

## SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY – PGT MARKING CRITERIA

In general, a high mark in a given class or band would be awarded to a piece of work that met the criteria fully and showed clear strengths in the attributes described. Relative weakness in one attribute may be offset by high achievement on another aspect of the work. In contrast, a low mark in a given class or band would be awarded to a piece of work which met the criteria generally but either did not show clear strength across the attributes described or where there is clear weakness in an attribute which is only partially offset by strengths elsewhere.

Class	Data Analysis Problems	Shorter Essay (up to 2000 words) These criteria are also used for essay-style examination answers	Longer Essay (3000-4000 words)	Research dissertation (NB statistical significance in results is not a requirement for a high mark)	Mark %
Distinction	An outstanding answer, well written and demonstrating a full appreciation of the problem and how to analyse it. Where appropriate a critical analysis of the data is provided	An outstanding answer, well written, logical and critical. Shows originality, flair and a full understanding of the subject. Where appropriate there is strong evidence of the use of a very wide range of sources, going beyond information provided e.g. in reading lists	Outstanding answer, showing evidence of a deep understanding of the subject and using a very wide range of sources going beyond information provided (e.g., in reading lists). The approach to the subject shows originality and flair.	Outstanding dissertation, showing initiative, originality, independence and thoughtfulness in analysis and interpretation of results and where feasible in design and execution of the research. Produced to a high standard acceptable as a journal submission (though statistically significance in results is not a requirement). Where appropriate there is evidence of a very wide range of sources.	<b>95, 88, 82</b>
	An excellent answer demonstrating a good understanding of the problem and fully analyzing the data	An excellent, full account, showing appreciation of all the main points, well written, critical and logical. Where appropriate there is strong evidence of the use of a wide range of sources, going beyond information provided (e.g., in reading lists)	Excellent answer, showing evidence of wide knowledge and understanding of the subject and/or originality of approach. A wide range of sources is used, going beyond information provided (e.g., in reading lists).	Excellent dissertation, showing evidence of initiative, originality, independence and thoughtfulness as feasible in the design, execution, and reporting of the work. Where appropriate there is evidence of the use of a wide range of sources.	<b>78, 75, 72</b>
Merit	A good answer demonstrating a reasonable understanding of the problem and accurately analysing most of the data	Comprehensive answer, clear, logical and accurate. Well structured, showing a sound grasp of the subject, and ability to think about it effectively	Comprehensive, well-organised and accurate answer, drawing on a fairly wide range of information and showing good grasp of relevant theory	Well-executed dissertation written up with clarity. Evidence of care and application in design, execution and reporting. Alternatively, an original and demanding dissertation, lacking the completeness necessary for a distinction.	<b>68, 65, 62</b>
Pass	Satisfactory answer demonstrating some knowledge of the problem and the ability to interpret a significant amount of the data	Satisfactory answer, with few substantive errors and omissions, but limited in scope and argument. Adequately structured. May be a good answer to a closely related but simpler question.	Adequately organised answer showing some grasp of theory and its relation to empirical data, but little insight or grasp of wider issues, and lacking originality.	Adequately organised and competent dissertation, but only a basic understanding of the point of the study. The dissertation may indicate a lack of attention to detail and other problems.	<b>58, 55, 52</b>
Marginal Fail	An answer that demonstrates some understanding but does not provide enough detail.	An answer with some basic merit, but with many errors and omissions, or sparse and irrelevant information. Poorly structured, with little detail. May be an acceptable answer to a related question.	Answer shows some understanding, but does not demonstrate sufficient engagement with the literature. There may be an over-use of secondary sources, and deficiencies in organisation and scope.	Dissertation conforms to basic format but is scrappily presented. Little attention to detail or design issues. Data not appropriately analysed or not fully analysed.	<b>48, 45</b>
Absolute Fail	Very rudimentary data analysis but with major omissions and/or flaws.	May contain some material relevant to parts of the question but with substantial errors, omissions and irrelevancies. Little or no detail.	An incomplete, inaccurate and poorly argued answer. Very poor organisation.	The dissertation contains some data but it is otherwise brief and perfunctory. There are some basic elements of research design, but key aspects are incomplete or badly executed. Exceptionally, a mark in this range may be given to a student whose work in the lab/field is satisfactory but who either fails to submit a report or whose report is seriously deficient in its account of the work done.	<b>42, 38, 35</b>
	No data analysis, or seriously flawed in conception, execution and presentation. Little or no evidence of being able to apply relevant knowledge of research methodology.	Totally inadequate or completely wrong answer. No more information than you would expect from a lay person, or full of misconceptions, errors and irrelevancies	No answer, or disconnected and mostly irrelevant fragments. No evidence of library research.	No dissertation, no evidence of data collection or seriously flawed in conception, execution and presentation. Little or no evidence of being able to apply relevant knowledge of research methodology.	<b>30, 20, 10, 0</b>

## SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY – PGT MARKING CRITERIA

Class	Assessed Presentations	Posters	Research Proposal	Mark %
Distinction	Outstanding presentation that shows originality in exposition as well as clarity, accuracy and thoroughness. There will be significant evidence of critical insight. Substantial effort will have been made to stimulate discussion. Sophisticated analysis will have been applied to the arguments and empirical evidence presented. Materials will be clear, stimulating and well-organised. The presentation will be well structured, skillfully delivered.	Outstanding poster that meets all the criteria of the lower Distinction band and in addition: offers substantial evidence of the students' insight and thoughtful analysis of the literature; has content that is well above expected level of analysis and insight; convincingly integrates material; includes clear evidence of original thinking and innovative ideas.	Outstanding proposal, having the features of the lower Distinction band and in addition: there is evidence of a creative and parsimonious choice of research methods which minimise threats to the validity of outcomes; demonstrates an excellent understanding of ethical issues relating to the proposal; produced to a high standard acceptable as a research protocol, journal submission, or report for a professional audience.	<b>95, 88, 82</b>
	Excellent presentation that shows originality in exposition as well as clarity, accuracy and thoroughness. Effort will have been made to stimulate discussion. There will have been appropriate analysis of the arguments and empirical evidence presented. The presentation itself will be clear, organised, and delivered effectively.	Excellent poster. The rationale is made clear and kept brief. Key aspects of the method and results are highlighted without any clutter. Take-home message is very clearly stated. Excellent use of figures and visual presentation. Meets all the criteria for a Merit and in addition, there is substantial evidence of the students' insight and analysis of the literature <b>OR</b> the poster convincingly integrates material going beyond core reading.	Excellent proposal, clearly written and showing evidence of initiative, originality and thoughtfulness in the design of the research. Clearly describes how threats to validity are addressed within the chosen research methods. Demonstrates a clear understanding of ethical issues relating to the proposal, and critically evaluates the strengths and limitations of the proposal Where appropriate there is evidence of the use of a wide range of sources.	<b>78, 75, 72</b>
Merit	Presentation has appropriate content and a logical structure. There is a clear and focused exposition of the chosen material, with no major errors or omissions. Presentation is delivered clearly. Analysis of key conceptual and empirical issues will be evident; evidence will be used to support or illustrate theoretical points and interpretations. Some attempt will be made at promoting discussion (for example by making use of pre-prepared discussion points).	Poster is generally clear and well-presented but could be improved. The rationale, in terms of the wider research context, is made clear. Layout of poster facilitates logical flow of content. Key aspects of the methods and results are highlighted without clutter. The analysis of the literature is appropriate and explained well. Good use of figures and visual presentation. Evidence of wide reading and good use of material. The conclusions drawn are appropriate for the results obtained and reveal evidence of independent thought. Take-home message is stated clearly	A well organised proposal, written up with clarity, and demonstrating evidence of care and application in design of the study. Demonstrates an understanding of ethical issues relating to the proposal, and critically evaluates the strengths and limitations of the proposal. Alternatively, a proposal for an original and demanding project lacking the completeness necessary for a distinction.	<b>68, 65, 62</b>
Pass	Presentation provides an adequate, if perhaps unsophisticated, answer; it is likely to be limited in scope and argument. It may suffer from omission of key material and/or sub-optimal structure. Source material may be appropriate but it is unlikely to be organized conceptually (e.g., it is presented paper-by- paper, or as listed in sources). Presentation lacks attempts at original analysis. Exposition is likely to lack clarity and focus and may reflect lack of understanding of complex arguments or evidence. Irrelevant material may be included.	Poster is adequate but lacks clarity in a number of places. The layout lacks structure and does not facilitate flow of the content. The rationale, in terms of the wider research context, is stated but lacks focus. The method and results can be generally understood but require more explanation. Too many/too few figures and visual aids <b>OR</b> level of detail inappropriate. The review is relevant but lacks depth, <b>OR</b> good level of detail in some areas but important aspects are missing. The conclusions drawn are appropriate for the results obtained but lack critical insight. Take-home message stated but lacks clarity/focus	An adequately organised and competent proposal, but showing only a basic understanding of the purpose of the project. Proposal reflects little determination to overcome the challenges in designing the project. Demonstrates a limited understanding of ethical issues relating to the proposal, and presented limited critical evaluation the strengths and limitations of the proposal. Lack of attention to detail in writing up the proposal.	<b>58, 55, 52</b>
Marginal Fail	Presentation is likely to be very basic in terms of topic coverage, sources used, and understanding demonstrated. It is likely to be under-researched and inadequately prepared. Misunderstandings, omissions or errors are likely to combine with poor structure and lack of clarity. Delivery is likely to be poor, reflecting lack of preparation, or to be characterized by confusion, either due to lack of understanding or failure in communication.	Poster is very basic, with weaknesses in most areas. The layout lacks structure and does not facilitate flow of the content. The rationale, in terms of the wider research context, is stated but lacks focus. The method and results can be generally understood but require more explanation. Too many/too few figures and visual aids <b>OR</b> level of detail inappropriate. The review lacks depth and/or important aspects are missing. The conclusions and take-home message are unclear.	Proposal may show some very basic knowledge, but there are weaknesses in most areas. Demonstrates little understanding of ethical issues relating to the proposal, and limited critical evaluation of the strengths and limitations of the proposal. May be untidily presented.	<b>48, 45</b>
Absolute Fail	Presentation lacks a clear definition of the topic area, and demonstrate little understanding. It is poorly structured and delivered, with substantial omissions, errors, and irrelevancies. Materials, if present, will lack clarity.	Poster fails to convey most of the essential points clearly. The rationale is unclear. The presentation is cluttered and overly detailed. The method and results cannot be clearly discerned. Inappropriate use of figures and other visual aids. The literature summary is very scant. The analysis of the literature is inadequate or inappropriate. The conclusions drawn are sketchy and reveal a failure to understand core concepts. No clear take-home message.	The proposal may contain fragments of relevant information but is otherwise brief and perfunctory, with many significant weaknesses. There may be some basic elements of study design but key aspects are incomplete or poorly executed.	<b>42, 38, 35</b>
	Presentation, if delivered at all, is weak in all areas and demonstrates little or no understanding of the topic.	No understanding of basic principles of poster presentation, or no poster was prepared.	No proposal or a proposal that is seriously flawed in conception and presentation. Proposal shows no evidence of being able to apply relevant knowledge of research methodology to the project.	<b>30, 20, 10, 0</b>

## SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY – PGT MARKING CRITERIA

Class	Problem Based Learning Report	Reflective Practice Report for MSc	Mark %
Distinction	This is an outstanding problem based learning report. The reports shows a high degree of originality and resourcefulness in the way the student went about collecting data or evidence. The formulation will be very well developed, showing some significant flair, and be well grounded in appropriate theory. The formulation will be very well structured (usually drawing on more than one psychological model or theory) and very presented. The student will also have demonstrated an excellent grasp of the key developmental and lifespan issues and their impact on the person's difficulties. The formulation will demonstrate a high degree of thoughtfulness, sensitivity and reflexivity. The responses to the questions will be well argued and grounded in evidence. The quality of the 'evidence' will have been thoughtfully and critically evaluated and the written responses to the questions set will demonstrate an accurate, mature and reflective approach to the key issues raised. The responses will be interesting and thought provoking and demonstrate significant originality in thinking. There will be very few grammatical, typographical or referencing errors in the report.	This is a good reflective report. It demonstrates a good level of personal insight and a capacity to learn from experience. It also provides an open and honest account of the learning process and an ability to reflect on how personal experiences may have shaped the student's understanding of the case. The student will have reviewed and critiqued the approach they took to answering the questions set and explored how this might have influenced their formulation. They will have been able to reflect on any personal experiences that might have influenced their understanding of the case and the type of formulation (or hypotheses) they developed. They will also have been able to reflect on personal strengths or experiences that they feel might help them to work with this sort of client in a future caring role. The reflective report will be well structured and presented with few grammatical, typographical or referencing errors.	<b>95, 88, 82</b>
	This is an excellent problem based learning report. The student will have developed a clear and appropriate research strategy to gather evidence for the report. The formulation will be clear, accurate and well presented and it will draw appropriately on the evidence base. It will cover most of the key issues and provide a thoughtful and reflexive explanation for what might be going on for the client. There will be evidence of originality in thinking and it is likely that more than one psychological model or theory will have been drawn upon. The student will have drawn on several sources of 'evidence' in order to produce thoughtful and coherent responses to the questions set. The responses to the questions will be of a high standard and the student will have demonstrated a good grasp of the key clinical issues. The student will have demonstrated some critical appreciation of the evidence base which they are drawing on to develop their arguments and the report will be well structured and presented with very few grammatical, typographical or referencing errors.		<b>78, 75, 72</b>
Merit	This is a good problem based learning report that is well organised and clearly presented. It is structured logically and develops its arguments in a systematic way. The research strategy was appropriate and well described, drawing on evidence from more than one source. The formulation will be logical and will offer a reasonable tentative explanation for what might be going on for the client. A number of the key issues will be incorporated into the formulation. The responses to the questions will be clear and appropriate and grounded in appropriate evidence. The content of the responses to most of the questions will be good, although there may be some minor factual errors. The student will have demonstrated a good awareness of key lifespan issues and their impact on the client. The responses to the questions will be clinically informed and clinically relevant. There may be some minor typographical, grammatical or referencing errors in the report.		<b>68, 65, 62</b>
Pass	This is an adequate problem based learning report. The formulation will be reasonably well developed and relatively easy to follow although some key aspects of the case may not have been considered. There will have been some attempts made to draw on an appropriate evidence base. At times, the student may have offered the formulation up in too much of a definitive way, ignoring other possible explanations for what might be going on. There may be some errors in content and some aspects of the formulation may not be clearly set out. A reasonable attempt will have been made to respond to the questions set and the student will have drawn on an evidence base to inform answers to these questions. There may be some errors in factual content or the report may miss key issues. There may be several grammatical, typographical or referencing errors.		<b>58, 55, 52</b>
Marginal Fail	This is very basic problem based learning report. The research strategy may be limited or poorly described with little rationale for it given. The formulation will have made an attempt to make sense of the client's difficulties but may be somewhat incoherent or may fail to address key issues. There may be little structure to the formulation or it may be poorly described or presented. The student may also have failed to draw on any substantial theory. The student will have made an attempt to respond to the questions set but some of these will contain errors or have missed key issues. There may be several factual errors and/or there may be a significant number of grammatical, typographical or referencing errors.	This reflective account fails to meet most or all of the standards set out above. The account may contain little reflection or be poorly structured and presented. The arguments made may be difficult to follow. There may be significant grammatical, typographical or referencing errors. Reports with the lowest marks will show significant deficiencies throughout.	<b>48, 45</b>
Absolute Fail	This problem based learning report fails to meet expected standards. The research strategy may be very limited or not described and there may be no rationale for it given. The formulation may be poorly written, inaccurate, confusing and/or poorly structured. There may be little sensitivity to key issues. The responses to the questions will be generally inadequate. The student may have failed to review key sources of evidence that might help to inform the questions set. The student may have failed to answer the question as set. The report itself may be poorly presented and contain a very significant number of grammatical, typographical or referencing errors.		<b>42, 38, 35</b>
	No problem based learning report submitted, or the report has very serious deficiencies throughout.		<b>30, 20, 10, 0</b>

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Class	Reflective Practice Report for PGDip	Longer Essay (3000 words) for PGDip	Case Report	Mark %
Distinction	This is an outstanding reflective report. The student will have demonstrated a high degree of flair and originality in the way they went about producing this report. They will have demonstrated a very thoughtful and mature approach to learning and a willingness to explore the links between the personal and the professional in a very sophisticated way. The report will be very well structured and very well written. It will be personally engaging and demonstrate considerable psychological insight. Difficult experiences may be described and the learning from this thoughtfully considered. The reflective account will be underpinned with appropriate psychological theory although the account won't have become overly theoretical at the cost of depth of personal reflection. The level of insight and emotional maturity demonstrated in this report will be exceptional. It will be very well presented with very few grammatical, typographical or referencing errors.	This is an outstanding piece of work. The content of this essay shows extensive, in-depth knowledge of subject, demonstrating originality and vision in the application of knowledge to form judgements on theories, concepts and principles. The student will demonstrate outstanding knowledge of theoretical background and critical analysis of relevant research. The student will have shown creativity, challenging boundaries through well-presented arguments and a meticulous, well-supported analysis and synthesis. The student will have demonstrated insightful reflection and reflexivity in issues involved. Work will be presented in a sophisticated manner and will be of publishable quality. There will be evidence of comprehensive use of appropriate source material beyond the expected.	This is an outstanding case report that demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of the presenting difficulty and treatment strategies under consideration. The report will show extensive, in-depth knowledge of current theoretical models and an ability to critically analyse and synthesise relevant research studies, using the theory to underpin demonstration of treatment strategies. Theories and evidence will be integrated with discussions of clinical practice and students will show evidence of original thought and creativity in their analysis and synthesis. Work will be presented in a sophisticated manner and will be of publishable quality. There will be evidence of comprehensive use of appropriate source material beyond the expected.	<b>95, 88, 82</b>
	This is an excellent reflective report. It will demonstrate most of the qualities described above. The student will have demonstrated a thoughtful approach to learning and a willingness to explore the links between the personal and the professional in a sophisticated way. The report will be very well structured and very well written. It will be personally engaging and demonstrate considerable psychological insight. Difficult experiences may be described and the learning from this thoughtfully considered. The reflective account will be underpinned with appropriate psychological theory although the account won't have become overly theoretical at the cost of depth of personal reflection. The student will have demonstrated insight and emotional maturity. It will be very well presented with few grammatical, typographical or referencing errors	This is an excellent essay. It will demonstrate most of the qualities described above. The content of this essay shows extensive knowledge of subject, demonstrating originality and vision in the application of knowledge to form judgements on theories, concepts and principles. The student will demonstrate excellent knowledge of theoretical background and critical analysis of relevant research. The student will have shown creativity in their arguments, with a robust analysis and synthesis. The student will have demonstrated insightful reflection and reflexivity in issues involved. There will be evidence of the use of appropriate source material beyond the expected. Work will be presented very effectively, with few typographical or referencing errors	This is an excellent case report that demonstrates most of the qualities described above. The report will show extensive knowledge of current theoretical models and an ability to critically analyse and synthesise relevant research studies, using the theory to underpin demonstration of treatment strategies. Theories and evidence will be integrated with discussions of clinical practice and students will show evidence of original thought and creativity in their analysis and synthesis. Effective use of appropriate source material beyond the expected. Work will be presented very effectively, with few typographical or referencing errors	<b>78, 75, 72</b>
Merit	This is a good reflective report. It demonstrates a good level of personal insight and a capacity to learn from experience. It also provides an open and honest account of the learning process and an ability to reflect on personal experiences. The student will also have been able to reflect on the personal strengths or experiences that they feel might help them to work with clients using similar formulations. The reflective report will be well structured and presented with few grammatical, typographical or referencing errors	This essay shows good knowledge of subject area with thorough coverage. Material will be analysed and synthesised in a clear and concise way demonstrating a good knowledge base on which to form judgements on theories, concepts and principles. The student will demonstrate critical analysis and synthesis of relevant research. The student will present well thought through arguments and a well-supported analysis and synthesis. The essay shows insightful reflection of issues involved and some reflexivity. There will be evidence of use of appropriate source material beyond the expected with work presented in a concise way in line with the requirements of the task, demonstrating skilled use of academic conventions and accurate proof reading.	A case report of this standard will demonstrate a good level of competency but will not demonstrate all the features described above. The report will show a good knowledge of current theoretical models and an ability to critically analyse and synthesise relevant research studies, using the theory to underpin demonstration of treatment strategies. Theories and evidence will be integrated with discussions of clinical practice and students will show evidence of good critical analysis and synthesis. Work will be comprehensive and clearly written but is not of publishable quality. There will be evidence of the use of appropriate source material beyond the expected.	<b>68, 65, 62</b>

## SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY – PGT MARKING CRITERIA

<b>Pass</b>	This is a satisfactory reflective report. The student will have made some reasonable attempts to reflect on their learning experience. The student will have shown that they have attempted to make links between aspects of personal and professional development and their learning. The student may also have found it difficult to think clearly about how their own personal experiences may have influenced the formulation they developed, but they have attempted to make some links. The reflective account will show structure and should follow a logical format. There may be some minor grammatical, typographical and referencing errors.	This essay shows adequate knowledge of subject and appropriate coverage. Material will be presented in a generally clear and concise way demonstrating an adequate knowledge base on which to form judgements on theories, concepts and principles. The student will demonstrate some critical analysis and synthesis of relevant research. The essay includes appropriate arguments, and the student will have exhibited relevant reflection on the issues involved. The essay follows a logical format. There may be some minor grammatical, typographical and referencing errors.	A case report of this standard will show adequate understanding of the implications of relevant theory and research as applied to clinical practice. The report will show knowledge of relevant theoretical models and satisfactory ability to critically analyse and synthesise relevant research studies, using the theory to underpin demonstration of treatment strategies. There may be minor errors in presented theory and strategy. The report should follow a logical format but there may be areas of repetition. There may be some grammatical, typographical and referencing errors.	<b>58, 55, 52</b>
<b>Marginal Fail</b>	This is an unsatisfactory reflective report. The student will have made some attempts to reflect on their learning experience but this will not be sufficient. The student may have struggled with making links between aspects of personal and professional development and their learning, or these links may have been made in a superficial way. The student may also have found it difficult to think clearly about how their own personal experiences may have influenced the formulation they developed. The reflective account will show structure but may at times be difficult to follow, with areas of repetition and grammatical, typographical and referencing errors.	This essay shows less than adequate knowledge of subject area with a limited range of sources. Material will lack clarity and conciseness. The student may show little critical analysis and synthesis of relevant research. The student's arguments may lack cohesion and synthesis. The student's reflection on issues involved may lack insight. The essay might follow a logical format but there may be areas of repetition with grammatical, typographical and referencing errors.	A case report of this standard may show some understanding of the implications of relevant theory and research as applied to clinical practice but there will be obvious gaps in this knowledge. The report may show some knowledge of relevant theoretical models but only limited ability to critically analyse and synthesise relevant research studies. There may be some use of theory to underpin the demonstration of treatment strategies, but there may be minor errors in presented theory and strategy. The report might follow a logical format but there may be areas of repetition with grammatical, typographical and referencing errors.	<b>48, 45</b>
<b>Absolute Fail</b>	This is a perfunctory reflective report. There may have been little attempt made to explore how the student's own personal experiences may have influenced the formulation they developed. The links made between personal and professional development and their own learning may feel weak and the ideas may be poorly formed. The reflective account may lack structure or may be poorly written or difficult to follow. There may also be numerous grammatical, typographical and referencing errors	This essay shows significant limitations in knowledge of subject area, with a very limited range of sources. The theoretical underpinning will be descriptive and inadequate, showing a lack of critical analysis and synthesis. The student will present poor or little argument with limited reflection of issues involved. Work will not meet academic conventions; there may be unsubstantiated material, as well as poor punctuation, grammatical mistakes and errors in referencing.	A case report of this standard will show inadequate understanding of the implications of relevant theory and research as applied to clinical practice. The report will show poor knowledge of relevant theoretical models and a lack of critical analysis, with little or no attempt to synthesise relevant research studies. There will be minimal evidence of the ability to link theory to practice. Work will not meet academic conventions; there may be unsubstantiated material, as well as poor punctuation, grammatical mistakes and errors in referencing.	<b>42, 38, 35</b>
	No reflective account submitted, or the account has very serious deficiencies throughout	No essay submitted, or the essay has very serious deficiencies throughout	No case report submitted, or the report has very serious deficiencies throughout	<b>30, 20, 10, 0</b>