Guidance on how to design and use rubrics

Introduction

This guide has been put together to assist colleagues at the University of Reading (UoR) when designing and using rubrics. The guide is aimed at undergraduate programmes, although the principles discussed can be applied when assessing student work (i.e., formative and summative assessment) at other levels.

This is a four-part guide which covers the following topics:

Part 1 – Getting the basics right

Part 2 – Types of rubrics and approaches to marking

Part 3 – Writing grade descriptors

Part 4 – Engaging students with rubrics

What is a rubric?

A rubric can be considered as a tool that helps markers to assess student work[1]. Rubrics tend to contain **measurable assessment criteria**, which are linked to **module learning outcomes**, and **qualitative grade descriptors** that articulate the standards against which student work is assessed (please see the following page for an illustrative example). A rubric is usually represented as a grid and can take the form of a qualitative or scoring rubric (please see Part 2 of the guide for more information on different types of rubrics).

The benefits of using a rubric

For **colleagues**, rubrics can help:

- foster a shared understanding amongst markers of how to apply the performance criteria and standards in the grade descriptors to student work (this and the below point are also important for moderation);
- ensure marking decisions are transparent, equitable, valid and reliable (e.g., there is intra and inter marker consistency);
- identify if the assessment is fit-for-purpose (e.g., if the assessment design is appropriate and in alignment with the programme and module learning outcomes).

For **students**, rubrics can help:

- make explicit and thus transparent the criteria and standards that will be used to grade their assessment (this and the below point are questions on the National Students Survey);
- understand how marking is fair;
- identify their current level of performance and what they need to do to improve on this, as the qualities student work needs to evidence are clearly articulated for each grade band;
- focus and direct student effort so that their work is aligned to the expectations within the rubric;
- develop independent learning and self-efficacy skills in relation to assessment.

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[1] Rubrics are often used to assess student work of a 'qualitative'/discursive nature and can be set up and used online within Blackboard, the University's Virtual Learning Environment. For work of a 'quantitative' nature, such as MCQs, a detailed mark scheme maybe more appropriate.

Table 1: Extract of an analytical rubric without numerically weighted criteria developed in Politics for a Part 3 project[2]

Grade bands	First Class		2.1	2.2	3rd (threshold)	Fail
Criteria	80+ Outstanding	70-79 Excellent	60-69 Very good	50-59 Good	40-49 Satisfactory	39 and below
Development and Motivation of research question	Clear and well developed research question(s): well-motivated with clear links to economic theory and/or previous evidence/literature and any relevant facts/figures that have gone considerably beyond the material introduced in the module. Research question(s) are creative/novel	Clear and well developed research question(s): well-motivated with links to economic theory and/or previous evidence/literature, and any relevant facts/figures that have gone beyond the material introduced in the module.	Clear and well developed research question(s) which extend beyond the material introduced in the module	Clear research question(s) but few links to economic theory and/or previous evidence/literature, and any relevant facts/figures, with little evidence of going much beyond the material introduced in the module.	The research question(s) is unclear and under-developed, with few links to economic theory and/or previous evidence/literature, and any relevant facts/figures, with little evidence of going much beyond the material introduced in the module	Little or no development of a research question(s) with little evidence of going beyond the material introduced in the module
Clear outline of methodology	Methodology chosen to answer research question(s) is fully developed, described and appropriate. The justification of methodology goes beyond examples taught and makes critical reference to relevant literature. Limitations to the data and methods well understood and discussed. Methodology used is applied in a novel/creative way.	Methodology chosen to answer research question(s) is well developed, described and appropriate. The justification of methodology goes beyond examples taught and makes critical reference to relevant literature. Limitations to the data and methods well understood and discussed	Methodology chosen to answer research question is well developed, described and appropriate. The justification of the methodology is critical, with reference to relevant literature, but does not go much beyond the examples taught.	Methodology chosen to answer research question well described and appropriate. Justification of methodology is descriptive, but shows understanding with some reference to literature; but does not go beyond examples taught.	Methodology chosen to answer the question only partially appropriate. Justification of methodology is descriptive and does not go beyond examples taught.	Methodology chosen to answer question inappropriate, with no clear justification or understanding of the methods, and does not go beyond examples taught.

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[2] See Appendix C for the full rubric.

PART 1: Getting the basics right

For a rubric to be effective, it is important that the basics are in place and are aligned[3]. This consists of the following:

- **Programme learning outcomes**. Programme learning outcomes are statements that articulate what a learner is expected to be able to do and know at the end of their study. Programme learning outcomes are informed by the UoR's Graduate Attributes, QAA subject benchmark statements and for some accredited programmes, professional and statutory regulatory body (PSRB) requirements. Learning outcomes should also be articulated for each Level allowing for progression (e.g., for UG programmes, learning outcome at Levels 5 and 4). This can help colleagues and students identify how the programme learning outcomes are scaffolded at the different Parts.

- **Module learning outcomes**. Module level learning outcomes are an iteration of programme level learning outcomes and tend to be more specific than programme level learning outcomes. Like programme level learning outcomes, the number of module level learning outcomes should be manageable, achievable and written at the appropriate level (the learning outcomes for Levels 4, 5 and 6 should be different in terms of expectation/demand. Please see the University guidelines on module descriptors and the SEEC credit level descriptors for further information and guidance). Having module learning outcomes written at the appropriate level can also help to ensure that the assessment criteria is also written at an appropriate level, which in turn informs the qualitative grade descriptors in a rubric.

- **Assessment tasks.** Establishing aligned programme and module learning outcomes can help colleagues decide which assessment task is best suited to help student development and demonstration of achievement of the learning outcomes. Assessment tasks should include assessing higher order learning (e.g., learning that requires students to 'evaluate', 'synthesise', and/or 'analyse' module content and not solely recall information) and the graduate attributes[4] where appropriate (please see Engage in Assessment for information on assessment design and the University guidelines on module descriptors for further information on higher order accessible learning outcomes).

  Assessment and feedback (formative and summative) on a module should be informed/planned through taking a programme level perspective (e.g., what is the assessment and feedback pattern across a programme? Are there horizontal and vertical links between assessments on a programme? This is important for feed forward). This programme level perspective can help to ensure that: students are not over assessed; the assessment diet across a programme is inclusive, authentic, varied; and there is balance between formative and summative assessment.

- **Measurable assessment criteria.** Assessment criteria are the properties or dimensions by which student work is assessed. Assessment criteria are informed by a module's learning outcomes and the assessment task. Assessment criteria make transparent to students the aspects that will be used to judge their progress and achievement of the learning outcomes.

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[3] Please contact a member of the Academic Development Enhancement for support on programme design, assessment and feedback: Kamilah Jooganah (k.jooganah@reading.ac.uk), Rodney Coombridge (r.d.coombridge@reading.ac.uk) or Diane Joyce (diane.joyce@reading.ac.uk).

[4] For further information on the Reading graduate attributes, please consult the Curriculum Framework.

Colleagues should collaborate when designing the assessment criteria and assessment standards contained in the qualitative grade descriptors (please see Part 3 of the guide for more information on writing qualitative grade descriptors). As well as collaborating with colleagues, students can also be involved in rubric design. This can be an effective way of developing student assessment literacy.

PART 2: Types of rubrics and approach to marking

There are different types of rubrics and approaches that can be taken to marking. This section provides an overview of these areas.

1. Holistic rubric

It is possible to create a rubric to reflect an overall, holistic judgement of the assessment. This type of rubric can be useful when marking examinations. It is less efficient in providing detailed student feedback on performance in relation to each criterion (please see Appendix A for an example of a holistic rubric).

Pros

- The final mark is based on student achievement or progress against the learning outcomes as a whole;
- It is quicker to mark student work.

Cons

- The feedback for each criterion is not detailed;
- It can be difficult to understand how each criterion is weighted/carries significance.

2. Analytic rubric – *with* numerically weighted criteria

With this type of rubric, the overall grade is determined by relative performance in across several criteria. Unlike the holistic rubric, there is a greater level of detail for each criterion in the qualitative grade descriptor. With some analytic rubrics, a numerical value or percentage weighting is attached to each criterion (these are do not have to be equally weighted). The final grade is typically reached through aggregating the weighted scores for each criterion (please see Appendix B for an example of an analytic rubric with numerically weighted criteria).

Please note, if a numerical value is assigned to each criterion that is not based on percentages (0-100), which may be the case when using a 'scoring rubric', it is important that it is communicated to students how their marks translate onto UoR's mark ranges.

Pros

- There is repeatability in assigning the same grade for equivalent qualities of work;
- It is transparent how the final grade is reached.

Cons

- The final grade may not reflect the value of the work as a whole;
- There is the potential to cause student confusion, if criteria across similar assessment types on a programme are weighted differently/different scales are used.

3. Analytic rubric – *without* numerically weighted criteria

It is possible to have an analytic rubric without a numerical value attached to each criterion. With this approach, the final mark is reached through making an overall

judgement on student performance across the criteria, and not through an arithmetic aggregation (please see Appendix C for an example of an analytic rubric without weighted criteria). As the criteria are not explicitly weighted, it is important that students and other markers are aware of which criteria carry greater importance than others. This can help students in determining how much work is required for each section of an assessment task. This information can also be of use to markers to help ensure consistency when assessing student work.

Pros

- The final grade reflects the work as a whole;
- Focus is placed on student performance and not scores for each criterion.

Cons

- It may not be transparent how the final grade is reached;
- Difficulties can arise in assigning the same grade for equivalent qualities of student work.

The type of rubric and the approach taken to marking on a module should be discussed amongst a programme team or informed by practices across a programme. This can help to achieve a level of **consistency in practice across a programme**. For example, it could be decided that the same type of rubric and approach to marking should be taken to similar assessment tasks across the programme (e.g., analytic rubric without numerically weighted criteria to mark student essays). This consistency can help to minimise student confusion and support moderation practices on a programme.

PART 3: Writing grade descriptors

This part of the guide provides suggestions on how colleagues may approach writing the qualitative grade descriptors in a rubric. Writing grade descriptors from 'scratch' may seem daunting. However, making it a collaborative process where colleagues and students are involved can help support this. Support can also be provided from the University's Academic Enhancement Team.

Establish the threshold/pass: To establish the threshold or pass level (e.g., 40% at UG level), the SEEC credit level descriptors should be consulted. The SEEC descriptors articulate the characteristics and context of learning at each Level (e.g. Level 4, 5 and 6) and can be used to inform judgements made about standards of learning. For example, the SEEC descriptors make explicit that the threshold for critical thinking and learner autonomy expected would be greater at Part 3 than at Part 1. With this in mind, it could be useful to consult the SEEC descriptors and start the process of writing the qualitative grade descriptors for each criterion at the threshold/Third class grade band. From this threshold, you can then write the descriptors for the higher and lower grade bands. That said, some colleagues have found it useful to begin at the grade band for a high First (80+) considering 'what a stand out First would look like' and then write the descriptors for the other grade bands.

The University of Exeter (UoE) have produced Generic University Assessment Criteria. Although these descriptors are aligned to the UoE's graduate attributes, they could prove useful for UoR colleagues in designing their grade descriptors, including in relation to the skills, qualities and attributes across grade bands at different Levels[5]. Other useful

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[5] When constructing your rubric, try to consider the full range of graduate attributes students are developing on your module, such as team working skills and ability to self-reflect. For further information on the Reading graduate attributes, please consult the Curriculum Framework.

resources include UoR's marking criteria (please see Appendix D) which can be adapted to suit the context of the module and assessment. Please also see the Assessment Handbook, which includes information on step marking for the higher grade bands.

Accessible language: When writing the descriptors, it is important to consider how they may be interpreted by students and colleagues, and how they can be designed to help to enhance student learning. The language used in the descriptors therefore needs to be **clear, concise and accessible** to all students as well as colleagues marking student work. It is worth bearing in mind that even amongst a group of markers there may be different interpretations of what, for example, 'critical analysis' means. To help ensure a shared understanding, some colleagues at the University have produced a glossary which explains the terms commonly used when assessing student work. This glossary is also shared with students.

Descriptors should strike a **balance between generic and task-specific content**. For example, 'critical understanding' could be a criterion used across different assessments, yet how this then translates for individual assessment tasks might require different forms of evidence (e.g., evidence of 'critical understanding' for a creative portfolio might be different from that required of students to evidence for a research paper). Where descriptors contain some level of generic content, this can help the student see how it applies to similar assessment tasks with the same criteria on their programme. This level of consistency is also useful to colleagues, especially in relation to marking and moderation.

Table 2: Extract of an analytical rubric without numerically weighted criteria developed Politics for a Part 3 project[6]

> Threshold at L6 is higher than for L5 & L4

Grade bands	First Class		2.1	2.2	3rd (threshold)	Fail
Criteria	80+ Outstanding	70-79 Excellent	60-69 Very good	50-59 Good	40-49 Satisfactory	39 and below
Application and Analysis	Critical analysis of produced evidence and findings which has both depth and breadth. Interpretation and discussion of produced results rigorously linked to research question(s) and economic theory/evidence from the literature. Outstanding synthesis between project findings and earlier discussions of	Critical analysis of produced evidence and findings. Interpretation and discussion of produced results strongly linked to research question(s) and economic theory/evidence from the literature. Excellent synthesis between project findings and earlier discussions of economic theory and or/past	Critical analysis of produced evidence and findings. Interpretation and discussion of produced results linked to research question(s) and economic theory/evidence from the literature. Synthesis between project findings and earlier discussions of economic theory and or/past literature. Construction of	Interpretation and discussion of produced results more descriptive than critical, somewhat linked to research question(s) and economic theory/evidence from the literature. Some, but limited in meaningful ... esis ... n ... of economic theory and	Interpretation and discussion of produced results is descriptive, with limited reference to research question(s) and economic theory/evidence from the literature. No meaningful synthesis between project findings and earlier discussions ... literature. Conclusions	Interpretation and discussion of produced results is limited and descriptive, with little or no reference to research question(s) and economic theory/evidence from the literature. No meaningful synthesis between project findings and earlier discussions of economic theory and or/past literature.

> What constitutes 'outstanding' synthesis from 'excellent', as one example, needs to be unpacked with students. Preferably using examples.

> Descriptor contains module and task specific requirements

[6] See Appendix C for the full rubric.

	economic theory and or/past literature. Construction of logical/convincing argument with conclusions supported by the project findings. Novel/creative insights.	literature. Construction of logical/convincing argument with conclusions supported by the project findings.	logical/convincing argument with conclusions generally supported by the project findings.	or/past literature. Conclusions are sound but not fully supported by the project findings.	are coherent but not fully supported by the project findings.	Conclusions are missing, incoherent or irrelevant

Descriptor contains an element of generalisability. E.g. The structure of the conclusion could apply to other assessments

Work at a 2.2 level is often more descriptive than at 2.1 and above

When writing the grade descriptors, try to aim for **consistent levelling of progression of achievement between the grade descriptors**, where the level of progression from one grade band is similar i.e., where there are no big jumps between some grade bands and yet only incremental steps between others.

Try to **phrase the descriptions on the presence of the quantity and quality** you expect associated with the criterion, rather than on the absence of them or 'what's missing in student work'. This may be difficult for the grade descriptors at the lower level, below the threshold. There may be instances where it is appropriate to state that element(s) are 'absent', however, try to avoid value judgement terms such as 'poor' or 'weak'. Although these terms may refer to the work, the student may internalise them as personal judgments.

Grade **descriptors should emphasise the process as well as outcome**. This can help to support/reiterate approaches to assessment and learning we are seeking to encourage in students. For example, we often do not want students to just accumulate knowledge, for learning to be effective they need to utilise what is taught/co-constructed and apply it, as one example, and formulate their own judgments. This process should be articulated in the grade descriptors and reflected in the criteria and module learning outcomes. Another example could be where students are asked to keep a reflective diary when working in a team, and the module learning outcomes, criteria and descriptors relate to students' ability to self-reflect on the process of team work. This can help students identify how they are developing some of the graduate attributes and their approaches to learning which they can apply to their studies as well as to a variety of other contexts.

When you have drafted your rubric, it is good practice to share it with colleagues and students for feedback. A pilot marking activity on past assessments or assessments of a similar nature could be undertaken. Constructing a rubric is an iterative exercise. A rubric should be viewed as a dynamic tool that is constantly improved on.

A rubrics diagnostic tool has been developed (please see Appendix E for the review tool). This, as well as the following prompts, could be useful when reviewing the rubric.

Prompt questions to aid rubric review

- What are the key module learning outcomes and what criteria need to be evidenced in order to meet them?
- Does the rubric align with the information provided in the assessment brief?

- Does the rubric reflect the assessment task?
- Is each level of performance across the grade descriptors clearly differentiated?
- How have I ensured that students have a complete understanding of the rubric? As well as a tool for markers, will students be able to use the rubric for peer and self-assessment?

PART 4: Engaging students with the rubric

This section covers some suggestions to engage students with the rubric.

Engaging students with the rubric

Activities that encourage students to actively engage with the assessment criteria and standards throughout a programme have been evidenced as helping student achievement, resulting in significant learning gains (Jones et al., 2017). Furthermore, student engagement with rubrics can not only help students internalise the standards and criteria that will be used to assess their assessment but can help impart a sense of ownership in students of the learning process and develop their identities as independent learners.

There are a number of strategies that can be used to engage students with the criteria and standards that will be used to assess their summative assessment. To be effective, activities that encourage **dialogue**: 1) between students and; 2) between the students and lecturers should be used. Such activities might include self and/or peer assessment formative activities where students review theirs/each other's work against the criteria prior to submission.

Another activity could consist of students working in groups where they mark and comment on exemplars. Students could then explain and justify their marks and comments to the group and then a class discussion unfolds. After each group has fed back, the lecturer then explains the rationale for the mark assigned to the exemplars and the strengths and areas of improvement/that could be approached differently regarding each exemplar. Exemplars can consist of past student work (permission would be needed from students and the work anonymised) and/or can be constructed by the lecturer/module team for the activity. Jones et al. (2017) argue that such activities which facilitate student engagement with rubrics can be particularly effective on student learning when introduced to students early on in their university careers.

Feedback to students

Feedback can take a variety of forms (e.g. verbal, peer generated) and can be delivered at different times (e.g. within and beyond the immediate learning context). It is thus important that students are made aware of the different types of feedback they receive. The feedback contained in a rubric is another form of feedback which students need to be encouraged to perceive the value of and actively engage in. For suggestions on how to engage students with feedback, it is recommended that colleagues consult the HEA's (now part of Advance HE) 'The developing engagement with feedback toolkit (DEFT)' (2016), which includes a feedback flowchart designed to help students navigate and act on the feedback they receive. Creating a culture whereby students are supported to drive the feedback themselves should be part of the pedagogic values embedded in a programme.

Evans (2016) and the HEA (2016) provide some suggestions that should be considered when providing feedback to students.

Accessible: Feedback should focus on how students can improve on their work, as well as areas of strength. Feedback could feedforward to assessments of a similar nature on the programme.

Opportunities to act: Feedback should be provided early allowing sufficient time for students to act on the feedback to enhance their work.

Aligned to summative assessment: Formative feedback should be aligned to the requirements in the summative assessment. The benefits of using a rubric are that it can help guide the feedback (formative and summative) provided to students. Providing a rubric for students' formative work can be particularly useful in terms of helping students prepare for their summative assessment.

Dialogue: Where possible, feedback should be accompanied by dialogue. This could take the form of general feedback to the whole class or individualised feedback.

Students should also be encouraged to provide feedback and reflect on the feedback they receive. This is important in helping to develop students' self-monitoring skills, ownership and agency in relation to their learning. Self-assessed and peer assessed formative activities can be particularly effective in this regard.

Further resources

Engaging students with rubrics

Jones, L., Allen, B., Dunn, P. and Brooker, L. (2017). Demystifying the rubric: a five-step pedagogy to improve student understanding and utilisation of marking criteria. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 36(1), 129-142. [online] Available at: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/07294360.2016.1177000?needAccess=true [Accessed 20 August 2018].

Reddy, M. Y. and Andrade, H. (2010). A review of rubric use in higher education. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 35(4), 435-448. [online] Available at: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/02602930902862859 [Accessed 20 August 2018].

Engaging colleagues with rubrics

Handley, K., Outer, B. and Price, M. (2013). Learning to mark: exemplars, dialogue and participation in assessment communities. *Higher Education Research & Development*. 32(6), 888-900. [online] Available at: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/07294360.2013.806438?needAccess=true [Accessed 20 August 2018].

Enhancing feedback practices

Higher Education Academy (2016). *The developing engagement with feedback toolkit (DEFT)*. HEA: York. [online] Available at: file:///C:/Users/xv916448/Downloads/the_developing_engagement_with_feedback_toolkit_deft_0.pdf [Accessed 20 August 2018].

Evans, C. (2016). *Enhancing assessment feedback practice in higher education: The EAT framework*. [online] Available at: https://www.southampton.ac.uk/assets/imported/transforms/content-block/UsefulDownloads_Download/A0999D3AF2AF4C5AA24B5BEA08C61D8E/EAT%20Guide%20April%20FINAL1%20ALL.pdf [Accessed 20 August 2018].

Policy and guidance

University of Reading (2018). *Assessment design*. [online] Available at: http://www.reading.ac.uk/engageinassessment/assessment-design/eia-assessment-design-main.aspx [Accessed 20 August 2018].

University of Reading (2018). *Centre for Quality Support and Development, Assessment handbook*. [online] Available at: http://www.reading.ac.uk/cqsd/QualityAssurance/PoliciesandProcedures/cqsd-assessmenthandbook.aspx [Accessed 20 August 2018].

University of Reading (2018). *Graduate attributes*. [online] Available at: http://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/curriculum-framework/cf-graduate-attributes.aspx [Accessed 20 August 2018].

University of Reading (2018). *Know what it is that you are assessing: writing assessment criteria*. [online] Available at: https://www.reading.ac.uk/engageinassessment/assessment-design/planning/eia-writing-assessment-criteria.aspx [Accessed 20 August 2018]/

Quality Assurance Agency (2018). *Subject benchmark statements*. [online] Available at: http://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/subject-benchmark-statements [Accessed 20 August 2018].

Quality Assurance Agency (2014). *The framework for higher education qualifications of UK degree-awarding bodies*. [online] Available at: http://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/qualifications-frameworks.pdf [Accessed 20 August 2018].

SEEC (2016*). Credit level descriptors for higher education*. [online] Available at: http://www.seec.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/SEEC-descriptors-2016.pdf [Accessed 20 August 2018].

Appendix A: Holistic rubric

The appendices contain examples of rubrics. They are for illustrative purposes only.

Example 1: Holistic Rubric

	Oral Report
Excellent	The student clearly describes the question studied and provides strong reasons for its importance. Specific information is given to support the conclusions that are drawn and described. The delivery is engaging and sentence structure is consistently correct. Eye contact is made and sustained throughout the presentation. There is strong evidence of preparation, organization, and enthusiasm for the topic. The visual aid is used to make the presentation more effective. Questions from the audience are clearly answered with specific and appropriate information
Very Good	The student described the question studied and provides reasons for its importance. An adequate amount of information is given to support the conclusions that are drawn and described. The delivery and sentence structure are generally correct. There is evidence of preparation, organization, and enthusiasm for the topic. The visual aid is mentioned and used. Questions from the audience are answered clearly.
Good	The student describes the question studied and conclusions are stated, but supporting information is not as strong as a 4 or 5. The delivery and sentence structure are generally correct. There is some indication of preparation and organization. The visual aid is mentioned. Questions from the audience are answered
Limited	The student states the question studied, but fails to fully describe it. No conclusions are given to answer the question. The delivery and sentence structure is understandable, but with some errors. Evidence of preparation and organization is lacking. The visual aid may or may not be mentioned. Questions from the audience are answered with only the most basic response.

Adapted from: http://www.ucdenver.edu/faculty_staff/faculty/center-for-faculty-development/Documents/Tutorials/Rubrics/documents/ex_holistic_oral_report.pdf

Appendix B: Analytic rubric with numerically weighted criteria

Example 2: Analytic rubric with numerically weighted criteria from Psychology

	Outstanding (85-100)	Excellent (72-84)	Good (60-69)	Sound (50-59)	Pass (40-49)	Failing (below 40)
Relevance [20%]: Questions are interpreted correctly; discussion is focused on topic of the questions; irrelevant content and discussion are not included.	Totally appropriate interpretation and relevant.	Almost wholly appropriate interpretation and relevant.	Largely appropriate interpretation and relevant.	May contain some misinterpretation and/or irrelevant material	Limited interpretation and relevance.	Significant misinterpretation and irrelevant material.
Knowledge & Understanding [25%]: Recommended literature used and interpreted appropriately; selection and use of evidence the shows understanding and insight; there is evidence of study beyond the recommended literature.	Comprehensive understanding and mastery of core evidence-base and extensive wider reading.	Very strong understanding of core evidence-base and clear evidence of appropriate wider reading.	Good understanding of core evidence-base and some appropriate wider reading.	Sound understanding of core evidence-base and some wider reading.	Weak understanding of core evidence-base and limited, inappropriate or little wider reading.	Lacks understanding of core evidence-base and inappropriate or no wider reading.
Analysis & Critical Thinking [40%]: The integration of evidence-base and data is clearly discussed to address the questions; there is evidence of analysis and problem solving skills; approach shows originality in argument or problem solving; there is evidence of critical insight and reasoned questioning of assumptions; there are incidences of independent judgement.	Very well developed analytical and problem solving skills; outstanding ability to evaluate data and evidence-base; shows strong critical judgement.	Well-developed analytical and problem solving skills; excellent evaluation of data and evidence-base; and shows critical judgement.	Good analytical and problem solving skills; good evaluation of data and evidence-base; shows some critical judgement.	Sound but inconsistent analytical and problem solving skills and evaluation of data and evidence-base; may show some critical judgement.	Inconsistent and weak analytical and problem solving skills; weak evaluation of data and evidence-base; lacks critical judgement.	Lacks analytical and problem solving skills; lacks evaluation of data and evidence-base; lacks critical judgement.
Scholarship and style [15%]: Conclusions are well justified and complete; facts reported and statements made are accurate; writing is clear and fluent; there is appropriate use of technical language for a professional audience; all sources appropriate; accurately acknowledged and formatted in a recognised style.	Very well justified and full conclusions; completely accurate and fluent writing using professional language; accurate referencing.	Well justified and full conclusions; almost wholly accurate and fluent writing using professional language; accurate referencing.	Largely well justified conclusions; largely accurate and fluent writing using professional language; largely accurate referencing.	Sound justification for conclusions; sound level of accuracy and written fluency and use of professional language; sound use of referencing conventions.	Weak justification for conclusions; some inaccuracy; inconsistent written fluency and use of professional language; inconsistent use of referencing conventions.	Limited or no justification for conclusions; much inaccuracy; poor written fluency and use of professional language; poor use of referencing conventions.

Appendix C: Analytic rubric without numerically weighted criteria

Example 3: Extract of analytic rubric without numerically weighted criteria from Politics

Rubric developed by Dr Sarah Jewell. Informed by Nottingham Trent University's 'Guide on how to construct and use grading matrices' (2014). Produced by the Centre for Academic Development and Quality. Please contact Dr Kamilah Jooganah (k.jooganah@reading.ac.uk) for further information.

Note that equal weighting is not given to all the criteria. The overall project mark will be determined by how well criteria have been met overall and is not a summation across the 5 criterion. Criterion 4 is the most important of the criteria. Please refer to the Project Structure guide within the Empirical Project_20189 Document to give you further guidance on writing and structuring your projects.

Grade bands	First Class		2.1	2.2	3rd (threshold)	Fail
Criteria	80+ Outstanding	70-79 Excellent	60-69 Very good	50-59 Good	40-49 Satisfactory	39 and below
Development and Motivation of research question	Clear and well developed research question(s): well-motivated with clear links to economic theory and/or previous evidence/literature and any relevant facts/figures that have gone considerably beyond the material introduced in the module. Research question(s) are creative/novel.	Clear and well developed research question(s): well-motivated with links to economic theory and/or previous evidence/literature, and any relevant facts/figures that have gone beyond the material introduced in the module.	Clear and well developed research question(s) which extend beyond the material introduced in the module.	Clear research question(s) but few links to economic theory and/or previous evidence/literature, and any relevant facts/figures, with little evidence of going much beyond the material introduced in the module.	The research question(s) is unclear and under-developed, with few links to economic theory and/or previous evidence/literature, and any relevant facts/figures, with little evidence of going much beyond the material introduced in the module.	Little or no development of a research question(s) with little evidence of going beyond the material introduced in the module.
Clear outline of methodology	Methodology chosen to answer research question(s) is fully developed, described and appropriate. The justification of methodology goes beyond examples taught and makes critical reference to relevant literature. Limitations to the data and methods well	Methodology chosen to answer research question(s) is well developed, described and appropriate. The justification of methodology goes beyond examples taught and makes critical reference to relevant literature. Limitations to the data and methods well	Methodology chosen to answer research question is well developed, described and appropriate. The justification of the methodology is critical, with reference to relevant literature, but does not go much beyond the examples taught.	Methodology chosen to answer research question well described and appropriate. The justification of methodology is descriptive, but shows understanding with some reference to literature; but does not go beyond examples taught.	Methodology chosen to answer the question only partially appropriate. The justification of methodology is descriptive and does not go beyond examples taught.	Methodology chosen to answer question inappropriate, with no clear justification or understanding of the methods, and does not go beyond examples taught.

	understood and discussed. Methodology used is applied in a novel/creative way.	understood and discussed.				
Use of Data and Stata	Data and Stata commands used effectively and correctly to manage and clean data, to produce statistics, regression results and other results. Use of Stata beyond that taught.	Data and Stata commands used effectively and correctly to manage and clean data, to produce statistics, regression results and other results.	Data and Stata commands generally used effectively and correctly to manage and clean data, to produce statistics, regression results and other results, with only minor errors.	Data and Stata commands generally used correctly to manage and clean data, to produce statistics, regression results and other results, but with some errors or use is limited.	Data and Stata commands often used incorrectly to manage and clean data, to produce statistics, regression results and other results.	Limited use of Stata and the Data which is incorrectly used to manage and clean data, to produce statistics, regression results and other results.
Application and Analysis	Critical analysis of produced evidence and findings which has both depth and breadth. Interpretation and discussion of produced results; rigorously linked to research question(s) and economic theory/evidence from the literature. Excellent synthesis between project findings and earlier discussions of economic theory and or/past literature. Construction of logical/convincing argument with conclusions supported by the project findings; with implications discussed. Novel/creative insights.	Critical analysis of produced evidence and findings. Interpretation and discussion of produced results; strongly linked to research question(s) and economic theory/evidence from the literature. Clear synthesis between project findings and earlier discussions of economic theory and or/past literature. Construction of logical/convincing argument with conclusions supported by the project findings; with implications discussed.	Critical analysis of produced evidence and findings. Interpretation and discussion of produced results; linked to research question(s) and economic theory/evidence from the literature. Synthesis between project findings and earlier discussions of economic theory and or/past literature. Construction of logical/convincing argument with conclusions generally supported by the project findings.	Interpretation and discussion of produced results more descriptive than critical, somewhat linked to research question(s) and economic theory/evidence from the literature. Some, but limited in meaningfulness, synthesis between project findings and earlier discussions of economic theory and or/past literature. Conclusions are sound but not fully supported by the project findings.	Interpretation and discussion of produced results is descriptive, with limited reference to research question(s) and economic theory/evidence from the literature. No meaningful synthesis between project findings and earlier discussions of economic theory and or/past literature. Conclusions are coherent but not fully supported by the project findings.	Interpretation and discussion of produced results is limited and descriptive, with little or no reference to research question(s) and economic theory/evidence from the literature. No meaningful synthesis between project findings and earlier discussions of economic theory and or/past literature. Conclusions are missing, incoherent or irrelevant.

Appendix D: University marking criteria for Levels 4-6

Below is an extract from the University [Assessment Handbook, Section 10: Marking](#) (2018).

UNIVERSITY MARKING CRITERIA FOR LEVELS 4-6

The following tables provide guidance in terms of criteria appropriate to the ranges of marks and classes. Obviously, this guidance is in very general terms and will need to be interpreted in the light of:

- the combination of knowledge, understanding, skills, techniques, scholarship and vocational achievement required by the subject;
- the kind of assessment – the marking conventions and guidance will need to be interpreted in terms of what can reasonably be expected from the piece of work being marked – there will be different expectations for an assignment based on one month's writing time (say) than for an answer in a written examination;
- the recognition that no guidelines at this level can cover every eventuality, and markers should reward creativity, originality, insight, maturity of scholarship or technical application and work of particular merit however presented.

70-100: FIRST CLASS

Excellent to outstanding work

Based on a thorough to full understanding of the problem or issue to hand

Top of range (85-100)	Criteria	Bottom of range (70-84)
Totally	Relevance;	Almost wholly
Complete mastery of the full range	Standard literature and/or methods and techniques;	Strong grasp of a wide range
Good	Evidence of study beyond the standard material;	Some
Excellent	Selection of sources, ideas, methods or techniques brought to bear with insight;	Well judged
Full	Integration of theory and evidence well organised to address the issue or problem;	Strong
Excellent and with flair	Scholarship;	Very good
Mature	Clear evidence of high analytic and problem solving skills or of evaluation and critical thought in analysis;	Very good
Excellent	Well justified and full conclusions;	Very good
Completely, or almost completely	Accurate;	Highly
With lucidity of expression as appropriate to the subject	Fluently written;	With clarity of expression as appropriate to the subject, excellent
Contains elements of all or almost all of the listed items which are appropriate to the subject	Originality in argument or problem solving; Lateral thinking; Significant critical insight; Reasoned discourse involving critique and counter critique; Reasoned questioning of assumptions; Reasoned reflection on methodology; Incidences of independent judgement; Successfully applying knowledge and understanding in unfamiliar situations.	Contains elements of all or almost all of the listed items which are appropriate to the subject

60-69: SECOND CLASS DIVISON 1

Good to very good work

Based on a sound to clear understanding of the problem or issue to hand.

Top of range (65-69)	Criteria	Bottom of range (60-64)
Largely relevant	Relevance;	Generally relevant
Good and secure grasp of a wide part	Standard literature and/or methods and techniques;	A solid grasp of a range
A good selection	Sources, ideas, methods or techniques brought to bear;	An appropriate selection
Good integration and well organised	Integration of theory and evidence organised to address the issue or problem;	Clear argument backed by evidence soundly organised
Some significant elements	Elements of good scholarship;	Some
Very clear	Clarity of argument;	Clear
Good	Evidence of analytic and problem solving skills or of evaluation and critical thought in analysis;	Sound
Well justified	Justified conclusions stemming from balanced argument;	Soundly justified
To a good standard	Accurate;	Mostly
For the most part	Fluently written;	In large part
May contain some	Originality in argument or problem solving;	May contain some
May contain some	Reasoned reflection on methodology or questioning of assumptions;	May contain some
May contain some of the listed items which are appropriate to the subject	Some study beyond the standard; Lateral thinking; Significant insight; Reasoned discourse involving critique and counter critique; Incidences of independent judgement; Application of knowledge and understanding in unfamiliar situations.	

50-59: SECOND CLASS DIVISION 2

Competent to sound work

Based on addressing the problem or issue using standard material and approaches.

Top of range (55-59)	Criteria	Bottom of range (50-54)
Relevant for the most part	Relevance;	May contain some irrelevant digressions
Most of the standard literature and/or methods	A familiarity with the standard literature and/or methods;	Much of the standard literature and/or methods
More successfully than not	Use of relevant sources, ideas, methods or techniques normally applied to the problem or issue;	With some success
Sound	Evidence of appropriate study;	Competent
Sound	Sufficient problem solving skills to arrive at a solution or argument to reach a conclusion;	Some success in problem solving or argument to reach a conclusion although it may not be fully developed
Soundly	Adequately written;	Competently
May be present	Evidence of some critical judgement applied either to analysis or the application of standard ideas and/or methods of solving problems.	May be present
But may also show the following: Some imbalance between knowledge and argument or discussion Some minor difficulties with the organisation of the material or full understanding of the problem or issue Some technical or factual flaws and inaccuracies		But may also show the following: More reliance on knowledge than on argument, analysis or discussion Some difficulties with organisation of the material or full understanding of the problem or issue A limit to the range of the standard sources, ideas, methods or techniques deployed; Some technical or factual flaws and inaccuracies

40-49:THIRD CLASS

Basic work at or just above threshold for honours to satisfactory but limited work
Based on a reasonable attempt to address the problem or issue using the more obvious standard material and approaches.

Top of range (45-49)	Criteria	Bottom of range (40-44)
Limited	Familiarity with the standard literature and/or methods;	Very limited
Satisfactory	Evidence of appropriate study;	Sufficient study but no indication of more
Satisfactory	Some deployment of standard sources, ideas, methods or techniques normally applied to the problem or issue;	Only some standard sources, ideas, methods or techniques normally applied to the problem or issue used
Satisfactory	Some success in solving problems or marshalling an argument to reach a conclusion although it may only be partially realised;	An attempt to solve a problem or marshal an argument to reach a conclusion but poorly realised
In large part	Adequately written;	Although in parts may only be barely so
May be present	Successful conclusions to parts of the problem or to elements of the issue.	Some indications of successful conclusions to parts of the problem or to elements of the issue may be present
But may also show the following: Some superficiality in understanding and/or use of material An over reliance on limited knowledge at the expense of development of argument, analysis or discussion Weak or limited selection of		But may also show the following: Marked superficiality in understanding and/or use of material Heavy reliance on limited knowledge at the expense of development of argument, analysis or discussion Poor or very limited selection of material and/or method Some markedly incorrect selection of the material

material and/or method Some incorrect selection of the material Technical or factual flaws and inaccuracies Some irrelevance		Significant technical or factual flaws and inaccuracies A noticeable degree of irrelevance

Mark range and descriptor	Criteria
35-39 Work just below threshold for honours but showing some evidence of study	Either Based on evidence of effort and some study and an attempt to construct an argument or discussion which demonstrates some awareness of the issue and that although not reaching the standard of an honours degree because of error, poor or incorrect use of material and/or technique the candidate has benefited from the course and gained some useful knowledge; Or For answers which while substantially unfinished or otherwise incomplete or in large part irrelevant, nonetheless provide evidence that the candidate has the basis for a sound response to the problem or issue
30-34 Work which is not satisfactory but contains elements indicating some work or effort	Based on the display of some very limited knowledge gained from study and an attempt to construct an argument or discussion but significantly flawed by the inclusion of irrelevant content and/or use of inappropriate method.
15-29 Clearly failing work	Deserving of some recognition only for making an effort and showing a little knowledge has been gained and a minimally coherent presentation of material or argument has been attempted
1-14 Seriously failing work	Only isolated knowledge displayed
0 No work or work disqualified for lateness or on disciplinary grounds	

Appendix E: UoR Rubric Review Tool

Criteria for Evaluating Rubrics	Baseline	Good	Exemplary
Alignment to Learning Outcomes 1. *Are your rubric criteria clearly linked to the module / programme learning outcomes? UoR Graduate Attributes? QAA subject benchmark statements?* 2. *Are your rubric descriptors appropriate for your programme level? E.g., There should be progression between L4, L5, L6 for UG level*	*rubric criteria are aligned to the module level outcomes in terms of knowledge, skills, techniques, scholarship and vocational achievement they assess *the performance level in the rubric descriptors is appropriate for the programme level.	baseline + * rubric criteria are aligned to the programme level learning outcomes * rubric criteria are aligned to the UoR graduate attributes	good + *rubric criteria are aligned to the subject specific QA indicators or external accreditation criteria *alignment to learning outcomes and criteria are jointly reviewed, discussed and revised by staff and students'
Clarity of Criteria 1. *Is the criteria choice appropriate for the level & assessment type?* 2. *Do the rubric criteria match the assessment brief?* 3. *Is there an appropriate / manageable number of criteria?* 4. *Are criteria measurable?* 5. *Are criteria sufficiently differentiated or do they overlap?* 6. *Is the language used accessible to students?*	* criteria are appropriate for the level & assessment type * criteria match those stated in the assessment brief * criteria number is manageable * criteria are measurable * the language used is accessible to students * criteria are sufficiently differentiated	baseline + * optional descriptions or guidance questions are provided for each criterion e.g. referencing - Have you used the APA referencing style?	good + * if these criteria are used for other module / programme assessments, their wording is consistent & helps students to identify potential skills transferability

Clarity of Scale & Grading Approach			
1. Is the grading approach (scoring or qualitative, holistic or analytical) appropriate for the assessment? 2. Is the grading approach transparent to endusers? 3. Is it clear how the final grade corresponds to the UoR marking ranges? 4. Is the scale range in a scoring rubric sufficiently distributed and differentiated? 5. Are the level labels appropriate?	*scale is suitable for the discipline and assessment type * it is clear if the rubric is analytic or holistic, scoring or qualitative * if a grade is awarded, it is clear how it corresponds to the UoR percentage marking ranges * scale ranges are sufficiently distributed and differentiated *scale labels are clear *scale labels or ranges show clear progression of achievement	baseline + * the grading approach is consistent across the module assignments where appropriate e.g. for similar assessment types, "good" always equals 50-59% and the same type of rubric and approach to grading is used	good + * the grading approach is consistent across the programme where appropriate * the level labels used consistently for similar assessment types across the programme
Criteria for Evaluating Rubrics	**Baseline**	**Good**	**Exemplary**
Clarity of the descriptors			
1. Are there descriptors for each level of achievement? 2. Are the descriptors sufficiently differentiated for each level of achievement? 3. Is the threshold / pass level clearly defined? 4. Is the language accessible to users? 5. Are they appropriate for the level of the course? 6. Does the language focus on the achievement & progress rather than deficiency? 7. Do the descriptors feed forward in a clear and succinct way?	*descriptors are provided for each level of achievement on the rubric criteria * descriptors are sufficiently differentiated for each criterion and level * the threshold / pass level is clearly established * descriptors are succinct, use positive phrasing and language accessible to students * descriptors make it clear how to improve	baseline + *the performance level in the rubric descriptors is appropriate for the programme level *there are exemplifications of the qualitative terms used such as "good", adequate", "excellent", "sufficient" * rubric descriptors for this assessment type are differentiated for levels 4,5,6 allowing for progression	good + *descriptors are jointly designed with students
Clarity of Expectations/ Guidance to students	* rubric is shared prior to an	baseline +	good +

1. *Is the rubric available to the students?* 2. *Are the students trained in using it?* 3. *Is there reference to it in programme materials?* 4. *Are students involved in designing / reviewing the rubric?*	assessment * rationale behind the rubric type and the grading approach are communicated to students *students are encouraged to use the rubric for self-assessment	* reference is made to the rubric throughout the module *formative and summative feedback provided on the assessment are linked to the rubric criteria and descriptors *students are guided in using the rubric for peer and/or self-evaluation * feedback from students informs the rubric design/ review	*rubric is regularly referred to during the programme to help students identify the skills and knowledge they are developing *faculty and students are jointly responsible for design of rubrics and students use them in peer and/or self-evaluation
Clarity of Expectations/ Guidance to markers 1. *Are appropriate standardisation & moderation procedures in place?* 2. *Does the use of rubric result in an acceptable degree of marker consensus (inter-rater reliability)?* 3. *Does the use of rubric result in one marker's consistency (intra-rater reliability)?* 4. *Are staff involved in the rubric design / review?*	* standardisation procedures are in place and sessions are held before every marking period * the same rubric is used to mark the same module assessment by multiple markers *cross-scoring by faculty and/or students occasionally produces inconsistent results	baseline + * rubrics are amended when required to add clarity and/or remove ambiguities *there is general agreement between different scorers when using the rubric (e.g. differs by less than 5-10% or less than ½ level)	good + *cross-scoring of assessments using rubric results in consistent agreement among scorers with a difference in scoring of no more than 5 percentage points *staff are involved in the rubric design / review

Adapted from: Gilbert, S. (2015). Rubric for Rubrics. A Tool for Assessing the Quality and Use of Rubrics in Education. Retrieved from http://www.tltgroup.org/resources/Rubrics/A_Rubric_for_Rubrics.htm

UoR Rubric review tool developed by Svetlana Mazhurnaya and Rubrics Working Group.