of sources. * Very poor quality of presentation and limited or no attempt at providing references and containing bibliographic omissions. * Overlooks most of the points in a problem (NB: where problem solving is an important key learning outcome).     For mathematical subjects:   * Substantial deficiencies, or no attempt, across large parts of the topics set, but with a little relevant material at places. * There is little or no logical structure to the answers. * Explanations, where required, are poor or missing. * Interpretations, where required, are missing or wrong and show no critical appreciation of the material. * Very limited or no use of common standard mathematical notation and conventions. |

**Level 4 Marking and Assessment Criteria (First Year)**

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| 1st (70+) 1st) | * Excellent knowledge and understanding of the subject, as well as a recognition of alternative perspectives and viewpoints. * Uses an argument that is logically structured and supported by evidence. * Engages with the material critically and demonstrates some capacity for intellectual initiative/ independent thought. * Incorporates one or two sources from beyond the reading list. * High quality organisation and style of presentation (including referencing) with few grammatical or spelling errors and attention to writing style. * A high level of skill in problem solving, which demonstrates powers of critical analysis (NB: where problem solving is an important key learning outcome).     For mathematical subjects:     * Perfect, or near-perfect answers to a considerable proportion of the parts of the questions attempted, and a firm grasp of the central issues covered. * Answers are largely presented fluently and logically. * In most questions explanations, where required, show evidence of an excellent comprehension of the material. * Interpretations, where required, often display a strong critical appreciation of the material. * Evidence of ability to use common standard mathematical notation and conventions. |
| 2:1 (60–69) | * Good knowledge and understanding of subject and some recognition of other viewpoints and perspectives. * Evidence of an argument that is logically structured, but it may not be consistently developed. * Some evidence of critical thinking in places. * Some attempt to go beyond or criticise the ‘essential reading’. * Presentation showing promise: effective writing style but some grammatical and spelling errors; referencing and bibliographic formatting satisfactory on the whole. * A satisfactory ability to apply principles effectively in the solution of factual problems and to deal with problems in an orderly manner, with realism and discrimination (NB: where problem solving is an important key learning outcome).     For mathematical subjects:     * A very good knowledge of much of the important material, possibly excellent in places, but with a limited account of some significant topics, or with some omissions/misunderstandings. * There is a good fluency and logical structure to many answers. * Explanations, where required, show evidence of good comprehension of the material though there may be some limited understanding of some areas. * Interpretations, where required, show some evidence of a critical appreciation of the material. * Some evidence of the use of common standard mathematical notation and conventions. |
| 2:2 (50–59) | * Reasonable knowledge and understanding of subject and an ability to answer the question, but there may be some gaps. * A tendency to assert/state opinion rather than argue on the basis of reason and evidence; structure may not be entirely clear or logical. * Some attempt at analysis but a tendency to be descriptive rather than critical. * Little attempt to go beyond or criticise the ‘essential reading’ for the unit; displaying limited capacity to discern between relevant and non-relevant material. * Satisfactory presentation: writing style conveys meaning but is sometimes clumsy; some significant grammatical and spelling errors; inconsistent referencing but generally accurate bibliography. * Some attempt at solving problems, but a tendency to overlook a number of points (NB: where problem solving is an important key learning outcome).     For mathematical subjects:     * A reasonably good knowledge of several important topics, possibly showing some good understanding in places, but with a limited account of some significant topics, or with some significant omissions/misunderstandings. * There is evidence of some fluency and logical structure in some questions. * Explanations, where required, show evidence of good comprehension of the material though with limited understanding in some areas. * Interpretations, where required, are generally standard but may in parts show some evidence of a critical appreciation of the material. * Limited use of common standard mathematical notation and conventions. |
| 3rd (40–49) | * Shows some knowledge and understanding of the subject and some awareness of key theoretical/ methodological issues but misses the point of the question. * Demonstrates little/no ability to construct an argument and an underdeveloped or chaotic structure with only minimal attempt to use evidence. * Limited, uncritical, and generally confused account of a narrow range of sources. * Poorly presented: writing style unclear with significant grammatical and spelling errors; limited attempt at providing references (e.g., only referencing direct quotations) and containing bibliographic omissions. * Some awareness of relevant areas for focusing problem solving but makes significant mistakes in solutions indicative of either a lack of discrimination or an understanding of a principle (NB: where problem solving is an important key learning outcome).     For mathematical subjects:   * A reasonable spread of relevant knowledge but showing a good grasp of only a minority of the material. Some questions may be answered well, others will have major omissions or misunderstandings. Some questions may not be attempted at all. * There may be some evidence of a logical structure to the answers in some areas, but this is limited. * Explanations, where required, are short and display a limited understanding of the material. Some explanations are not given. * Interpretations, where required, are poor and do not show critical appreciation of the material. * Very limited use of common standard mathematical notation and conventions. |
| Marginal Fail  (35–39) | * Shows limited understanding and knowledge of the subject and omits significant parts of the question. * Little or no argument and incoherent or illogical structure; evidence used inappropriately or incorrectly. * Inadequate use of analytical skills and tendency to assert opinion rather than engage in critique. * Some evidence of reading but little comprehension * Inadequate presentation: e.g., not always easy to follow; frequent grammatical and spelling errors; some attempt to provide references but inconsistent and containing bibliographic omissions. * Little or no awareness of relevant areas for focusing problem solving and makes significant mistakes in solutions indicative of either a lack of discrimination or an understanding of a principle (NB: where problem solving is an important key learning outcome).     For mathematical subjects:   * Considerable deficiencies, or very partial attempts at questions, across large parts of the topics set, but with some relevant material at places. * There is little evidence of a logical structure to the answers. * Explanations, where required, are poor or missing. * Interpretations, where required, are weak or missing and show almost no critical appreciation of the material. * Limited or no use of common standard mathematical notation and conventions. |
| Outright Fail  (0–34) | * Very limited, and seriously flawed, knowledge and understanding; little understanding of the question or fails to address the question entirely. * No attempt to construct an argument and incoherent or illogical structure. * No evidence of analytical skill. * Uncritical and generally confused account of a very narrow range of sources. * Very poor presentation: poor writing style; significant errors in spelling and grammar with limited or no attempt at providing references and containing bibliographic omissions. * Misses most of the points in a problem (NB: where problem solving is an important key learning outcome).     For mathematical subjects:   * Substantial deficiencies, or no attempt, across large parts of the topics set, but with a little relevant material at places. * There is little or no logical structure to the answers. * Explanations, where required, are poor or missing. * Interpretations, where required, are missing or wrong and show no critical appreciation of the material. * Very limited or no use of common standard mathematical notation and conventions. |

## Model Answers to Assessments

Schools in SSL do not routinely provide model answers to examinations or other assessments. There are various reasons for this, including:

1. In essay subjects in particular, there is never a “correct” or “model” answer. We are looking for quality of explanation, prioritisation, selectivity, and a critical approach - not comprehensiveness. Good answers should display evidence of wide-ranging reading and study, and this will usually involve some degree of independent specialisation. For this reason, good answers are often quite different from each other.
2. We discourage an overly assessment-based focus to study because it invites question-spotting and “surface learning” (learning for the exam). Instead, we encourage you to learn material deeply so that you are able to apply that learning in a variety of contexts you may not have encountered before. This ability to use your learning in different ways is highly valued by employers as well as examiners.
3. We try to develop our units to keep them current. Past questions are not necessarily a good guide to the examination or the content covered in future exams.
4. In mathematical subjects, we are interested in your ability to use the techniques that are covered in the unit. We give marks for this even if there are inaccuracies in your answer. Your understanding of method, and explanation of it, is usually more important than the answer to the particular question because it shows us that you can apply the material in a variety of contexts.

We recognise the importance of practising assessments before examinations or submission. For this reason, we aim to provide you with relevant practice through coursework assessments on which you will receive feedback.

## Moderation and Treatment of Marks

The university regulations on moderation and treatment of marks is available at:

[16: Moderation and treatment of marks | Academic Quality and Policy Office | University of Bristol](https://www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/assessment/regulations-and-code-of-practice-for-taught-programmes/treatment-marks/)

## Policy on Penalties for Exceeding Size Limits for Summative Assessments (UG)

## Introduction

For every piece of coursework you do, your School will tell you whether there is a size limit, how this is measured and whether penalties will be imposed if you exceed this limit. This document sets out the way we do this in the Faculty of Social Sciences and Law, and the penalties that can be imposed for exceeding limits. Any specific information provided with the assignment will take precedence over this general policy, but in the absence of any further information, you should assume that this policy holds.

The penalties specified below relate to the 101 point marking scale (0% - 100%). If your school uses the 21 point marking scale, the mark for the assignment will be converted to the 101 point scale first and the penalty will be applied to the converted score. The final mark awarded may not necessarily fit on the 21 point marking scale.

## Assessments measured by word count

Where an assessment is measured by word count, penalties will apply to pieces of work where the word-count is higher than the word-limit. When the assessment is set, the word-limit will be specified and how the word-limit is defined will be explained. This will include what is counted and what is not counted in the word count, for example

* Whether footnotes/endnotes count within the word-count
* Whether direct quotations count within the word-count
* Whether bibliographies count within the word-count
* Whether cover-sheets count within the word-count

If this information is not provided with the assignment, you should assume that all text excluding bibliography will be counted. Your school may ask you to put the total word count on the assessment when you submit it. Your school may check word counts. If you are found to have put an inaccurate word count on the submission, you may be penalised over and above the penalties outlined below.

If you exceed the word count, the whole assessment will normally be marked to provide an “intellectual” mark, but a deduction will be made according to how far over the limit your count is. The following table summarises the penalties that will be applied:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Assessment exceeds word limit by up to (percentage of maximum)** | **Penalty deducted from intellectual mark** |
| 5% | 5 marks |
| 10% | 10 marks |
| 15% | 15 marks |
| 20% | 20 marks |
| 25% | 30 marks |
| More than 25% | Mark of zero applied, and assessment **not marked**. |

**Example 1:** If an essay had a maximum word-length of 3,000 words, and a student handed in a piece of work of 3,100 words, as this is above the word limit, but below the 5% excess, (3,150 words), the intellectual mark would be reduced by 5 marks. Thus, if the intellectual mark had been 60, you would be awarded a mark of 55.

**Example 2**: If a report had a maximum word-length of 1,000 words, and a student handed in a piece of work of 1,160 words, this is between 15% and 20% over the word limit (between 1,150 words and 1,200 words), the intellectual mark would be reduced by 20 marks. Thus, if the intellectual mark had been 60, you would be awarded a mark of 40.

## Assessments measured by number of pages

Where an assessment is measured by page length, penalties will apply to pieces of work where too many pages are submitted. When the assessment is set, the page limit will be specified and how you should format the assessment will be explained. In the absence of any specific instructions on the assignment, you should assume:

* The size of a page is one side of A4
* The assignment should be submitted in Arial, Calibri or Times at 12-point in a single column
* The minimum size of margins are is 2cm top and bottom, and 3cm left and righti
* Line spacing is 1.5 lines
* Cover-sheets, bibliographies/reference lists do not count towards the page count but, footnotes and endnotes will count..

If you exceed the page limit, the whole assessment will normally be marked to provide an “intellectual” mark, but a deduction will be made according to how far over the limit you have gone. The following table summarises the penalties that will be applied:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Number of part (ie ‘up to’) or complete pages over the limit** |  |
| 1 | 5 marks |
| 2 | 12 marks |
| 3 | 20 marks |
| More than 3 | Mark of zero applied, and assessment **not marked** |

# Data Protection

The University needs to process student personal data to function effectively as an educational institution and to provide students with the support they require while undertaking their studies.

Personal data is processed for a variety of reasons (as set out on the Student Fair Processing Notice webpage - <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/secretary/data-protection/policy/students-processing-notice/>) and all such personal data shall be collected and held per the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.