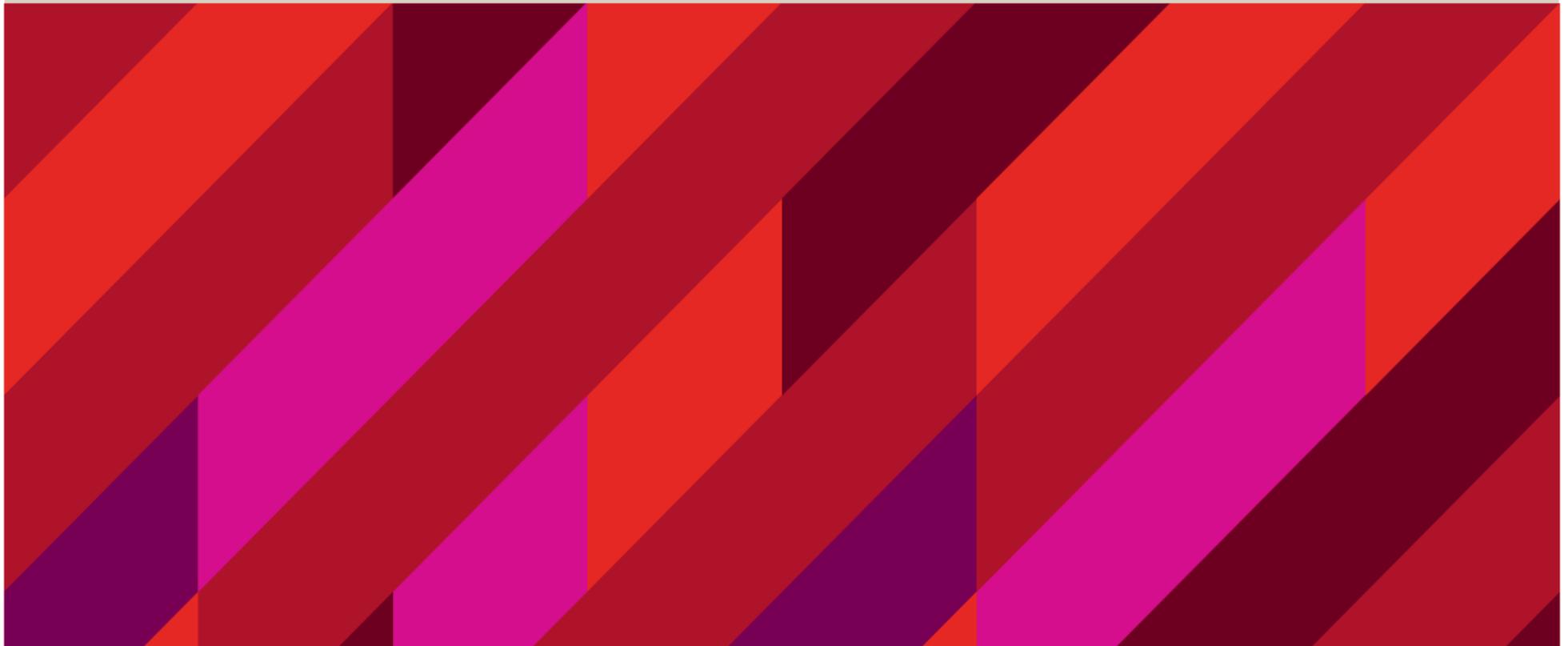


# Assessment rubrics, marking guidelines and performance standards

**Assessment Workshop 2: 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2017**

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# Continuing the theme:

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How do we ensure that the assessment process is highly valued by students - not simply seen as an endpoint but as an opportunity for them to be *actively* involved in their own learning?

*Today we focus on the role of rubrics, marking guidelines and performance standards*

# Aims of the workshop:

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- Define outcomes, rubrics, marking guidelines and performance standards.
- Explain why these assessment features are important.
- Outline what the research says about the characteristics of effective rubrics & marking guidelines.
- Examine some examples of rubrics and marking guidelines
- Open discussion about ideas/issues/concerns

# Defining the key terms.

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## Outcomes

What a learner is expected to know, understand, and/or be able to demonstrate after completion of a process of learning. They are expressed in terms of the dimensions of knowledge, skills and the application of knowledge and skills

(The AQF Second Edition January 2013, p. 11).

# Effective outcomes . . .

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- use *one verb* that is aligned to the level of the course/program.
  - Focus on content/skills that are *significant and meaningful* in the long term and *aligned to program learning outcomes, level of study, faculty and university strategic priorities and values*.
  - *Can be effectively assessed*.

# Rubrics

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Rubrics provide a **brief outline of the assessment criteria**. They outline the properties or characteristics used to judge the quality of student performance.

The purpose of a rubric is to help **focus student attention** and **highlight the factors that will be considered** in the assessment of their work.

Rubrics signal to students **what is valued** in an assessment task

*They enable **informed decision making** which, in turn, promotes student **autonomy and ownership of learning** (Panadero & Romero, 2014).*

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Sadler (1987) suggests that rubrics should express criteria as a noun phrase which does not imply a specific quality.

**Example:**

In this task you will be assessed on:

- Your depth of understanding of the interrelationships between key concepts
- The quality of your expression
- The application of appropriate referencing procedures
- The structure of your response

# Marking scales/guidelines

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*A matrix that provides descriptions of levels of performance against the criteria for a specific task.*

## The use of marking scales/guidelines:

- Promotes a common understanding of levels of student performance against criteria.
- Reduces student anxiety about expectations and provides a tool for self-evaluation.
- Facilitates increased efficiency in marking and grading processes.

Marking scales/guidelines need to be aligned with BOTH the unit learning outcomes and MQ grade descriptors.

# Achievement standards

(e.g. the MQ generic grade descriptors)



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Grade	Descriptor
<b>HD</b> (High Distinction)	Provides consistent evidence of deep and critical understanding in relation to the learning outcomes. There is substantial originality and insight in identifying, generating and communicating competing arguments, perspectives or problem solving approaches; critical evaluation of problems, their solutions and their implications; creativity in application as appropriate to the discipline.
<b>D</b> (Distinction)	Provides evidence of integration and evaluation of critical ideas, principles and theories, distinctive insight and ability in applying relevant skills and concepts in relation to learning outcomes. There is demonstration of frequent originality in defining and analysing issues or problems and providing solutions; and the use of means of communication appropriate to the discipline and the audience.
<b>Cr</b> (Credit)	Provides evidence of learning that goes beyond replication of content knowledge or skills relevant to the learning outcomes. There is demonstration of substantial understanding of fundamental concepts in the field of study and the ability to apply these concepts in a variety of contexts; convincing argumentation with appropriate coherent justification; communication of ideas fluently and clearly in terms of the conventions of the discipline.
<b>P</b> (Pass)	Provides sufficient evidence of the achievement of learning outcomes. There is demonstration of understanding and application of fundamental concepts of the field of study; routine argumentation with acceptable justification; communication of information and ideas adequately in terms of the conventions of the discipline. The learning attainment is considered satisfactory or adequate or competent or capable in relation to the specified outcomes.

# Achievement standards

(e.g. the MQ generic grade descriptors)

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The MQ grade descriptors are **generic standards for reporting grades**. They serve as a set of general guidelines that define the central criteria for making grading decisions.

The MQ grade descriptors at the D and HD levels, focus on students' demonstration of:

- deep and critical understanding and
- originality, insight and creativity

**Marking scales/guidelines for individual tasks** - can include **a range criteria related to the learning outcomes** in a specific unit however . . .

**Grading decisions for individual tasks** - need to be made with reference to the **MQ grade descriptors**.

# The characteristics of effective rubrics & marking criteria

Some suggestions based on the research:

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- Design marking scales/guidelines in **collaboration with colleagues** (design-phase moderation).
- **Involve students in creating and applying marking scales/guidelines** to self-assess and peer-assess. This increases their understanding of assessment processes and enhances metacognitive awareness (Becker, 2016).
- Use **clear, concise and unambiguous language**.
- Focus on **core criteria** so that students know exactly what is important.
- Ensure that performance descriptors reflect **clear gradations in quality**.

# The characteristics of effective rubrics & marking criteria



Some suggestions based on the research:

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- Ensure that marking scales/guidelines are **aligned** with the standards (e.g. MQ grade descriptors), unit learning outcomes and task instructions.
- **Peer-marking** should occur among teachers to assess the effectiveness of a rubric.
- Provide rubrics and marking scales/guidelines to students **prior to them starting an assessment** and **sample responses** annotated against the performance criteria.
- Explain the purpose of the marking scale and rubric to students. **Model the use of these tools for self-reflection and self-assessment.**
- Give students an opportunity to **practice their use of the rubric.**
- **Make final grading decisions holistically**, based on a global judgement against the criteria.

# Example 1 – EDUC261

## Moodle Task

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- What is the task designed to achieve?
- How are the outcomes, criteria and task instructions aligned?
- How did you build the descriptors for the marking guidelines?
- Any other questions?

# Example 2 – SPED828

## Moodle Task

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- What is the task designed to achieve?
- How did you developed the criteria and marking scale descriptors?
- What is the rationale for the N/A for the D and HD levels (Criteria 1)
- Any other questions?

# The take-away message:

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*There is significant potential for well-designed rubrics and marking scales to enhance learning and actively involve students in their own learning.*

# Useful resources

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1. Assessment policy FAQ: <http://teche.ltc.mq.edu.au/human-science/assessment-policy-faqs/>
2. iLearn resources (Designing rubrics in GradeMark) - [https://www.mq.edu.au/iLearn/resources/grademark\\_rubrics.htm](https://www.mq.edu.au/iLearn/resources/grademark_rubrics.htm)
3. Writing assessment criteria and standards – a practical guide: University of Queensland

# Assessment Workshop 3

Assessment showcase - Tuesday 6th June, 1-2pm, X5B146

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I'm looking for case studies of Innovative assessment approaches including

- Authentic tasks
- Program-based assessment ideas
- Innovative tasks that engage students and promote learning
- Assessment designs that promote academic integrity
- Marking scales aligned to the MQ grade descriptors



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**Thank you**