

LUBS Generic Assessment Criteria

Headline summary

- Your final mark and feedback may reflect a balance of strengths and areas for improvement across the different assessment criteria.
- The relative importance of each criterion will vary according to the type of assignment. For example, a skills-based assessment may place emphasis on different criteria from a conceptual assignment, while analysis is typically weighted more heavily in the final year. Your module leader should explain which criteria are most important for each assessment.
- Expectations increase at each level as subjects become more complex. A technique or argument that impresses markers in the first year may be considered mid-range in the second year and lower-range in the final year. Terms such as 'analysing and forming a coherent argument' therefore appear throughout the criteria but should be understood in the context of the level at which you are studying. If any feedback is unclear, ask your module leader for clarification or speak to your personal tutor.

What do the grades mean?

UNDERGRADUATE (UG): levels 1, 2 and 3-4	POSTGRADUATE TAUGHT MASTERS (PGT) level 5	APPRENTICESHIP level 7
70% and above is a first class mark (excellent)	70% and above is a pass with distinction (excellent)	70% and above is a pass with distinction (excellent)
60-69% is an upper second (2.i) (good to very good)	60-69% is a pass with merit (good to very good)	60-69% is a pass with merit (good to very good)
50-59% is a lower second (2.2) (reasonable, room to improve)	50-59% is acceptable to pass	50-59% is acceptable to pass
40-49% is a third class mark, but still a pass for UG students. (acceptable to pass; significant scope to improve)	49% and below is a fail mark, not meeting Masters standards. 50 is the Masters pass mark.	49% and below is a fail mark, not meeting Masters standards. 50 is the Masters pass mark.
39% or below indicate a fail. 40 is the minimum pass mark for UG.		

Where to get help to improve

The LUBS criteria reflect guidance provided by the University Library's academic skills team, which offers resources to support all aspects of your academic work. You can also speak to your module leader or personal tutor about how to develop your work and improve your marks.

<https://library.leeds.ac.uk/info/1400/study-and-research-support>

<https://library.leeds.ac.uk/info/1401/academic-skills/105/critical-thinking/2>

<https://library.leeds.ac.uk/downloads/download/143/feedback-action-plan-template>

Note: The terms 'criticality' and 'critical thinking' are widely used in academic contexts. At LUBS, we more commonly use 'evaluation' or 'analysis' to describe the same skills. Because 'critical' has more than one meaning in English, it can be confusing. In an academic context, it refers to careful, precise evaluation or analysis.

Generic Assessment Criteria: full descriptions

LUBS LEVEL 1 GENERIC ASSESSMENT CRITERIA (FHEQ LEVEL 4)

Level 1 indicative grade	Understanding and Context (includes range and depth of understanding, and evaluation and interpretation of concepts)	Research and referencing (includes breadth, relevance and quality of the data/literature/information you've brought in to support your points, and accurate referencing)	Analysis, Evaluation, Criticality, Argument (includes application of technique, and/or interpretation of qualitative and quantitative data, and synthesis of evidence)	Structure, coherence, style (includes organisation [focus/structure], clarity, and adherence to format [word count, any special instructions])
Over 85 high first; exceptional	You understand key foundational topics perfectly, are aware of current problems and ideas in the subject, and have come up with original insights.	Very wide range of high quality, relevant information from research based sources, accurately cited and referenced Displays sound judgement in identifying high quality sources widely beyond the reading list, which have been ably used and interpreted to support coherent argument around the question.	You've applied relevant techniques to evaluate and effectively interpret academic material on the foundational principles – whether this is data (qualitative or quantitative) or academic reading. You have identified relevant arguments, limitations and gaps and discussed their implications.	Very high quality, clear, balanced and persuasive argument; strong focus on relevant issues; logical structure; valid and reflective conclusions; within wordcount.
70-85 first; excellent	You understand key foundational topics very well, are aware of current problems and ideas in the subject.	Wide range of high quality, relevant information from research based sources. Displays sound judgement in identifying high quality sources beyond the reading list, which have been used to support sound argument around the question. Well referenced and cited.	You're able to evaluate and interpret foundational principles materials effectively – whether this is data (qualitative or quantitative) or academic reading. You have identified relevant arguments and gaps and discussed them appropriately.	High quality, clear, balanced argument; well focused; logical structure; valid and reasonable conclusions; within wordcount.
60-69 2.i; good/ very good	You understand the foundational topics well, are aware of some current ideas and problems but could go further in showing a more in depth understanding.	Good range of information from research based sources. Reading makes comprehensive use of all relevant reading list sources; may also include additional research-based sources, . The reading has been used appropriately to support the question with accurate citation and referencing.	You've been able to evaluate and interpret key information competently – whether this is data (qualitative or quantitative) or academic reading. You have identified relevant arguments and gaps and discussed them appropriately.	Good quality, clear, mostly balanced argument; good focus and structure; sensible conclusions; within wordcount.
50-59 2.ii; reasonable	You understand the foundational topics to a reasonable extent, and have alluded to some relevant ideas, but there is considerable scope to demonstrate more in depth understanding.	Reasonable range of information from the module reading list, but some relevant reading has been missed. Some non-academic sources included. An attempt has been made to use the reading to appropriately to support the question, but is not completely consistent; citation and referencing is present but inaccurate and/or inconsistent.	You've made an attempt to evaluate and interpret information – whether this is data (qualitative or quantitative) or academic reading, but your analysis contains mistakes, or your analysis is too simple. You have alluded to arguments in the literature but not explored them enough.	A reasonable attempt at a balanced argument; structure is there but not completely organised; arguments brought to some conclusion; within wordcount or only a few words over.
40-49 third; acceptable	You understand some parts of the foundational topics, but have used a descriptive manner with	Limited reading, either from the provided reading list or from non-academic sources. The reading is appropriate to the topic but has not been integrated very well; citation	You have described or reported information, rather than evaluating and interpreting it – whether this is data (qualitative or quantitative) or academic	Not enough, or unbalanced argument; structure is not organised; descriptive conclusion; within

	some errors) so need a more precise and in-depth understanding.	and referencing is present but inaccurate and/or inconsistent.	reading. You haven't spotted arguments in the literature, or haven't mentioned them.	wordcount or only a few words over.
20-39 fail	You have attempted to report the topic, but in a descriptive manner and/or with too many errors to pass as having understood it.	Limited reading, mostly or all from non-academic sources, and/or items not relevant to the question. Reading has not been adequately linked to the topic or used to support the question; citation and referencing is absent or very inaccurate and/or inconsistent.	You have reported information, rather than evaluating and interpreting it, and reported it poorly or with errors – whether this is data (qualitative or quantitative) or academic reading.	No balanced argument; structure is absent or very disorganised; descriptive or erroneous conclusion; potentially over wordcount.
0-19 No serious attempt	You haven't submitted, or have submitted something so off topic or full of errors that it cannot be marked as an attempt at the question.	No reading from the list or from any academic sources, or, sources listed that are not real or weren't consulted; no referencing or citation.	You haven't submitted, or, haven't included any data or literature.	No attempt at argument or organisation, wordcount not relevant.

LUBS LEVEL 2 GENERIC ASSESSMENT CRITERIA (FHEQ LEVEL 5)

Level 2 indicative grade	Understanding and Context (includes range and depth of understanding, and evaluation and interpretation of concepts)	Research and referencing (includes breadth, relevance and quality of the data/literature/information you've brought in to support your points, and accurate referencing)	Analysis, Evaluation, Criticality, Argument (includes application of technique, and/or interpretation of qualitative and quantitative data, and synthesis of evidence)	Structure, coherence, style (includes organisation [focus/structure], clarity, and adherence to format [word count, any special instructions])
Over 85 high first; exceptional	You understand appropriate principles and concepts perfectly, are aware of current problems and ideas in the subject, and have come up with original, professional level insights.	Very wide range of high quality, relevant information from research based sources, accurately cited and referenced Displays sound judgement in identifying high quality sources widely beyond the reading list, which have been ably used and interpreted to support coherent argument around the question.	You've applied relevant techniques to evaluate and interpret material effectively – whether this is data (qualitative or quantitative) or academic reading. You have identified relevant arguments, limitations and gaps and discussed their implications, and are aware of differing interpretations.	Very high quality, clear, balanced and persuasive argument; strong focus on relevant issues; logical structure; valid and reflective conclusions; within wordcount.
70-85 first; excellent	You understand principles and concepts very well, are aware of current problems and ideas in the subject.	Wide range of high quality, relevant information from research based sources. Displays sound judgement in identifying high quality sources beyond the reading list, which have been used to support sound argument around the question. Well referenced and cited.	You're able to evaluate and interpret material effectively – whether this is data (qualitative or quantitative) or academic reading. You have identified relevant arguments and gaps and discussed them appropriately.	High quality, clear, balanced argument; well focussed; logical structure; valid and reasonable conclusions; within wordcount.
60-69 2.i; good/ very good	You understand principles and concepts well, are aware of some current ideas and problems related to the topic, but could demonstrate more depth in your understanding.	Good range of information from research based sources. Reading makes comprehensive use of all relevant reading list sources; may also include additional research-based sources. . The reading has been used appropriately to support the question with accurate citation and referencing.	You've evaluated and interpreted material well – whether this is data (qualitative or quantitative) or academic reading. You have identified and discussed some relevant arguments and gaps.	Good quality, clear, mostly balanced argument; good focus and structure; sensible conclusions; within wordcount.
50-59 2.ii; reasonable	You understand principles and concepts to a reasonable extent, and have alluded to some relevant ideas but there is considerable scope for more depth.	Reasonable range of information from the module reading list, but some relevant reading has been missed. Some non-academic sources included. An attempt has been made to use the reading to appropriately to support the question, but is not completely consistent; citation and referencing is present but inaccurate and/or inconsistent.	You've made an attempt to evaluate and interpret information – whether this is data (qualitative or quantitative) or academic reading, but your analysis contains mistakes, or your analysis is too simple. You have alluded to comparisons or gaps in the literature but not explored them enough.	A reasonable attempt at a balanced argument; structure is there but not completely organised; arguments brought to some conclusion; within wordcount or only a few words over.
40-49 third; acceptable	You understand some concepts and principles, but have reported it in a descriptive manner (with some errors) so a	Limited reading, either from the provided reading list or from non-academic sources. The reading is appropriate to the topic but has not been integrated very well; citation and referencing is present but	You have described or reported information, rather than evaluating and interpreting it – whether this is data (qualitative or quantitative) or academic reading. You haven't	Not enough, or unbalanced argument; structure is not organised; descriptive conclusion; within wordcount or only a few words over.

	more precise and in depth understanding is needed.	inaccurate and/or inconsistent.	spotted arguments or gaps in the literature, or haven't mentioned them.	
20-39 (fail)	You have attempted to report the topic, but in a descriptive manner and/or with too many errors to pass as having understood it.	Limited reading, mostly or all from non-academic sources, and/or items not relevant to the question. Reading has not been adequately linked to the topic or used to support the question; citation and referencing is absent or very inaccurate and/or inconsistent.	You have reported information, rather than evaluating and interpreting it, and reported it poorly or with errors – whether this is data (qualitative or quantitative) or academic reading.	No balanced argument; structure is absent or very disorganised; descriptive or erroneous conclusion; potentially over wordcount.
0-19 No serious attempt	You haven't submitted, or have submitted something so off topic or full of errors that it cannot be marked as an attempt at the question.	No reading from the list or from any academic sources, or, sources listed that are not real or weren't consulted; no referencing or citation.	You haven't submitted, or, haven't included any data or literature.	No attempt at argument or organisation, wordcount not relevant.

LUBS FINAL-YEAR UNDERGRADUATE GENERIC ASSESSMENT CRITERIA (FHEQ LEVEL 6)

	Understanding and Context (includes range and depth of understanding, and evaluation and interpretation of concepts)	Research and referencing (includes breadth, relevance and quality of the data/literature/information you've brought in to support your points, and accurate referencing)	Analysis, Evaluation, Criticality, Argument (includes application of technique, and/or interpretation of qualitative and quantitative data, and synthesis of evidence)	Structure, coherence, style (includes organisation [focus/structure], clarity, and adherence to format [word count, any special instructions])
Level 3/4 indicative grade				
Over 85 high first; exceptional	You understand relevant debates perfectly, are aware of current complexities in the subject, and have come up with original, professional level insights.	Very wide range of high quality, relevant information from research based sources, accurately cited and referenced Displays sound judgement in identifying high quality sources widely beyond the reading list, which have been seamlessly synthesised to support coherent argument around the question.	You've shown exceptional conceptual understanding and are able to sustain a nuanced arguments in the topics. You have identified relevant ambiguities, limitations and gaps and discussed their implications, and are aware of differing interpretations.	Very high quality, clear, balanced and persuasive argument; strong focus on relevant issues; logical structure; valid and reflective conclusions; within wordcount.
70-85 first; excellent	You understand the debates and complexities very well, are aware of current problems and ideas in the subject.	Wide range of high quality, relevant information from research based sources. Displays sound judgement in identifying high quality sources beyond the reading list, which have been synthesised to support sound argument around the question. Well referenced and cited.	You demonstrate excellent conceptual understanding and are able to discuss sophisticated arguments in the topic. You have identified relevant limitations and gaps and discussed them appropriately.	High quality, clear, balanced argument; well focussed; logical structure; valid and reasonable conclusions; within wordcount.
60-69 2.i; good/very good	You understand debates and complexities well, are aware of some current ideas and problems related to the topic, but could demonstrate more depth in your understanding.	Good range of information from research based sources. Reading makes comprehensive use of all relevant reading list sources; may also include additional research-based sources. The reading has been synthesised to some degree, to support the question with accurate citation and referencing.	You demonstrate good conceptual understanding and are able to discuss multiple arguments in the topic. You have identified limitations and gaps and discussed them appropriately.	Good quality, clear, mostly balanced argument; good focus and structure; sensible conclusions; within wordcount.
50-59 2.ii; reasonable	You understand principles and concepts to a reasonable extent, and have alluded to some relevant ideas but there is considerable scope for more depth.	Reasonable range of information from the module reading list, but some relevant reading has been missed. Some non-academic sources included. An attempt has been made to use the reading to appropriately to support the question, but is not completely consistent; citation and referencing is present but inaccurate and/or inconsistent.	You've made an attempt at conceptual discussion, but your analysis contains mistakes or your analysis is limited. You have alluded to comparisons or gaps in the literature but not explored them enough.	A reasonable attempt at a balanced argument; structure is there but not completely organised; arguments brought to some conclusion; within wordcount or only a few words over.
40-49 third; acceptable	You understand some concepts and principles, but have reported it in a descriptive	Limited reading, either from the provided reading list or from non-academic sources. The reading is appropriate to the topic but has not been integrated very well; citation	You have described or reported the concepts in the topic, sometimes with errors or omissions. You haven't spotted arguments	Not enough, or unbalanced argument; structure is not organised; descriptive conclusion; within

	manner (with some errors) so a more precise and in depth understanding is needed.	and referencing is present but inaccurate and/or inconsistent.	or gaps in the literature, or haven't mentioned them.	wordcount or only a few words over.
20-39 fail	You have attempted to report the topic, but in a descriptive manner and/or with too many errors to pass as having understood it.	Limited reading, mostly or all from non-academic sources, and/or items not relevant to the question. Reading has not been adequately linked to the topic or used to support the question; citation and referencing is absent or very inaccurate and/or inconsistent.	You have reported concepts poorly or with errors, and have not explored the limits or gaps in the subject.	No balanced argument; structure is absent or very disorganised; descriptive or erroneous conclusion; potentially over wordcount.
0-19 No serious attempt	You haven't submitted, or have submitted something so off topic or full of errors that it cannot be marked as an attempt at the question.	No reading from the list or from any academic sources, or, sources listed that are not real or weren't consulted; no referencing or citation.	You haven't submitted, or, haven't included any data or literature.	No attempt at argument or organisation, wordcount not relevant.

LUBS LEVEL 5 GENERIC ASSESSMENT CRITERIA (FHEQ LEVEL 7: MASTER'S AND APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMMES)

Level 5 or level 7 indicative grade	Understanding and Context (includes range and depth of understanding, and evaluation and interpretation of concepts)	Research and referencing (includes breadth, relevance and quality of the data/literature/information you've brought in to support your points, and accurate referencing)	Analysis, Evaluation, Criticality, Argument (includes application of technique, and/or interpretation of qualitative and quantitative data, and synthesis of evidence)	Structure, coherence, style (includes organisation [focus/structure], clarity, and adherence to format [word count, any special instructions])
Over 85 high distinction; exceptional	Complete mastery of a complex and specialist topic, analytical awareness of the latest thinking in the subject, original, giving professional level insights.	Very wide range of high quality, relevant information from research based sources, accurately cited and referenced. Displays sound judgement in identifying high quality sources widely beyond the reading list, which have been masterfully synthesised to support coherent argument around the question.	Complete mastery of analysis, evaluation and challenge of relevant arguments. Able to identify gaps and limitations and hypothesise on their implications; appreciation of nuance and ambiguity in the subject.	Exceptionally clear, balanced and persuasive argument; completely focussed on relevant issues; logical, reflective and with complete clarity; within wordcount.
70-85 distinction; excellent	Convincing mastery of a complex and specialist topic, analytical awareness of current thinking in the subject, strong interpretative insights	Wide range of high quality, relevant information from research based sources. Displays sound judgement in identifying high quality sources beyond the reading list, which have been excellently synthesised to support sound argument around the question. Well referenced and cited.	Excellent ability to evaluate and challenge relevant arguments, limitations and gaps, to discuss their implications; appreciation of nuance and ambiguity in the subject.	High quality, clear, balanced argument; well focussed; logical structure; valid and reasonable conclusions; within wordcount.
60-69 merit; good	A good level of mastery of a complex and specialist topic, good awareness of current thinking in the subject, some reasonable interpretative insights	Good range of information from research based sources. Reading makes comprehensive use of all relevant reading list sources; may also include additional research-based sources. The reading has been synthesised to support the question with accurate citation and referencing.	Demonstrates ability to analyse relevant arguments and gaps, some ability to discuss their implications; appreciation of how the subject works and its limitations.	Well organised, balanced argument; focussed; logical structure; reasonable conclusions; within wordcount.
50-59 pass; acceptable	Reasonable understanding of a complex and specialist topic, some awareness of current thinking in the subject, some interpretative insights, though these may lack depth or validity.	Reasonable range of information from the module reading list, but some relevant reading has been missed. Some non-academic sources included. An attempt has been made to use the reading to appropriately to support the question, but is not completely consistent; citation and referencing is present but inaccurate and/or inconsistent.	An attempt has been made to analyse relevant arguments and gaps and discuss their implications, but may be descriptive or lack understanding or depth. Limited appreciation of how the subject works and its limitations.	Reasonable level of organisation and focus; some visible structure; some reasonable conclusions; within or close to wordcount.
40-49 fail	Incomplete or inaccurate understanding of a	Too little reading, no attempt to go beyond provided reading list.	No discernible attempt to analyse relevant arguments or their	Poor organisation and focus; lacks structure; no or not enough

	complex and specialist topic, low awareness of current thinking in the subject, lack of interpretative insights.	Synthesis has not been attempted or is unsuccessful. Referencing and citing is incomplete or inaccurate.	implications. Descriptive approach and/or lack of understanding or depth. Not clear that the student understands the subject.	reasonable conclusions; may not adhere to wordcount.
20-39 low fail	Complete misunderstanding of a complex and specialist topic, no awareness of current thinking in the subject, no interpretative insights.	Hardly any reading, no attempt to go beyond provided reading list. Synthesis has not been attempted at all. Referencing and citing is incomplete or inaccurate.	No discernible attempt to analyse relevant arguments or their implications. Obvious lack of understanding or depth. Clear that the student does not understand the subject.	Poor organisation and focus; lacks structure; no reasonable conclusions; may not adhere to wordcount.
0-19 No serious attempt	Student hasn't submitted, or have submitted something so off topic or full of errors that it cannot be marked as an attempt at the question.	No reading from the list or from any academic sources, or, sources listed that are not real or weren't consulted; no referencing or citation.	No submission of assignment, or of any data or literature.	No attempt at argument or organisation, wordcount not relevant.