

NCAD Grade Descriptors

Grade descriptors act as guidelines for students and academic staff. The grade descriptors below have been approved by the NCAD Academic Council to provide general guidance and should be adapted to the particular needs of the examiners and the relevant module assessment.

A+ A A-

Work submitted for assessment that achieves a grade in the A band will be excellent. It will demonstrate most or all of the following qualities:

Assessment Criteria*	Undergraduate degree pre-final years Undergraduate certificate and diploma	Additional qualities for final year undergraduate and taught postgraduate
Knowledge & Understanding	Deep knowledge and critical understanding of contexts relating to the work, including, where appropriate, professional ones.	High levels of critical thinking, comprehensive and deep research.
Application & Realisation	Discerning and thorough selection, testing and/or employment of appropriate sources, materials, techniques and/or concepts.	Sophisticated synthesis.
Organisation & Engagement	Demonstrable evidence of highly effective organisation (including planning, meeting deadlines, preparedness).	Strong evidence of high levels of enterprise, initiative and independence.
Communication & Presentation	Inventive and eloquent expression and presentation of ideas and/or the results of the work undertaken.	Highly relevant and scrupulous.
Creativity & Resourcefulness	A confident response to the task which demonstrates flair and ambition.	Demonstrable originality.

B+ B B-

Work submitted for assessment that achieves a grade in the B band will be very good. It will demonstrate most or all of the following qualities:

Assessment Criteria*	Undergraduate degree pre-final years Undergraduate certificate and diploma	Additional qualities for final year undergraduate and taught postgraduate
Knowledge & Understanding	Well-informed understanding of appropriate contexts relating to the work, including, where appropriate, professional ones.	Very good levels of critical thinking and extensive research.
Application & Realisation	Thorough selection, testing and/or employment of suitable sources, materials, techniques and/or concepts in relation to the task.	Significant levels of synthesis, and a thorough application of skills and knowledge.
Organisation & Engagement	Effective organisation in relation to planning, meeting deadlines, preparedness.	Ample evidence of enterprise and initiative.
Communication & Presentation	Coherent, well-structured expression and presentation of ideas and/or the results of the tasks undertaken.	Clear, focused and very well managed presentation.
Creativity & Resourcefulness	A response to the task which demonstrates ingenuity and/or imagination.	Demonstrable inventiveness.

C+ C C-

Work submitted for assessment that achieves a grade in the C band will be good. It will demonstrate most or all of the following qualities:

Assessment Criteria*	Undergraduate degree pre-final years Undergraduate certificate and diploma	Additional qualities for final year undergraduate and taught postgraduate
Knowledge & Understanding	Reasonable understanding of appropriate contexts relating to the work, including, where appropriate, professional ones.	Critical thinking and research which, is proficient and/or methodical.
Application & Realisation	Appropriate selection, testing and/or employment of sources, materials, techniques and/or concepts in relation to the task.	Reasonable synthesis.
Organisation & Engagement	Effective organisation in relation to planning, meeting deadlines, preparedness, etc.	Some evidence of initiative or enterprise.
Communication & Presentation	Cogent expression and presentation of ideas and/or the results of the tasks undertaken.	Competent expression and analysis.
Creativity & Resourcefulness	A fair response to the task which shows a good level of ingenuity and/or inventiveness.	Some evidence of originality.

* See page 3 for details.

D+ D D-

Work submitted for assessment that achieves a grade in the D band will be satisfactory. It will demonstrate most or all of the following qualities:

Assessment Criteria*	Undergraduate degree pre-final years Undergraduate certificate and diploma	Additional qualities for final year undergraduate and taught postgraduate
Knowledge & Understanding	Moderate understanding of appropriate contexts relating to the work, including, where appropriate, professional ones.	Partial evidence of critical thinking and research.
Application & Realisation	Generally basic deployment of appropriate sources, materials, techniques and/or concepts in relation to the task.	Limited development of ideas.
Organisation & Engagement	Adequate planning, preparedness and other organisational activities required to complete the work.	Minimum levels of initiative and enterprise.
Communication & Presentation	Incomplete presentation and/or limited expression of ideas and/or the results of the tasks undertaken.	Presentation and communication lacks consistency.
Creativity & Resourcefulness	Sufficient evidence of imagination and ingenuity.	Limited evidence of ambition.

E+ E E-

Work submitted for assessment that achieves a grade in the E band will be unsatisfactory. It may achieve satisfactory levels in terms of some of the qualities outlined below, but does not meet the overall threshold to pass. As such it will be a marginal fail.

Assessment Criteria*	Undergraduate degree pre-final years Undergraduate certificate and diploma	Additional qualities for final year undergraduate and taught postgraduate
Knowledge & Understanding	Insufficient understanding of appropriate contexts relating to the work including, where appropriate, professional ones.	Insufficient evidence of critical thinking.
Application & Realisation	Poor engagement and application of sources, materials, techniques and/or concepts in relation to the task. The student may have chosen inappropriate materials or has not followed the 'brief' set.	
Organisation & Engagement	Inadequate planning, preparedness and/or other organisational activities required to complete the work.	
Communication & Presentation	Incomplete presentation and/or insufficiently coherent expression of ideas and/or the results of the tasks undertaken.	
Creativity & Resourcefulness	Minimal evidence of creative originality and imagination.	

F

Work submitted for assessment that achieves an F will be deemed a fail. It will not have achieved satisfactory levels of achievement in all or most of the qualities outlined above.

Assessment criteria

Knowledge and Understanding

Capacity to undertake (independent) research, to identify and collate appropriate materials, ideas, concepts, theories, debates, formula, in relation to a subject and know how to interpret and discuss these.

Application and Realisation

Application of skills and knowledge to address the assessment tasks; shows students' capacity to apply what is learnt to the assessment task; show reasoning, deduction, solving problems, making sense of their learning.

Realisation is linked to resolution, judgement, evaluation and making choices, it shows students' ability to realise their efforts in the final outcome, and relate this to the wider context.

Organisation and Engagement

Organising, managing and completing the assessment task within a timeframe, meeting deadlines; ability to manage complex situations; shows capacity to be a self-directed learner. Also this category includes organising of ideas and values.

Engagement is both a process and an outcome. It is linked to student interactions, and commitment. Students learn how to ask and answer questions, show the extent to which they have actively engaged with the learning and assessment tasks, achieved learning outcomes, and interacted positively within the learning environment, ie, demonstrated an awareness of interaction with and responsiveness to others in the learning environment and/or in placement contexts.

Communication and Presentation

Quality execution, coherent, clear presentation, evidence of making connections and integration of ideas, also demonstrates judgement, evaluation and editing. Complete a bibliography, appropriate and accurate use of referencing.

Creativity and Resourcefulness

Independent thought and expression, experimentation, ambition in response to an assessment task, ingenuity, the ability to analyse, process, select, construct, assemble and resolve an assessment task beyond the terms of the task set.