

# OCA Assessment Criteria

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## 1. What are assessment criteria?

Assessment criteria provide a consistent and shared language to help students and assessors measure learning.

### How are criteria established?

Assessment criteria are benchmarked to the same national standards ([QAA Subject Benchmarks](#)), as your learning outcomes. These help to align the learning outcomes of your course unit, the activities you complete, and the way your work is then assessed.

### Knowledge, understanding & application

OCA has developed a set of assessment criteria common to all disciplines and courses. These are organised around the terms knowledge, understanding, and application. On page 2 these are defined, alongside a list of specific criteria that apply to each term.

### New and old criteria

The assessment criteria apply to all students submitting for assessment from August 2021 onwards. The criteria take account of previous versions, so there is no detriment to students through assessment.

### Using the criteria

The language of the criteria can seem academic and potentially daunting. Through preparing for assessment and your feedback you will become more familiar with how to use them.

## Stages of study

The assessment criteria are set out for each stage. A stage refers to your level of study:

- Stage One (Undergraduate, Level 1, HE4)
- Stage Two (Undergraduate, Level 2, HE5)
- Stage Three (Undergraduate, Level 3, HE6)
- Postgraduate (HE7)

Identify you have the correct stage by checking your course unit details.

## Criteria by stage

The language of the criteria differs across stages of study to reflect the depth of learning expected. For example, Stage One asks for 'an introductory awareness of...', Stage Two a 'deepening awareness of...', and by Stage Three this has grown to an 'in-depth awareness of...' to reflect the intended learning. This distinguishing language has been highlighted in ***bold italics*** throughout.

## Grade bandings

Grade bandings set out the range of marks that are available, alongside a description of the grade in relation to the assessment criteria.

For example, any number within the 60-69 banding will be described as having 'very good', 'thorough', 'confident' or 'strong' outcomes. These descriptive terms are underlined.

## Assessment grid

The three criteria are presented within an assessment grid, listing the different grade bandings and descriptions for each criteria.

## Summative feedback

Alongside feedback and feedforward, you will receive an overall mark for your assessment. Your achievements against each of the three assessment criteria will be indicated using the grade banding descriptions.

## Pass and fail

The pass mark is 40 and above. Fails are 39 and below.

## Support and guidance

Please log into OCA Learn's [Assessment Guidance](#) resource to get support and guidance on preparing and submitting for assessment.

Additional support, such as group sessions, are available via your Department Spaces on OCA Learn.

## 2. OCA Assessment Criteria

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### Knowledge

Knowledge can be defined as:

The extent to which knowledge of relevant concepts, practices, theories, and contexts are demonstrated.

Assessment Criteria that applies to Knowledge:

**Practical knowledge:** Demonstrate the use of technologies, methods, practices and processes related to the subject.

**Contextual knowledge:** Identify, define, and describe contemporary and historical practices, theories, and debates.

**Subject knowledge:** Identify, define, and describe appropriate principles, concepts and subject knowledge.

**Subject boundaries:** Acknowledge emerging practices and wider contexts, that shape subject knowledge and boundaries.

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### Understanding

Understanding can be defined as:

The level of understanding demonstrated through the testing and application of knowledge.

Assessment Criteria that applies to Understanding:

**Research:** Select, question, test, interpret and synthesize relevant knowledge to inform intentions, ideas, and outcomes.

**Critical thinking:** Apply critical thinking to develop an informed personal position.

**Creativity:** Apply curiosity, creativity, and intellectual enquiry to initiate, test, and articulate ideas and outcomes in inventive and individual ways.

### Application

Application can be defined as:

The degree to which knowledge and understanding are demonstrated through the application of technical, communication, personal, transferable, and graduate skills.

Assessment Criteria that applies to Application:

**Personal and transferable skills:** Use personal and transferable skills to effectively sustain independent learning and reflect on progress

**Graduate skills:** Apply transferable and graduate skills in establishing appropriate professional practices and standards.

**Practical skills:** Select, test and use materials, media and techniques to realise and present ideas and solutions.

**Technical skills:** Apply appropriate technical skills and processes to develop and produce outcomes.

**Communication skills:** Employ communication skills to effectively present ideas, intentions, and outcomes.

### 3. Assessment Grid for Undergraduate Stage One (HE4)

#### Knowledge

Demonstrating **an introductory awareness** of practical and contextual knowledge, and **an appreciation** of subject knowledge and boundaries.

#### Understanding

Selecting, testing and interpreting **a broad range** of research, and applying **competent** critical thinking and creativity to produce **effective** ideas and outcomes.

#### Application

Applying **introductory** personal and graduate skills to initiate and sustain studies and **initial** practice, and **broadly** relevant practical, technical, and communication skills to articulate ideas, and outcomes effectively.

#### Knowledge (Stage One)

##### 90–100

Demonstrating an exceptional introductory awareness of extensive practical and contextual knowledge, and a deep appreciation of subject knowledge and boundaries.

##### 80–89

Demonstrating outstanding introductory awareness of in depth practical and contextual knowledge, and a substantial appreciation of subject knowledge and boundaries.

##### 70–79

Demonstrating a significant introductory awareness of comprehensive practical and contextual knowledge, and a highly confident appreciation of subject knowledge and boundaries.

##### 60–69

Demonstrating a very good introductory awareness of thorough practical and contextual knowledge, and a confident appreciation of subject knowledge and boundaries.

##### 50–59

Demonstrating a good introductory awareness of sound practical and contextual knowledge, and a growing appreciation of subject knowledge and boundaries.

##### 40–49

Demonstrating an adequate introductory awareness of basic practical and contextual knowledge, and a broad appreciation of subject knowledge and boundaries.

##### 30–39

Demonstrating a limited introductory awareness of incomplete practical and contextual knowledge, and a narrow appreciation of subject knowledge and boundaries.

##### 0–29

Demonstrating little or no introductory awareness of very limited or no practical and contextual knowledge, and little or no appreciation of subject knowledge and boundaries.

## Understanding (Stage One)

### 90–100

Selecting, testing and interpreting extensive range of research, and applying outstanding critical thinking and creativity to produce exceptional ideas and outcomes.

### 80–89

Selecting, testing and interpreting in depth range of research, and applying accomplished critical thinking and creativity to produce outstanding ideas and outcomes.

### 70–79

Selecting, testing and interpreting comprehensive range of research, and applying confident critical thinking and creativity to produce excellent ideas and outcomes.

### 60–69

Selecting, testing and interpreting thorough range of research, and applying strong critical thinking and creativity to produce very good ideas and outcomes.

### 50–59

Selecting, testing and interpreting sound range of research, and applying competent critical thinking and creativity to produce good ideas and outcomes.

### 40–49

Selecting, testing and interpreting basic range of research, and applying adequate critical thinking and creativity to produce reasonable ideas and outcomes.

### 30–39

Selecting, testing and interpreting surface level range of research, and applying limited critical thinking and creativity to produce rudimentary ideas and outcomes.

### 0–29

Selecting, testing and interpreting an inadequate range of research, and applying little or no critical thinking and creativity to produce poor or no ideas and outcomes.

## Application (Stage One)

### 90–100

Applying exceptional personal and graduate skills to initiate and sustain studies and initial practice, and extensive practical, technical, and communication skills to articulate ideas, and outcomes effectively.

### 80–89

Applying accomplished personal and graduate skills to initiate and sustain studies and initial practice, and outstanding relevant practical, technical, and communication skills to articulate ideas, and outcomes effectively.

### 70–79

Applying confident personal and graduate skills to initiate and sustain studies and initial practice, and excellent relevant practical, technical, and communication skills to articulate ideas, and outcomes effectively.

### 60–69

Applying strong personal and graduate skills to initiate and sustain studies and initial practice, and very good relevant practical, technical, and communication skills to articulate ideas, and outcomes effectively.

### 50–59

Applying sound personal and graduate skills to initiate and sustain studies and initial practice, and good relevant practical, technical, and communication skills to articulate ideas, and outcomes effectively.

### 40–49

Applying basic personal and graduate skills to initiate and sustain studies and initial practice, and reasonable relevant practical, technical, and communication skills to articulate ideas, and outcomes effectively.

### 30–39

Applying limited personal and graduate skills to initiate and sustain studies and initial practice, and rudimentary relevant practical, technical, and communication skills to articulate ideas, and outcomes effectively.

### 0–29

Applying poor or no personal and graduate skills to initiate and sustain studies and initial practice, and inadequate or no relevant practical, technical, and communication skills to articulate ideas, and outcomes effectively.

## 4. Assessment Grid for Undergraduate Stage Two (HE5)

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### Knowledge

Demonstrating **a deepening awareness** of practical and contextual knowledge, and **a recognition** of subject knowledge and boundaries.

### Understanding

Selecting, testing and interpreting **focused** research, and applying **developing** critical thinking and creativity to produce **effective and increasingly individual** ideas and outcomes.

### Application

Applying **developing** personal and graduate skills to initiate and sustain studies and **growing** practice, and **increasingly** relevant practical, technical, and communication skills to articulate ideas, and outcomes effectively.

## Knowledge (Stage Two)

### 90–100

Demonstrating an exceptional deepening awareness of extensive practical and contextual knowledge, and a deep recognition of subject knowledge and boundaries

### 80–89

Demonstrating outstanding deepening awareness of in depth practical and contextual knowledge, and a substantial recognition of subject knowledge and boundaries.

### 70–79

Demonstrating a significant deepening awareness of comprehensive practical and contextual knowledge, and a highly confident recognition of subject knowledge and boundaries.

### 60–69

Demonstrating a very good deepening awareness of thorough practical and contextual knowledge, and a confident recognition of subject knowledge and boundaries.

### 50–59

Demonstrating a good deepening awareness of sound practical and contextual knowledge, and a growing recognition of subject knowledge and boundaries.

### 40–49

Demonstrating an adequate deepening awareness of basic practical and contextual knowledge, and a broad recognition of subject knowledge and boundaries.

### 30–39

Demonstrating a limited deepening awareness of incomplete practical and contextual knowledge, and a narrow recognition of subject knowledge and boundaries.

### 0–29

Demonstrating little or no deepening awareness of very limited or no practical and contextual knowledge, and little or no recognition of subject knowledge and boundaries.

## Understanding (Stage Two)

### 90–100

Selecting, testing and interpreting an extensive range of focused research, and applying outstanding developing critical thinking and creativity to produce exceptional effective and increasingly individual ideas and outcomes.

### 80–89

Selecting, testing and interpreting an in depth range of focused research, and applying accomplished developing critical thinking and creativity to produce outstanding effective and increasingly individual ideas and outcomes.

### 70–79

Selecting, testing and interpreting a comprehensive range of focused research, and applying confident developing critical thinking and creativity to produce excellent effective and increasingly individual ideas and outcomes.

### 60–69

Selecting, testing and interpreting a thorough range of focused research, and applying strong developing critical thinking and creativity to produce very good effective and increasingly individual ideas and outcomes

### 50–59

Selecting, testing and interpreting a sound range of focused research, and applying competent developing critical thinking and creativity to produce good effective and increasingly individual ideas and outcomes.

### 40–49

Selecting, testing and interpreting a basic range of focused research, and applying adequate developing critical thinking and creativity to produce reasonable effective and increasingly individual ideas and outcomes.

### 30–39

Selecting, testing and interpreting a surface level range of focused research, and applying limited developing critical thinking and creativity to produce rudimentary effective and increasingly individual ideas and outcomes.

### 0–29

Selecting, testing and interpreting an inadequate range of focused research, and applying little or no developing critical thinking and creativity to produce poor or no effective and increasingly individual ideas and outcomes.

## Application (Stage Two)

### 90–100

Applying exceptional developing personal and graduate skills to initiate and sustain studies and growing practice, and extensive increasingly practical, technical, and communication skills to articulate ideas, and outcomes effectively.

### 80–89

Applying accomplished developing personal and graduate skills to initiate and sustain studies and growing practice, and outstanding increasingly practical, technical, and communication skills to articulate ideas, and outcomes effectively.

### 70–79

Applying confident developing personal and graduate skills to initiate and sustain studies and growing practice, and excellent increasingly practical, technical, and communication skills to articulate ideas, and outcomes effectively.

### 60–69

Applying strong developing personal and graduate skills to initiate and sustain studies and growing practice, and very good increasingly practical, technical, and communication skills to articulate ideas, and outcomes effectively.

### 50–59

Applying sound developing personal and graduate skills to initiate and sustain studies and growing practice, and good increasingly practical, technical, and communication skills to articulate ideas, and outcomes effectively.

### 40–49

Applying basic developing personal and graduate skills to initiate and sustain studies and growing practice, and reasonable increasingly practical, technical, and communication skills to articulate ideas, and outcomes effectively.

### 30–39

Applying limited developing personal and graduate skills to initiate and sustain studies and growing practice, and rudimentary increasingly practical, technical, and communication skills to articulate ideas, and outcomes effectively.

### 0–29

Applying poor or no developing personal and graduate skills to initiate and sustain studies and growing practice, and inadequate or no increasingly practical, technical, and communication skills to articulate ideas, and outcomes effectively.

## 5. Assessment Grid for Undergraduate Stage Three (HE6)

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### Knowledge

Demonstrating ***an in-depth awareness*** of practical and contextual knowledge, and a ***deepening recognition*** of subject boundaries.

### Understanding

Selecting, testing and interpreting ***relevant and detailed*** research, and applying ***fluent*** critical thinking and creativity to produce ***highly effective and individual*** ideas and outcomes.

### Application

Applying ***increasingly professional*** personal and graduate skills to initiate and sustain studies and ***emerging*** practice, and ***highly*** relevant practical, technical, and communication skills to articulate ideas, and outcomes effectively.

## Knowledge (Stage Three)

### 90–100

Demonstrating an exceptional in depth awareness of extensive practical and contextual knowledge, and an extensive deepening recognition of subject knowledge and boundaries.

### 80–89

Demonstrating outstanding in depth awareness of in depth practical and contextual knowledge, and a substantial deepening recognition of subject knowledge and boundaries.

### 70–79

Demonstrating a significant in depth awareness of comprehensive practical and contextual knowledge, and a highly confident deepening recognition of subject knowledge and boundaries.

### 60–69

Demonstrating a very good in depth awareness of thorough practical and contextual knowledge, and a confident deepening recognition of subject knowledge and boundaries.

### 50–59

Demonstrating a good in depth awareness of sound practical and contextual knowledge, and a growing deepening recognition of subject knowledge and boundaries.

### 40–49

Demonstrating an adequate in depth awareness of basic practical and contextual knowledge, and a broad deepening recognition of subject knowledge and boundaries

### 30–39

Demonstrating a limited in depth awareness of incomplete practical and contextual knowledge, and a narrow deepening recognition of subject knowledge and boundaries.

### 0–29

Demonstrating little or no in depth awareness of very limited or no practical and contextual knowledge, and little or no deepening recognition of subject knowledge and boundaries.

## Understanding (Stage Three)

### 90–100

Selecting, testing and interpreting an extensive range of relevant and detailed research, and applying outstanding fluent critical thinking and creativity to produce exceptional highly effective and increasingly individual ideas and outcomes.

### 80–89

Selecting, testing and interpreting an in depth range of relevant and detailed research, and applying accomplished fluent critical thinking and creativity to produce outstanding highly effective and increasingly individual ideas and outcomes.

### 70–79

Selecting, testing and interpreting a comprehensive range of relevant and detailed research, and applying confident fluent critical thinking and creativity to produce excellent highly effective and increasingly individual ideas and outcomes.

### 60–69

Selecting, testing and interpreting a thorough range of relevant and detailed research, and applying strong fluent critical thinking and creativity to produce very good highly effective and increasingly individual ideas and outcomes.

### 50–59

Selecting, testing and interpreting a sound range of relevant and detailed research, and applying competent fluent critical thinking and creativity to produce good highly effective and increasingly individual ideas and outcomes.

### 40–49

Selecting, testing and interpreting a basic range of relevant and detailed research, and applying adequate fluent critical thinking and creativity to produce reasonable highly effective and increasingly individual ideas and outcomes.

### 30–39

Selecting, testing and interpreting a surface level range of relevant and detailed research, and applying limited fluent critical thinking and creativity to produce rudimentary highly effective and increasingly individual ideas and outcomes.

### 0–29

Selecting, testing and interpreting an inadequate range of relevant and detailed research, and applying little or no fluent critical thinking and creativity to produce poor or no highly effective and increasingly individual ideas and outcomes.

## Application (Stage Three)

### 90–100

Applying exceptional increasingly professional personal and graduate skills to initiate and sustain studies and emerging practice, and extensive highly relevant practical, technical, and communication skills to articulate ideas, and outcomes effectively.

### 80–89

Applying accomplished increasingly professional personal and graduate skills to initiate and sustain studies and emerging practice, outstanding highly relevant practical, technical, and communication skills to articulate ideas, and outcomes effectively.

### 70–79

Applying confident increasingly professional personal and graduate skills to initiate and sustain studies and emerging practice, excellent highly relevant practical, technical, and communication skills to articulate ideas, and outcomes effectively.

### 60–69

Applying strong increasingly professional personal and graduate skills to initiate and sustain studies and emerging practice, and very good highly relevant practical, technical, and communication skills to articulate ideas, and outcomes effectively.

### 50–59

Applying sound increasingly professional personal and graduate skills to initiate and sustain studies and emerging practice, and good highly relevant practical, technical, and communication skills to articulate ideas, and outcomes effectively.

### 40–49

Applying basic increasingly professional personal and graduate skills to initiate and sustain studies and emerging practice, and reasonable highly relevant practical, technical, and communication skills to articulate ideas, and outcomes effectively.

### 30–39

Applying limited increasingly professional personal and graduate skills to initiate and sustain studies and emerging practice, and rudimentary highly relevant practical, technical, and communication skills to articulate ideas, and outcomes effectively.

### 0–29

Applying poor or no increasingly professional personal and graduate skills to initiate and sustain studies and emerging practice, and inadequate or no highly relevant practical, technical, and communication skills to articulate ideas, and outcomes effectively.



## 6. Assessment Grid for Postgraduate (HE7)

### Knowledge

Demonstrating **advanced awareness** of practical and contextual knowledge, and **ability to navigate and critique** subject boundaries.

### Understanding

Selecting, testing and interpreting **relevant and specialist** research, and applying **highly fluent** critical thinking and creativity to produce **professional and innovative** ideas and outcomes.

### Application

Applying **specialist** personal and graduate skills to initiate and sustain studies and **professional** practice, and **specialist** and relevant practical, technical, and communication skills to articulate ideas, and outcomes effectively.

## Knowledge (Postgraduate)

### 90–100

Demonstrating an exceptional advanced awareness of extensive practical and contextual knowledge, and an extensive ability to navigate and critique subject knowledge and boundaries.

### 80–89

Demonstrating outstanding advanced awareness of in depth practical and contextual knowledge, and a substantial ability to navigate and critique subject knowledge and boundaries.

### 70–79

Demonstrating a significant advanced awareness of comprehensive practical and contextual knowledge, and a highly confident ability to navigate and critique subject knowledge and boundaries.

### 60–69

Demonstrating a very good advanced awareness of thorough practical and contextual knowledge, and a confident ability to navigate and critique subject knowledge and boundaries.

### 50–59

Demonstrating a good advanced awareness of sound practical and contextual knowledge, and a growing ability to navigate and critique subject knowledge and boundaries.

### 40–49

Demonstrating an adequate advanced awareness of basic practical and contextual knowledge, and a broad ability to navigate and critique subject knowledge and boundaries.

### 30–39

Demonstrating a limited advanced awareness of incomplete practical and contextual knowledge, and a narrow ability to navigate and critique subject knowledge and boundaries.

### 0–29

Demonstrating little or no advanced awareness of very limited or no practical and contextual knowledge, and little or no ability to navigate and critique subject knowledge and boundaries.

## Understanding (Postgraduate)

### 90–100

Selecting, testing and interpreting an extensive range of relevant and specialist research, and applying outstanding highly fluent critical thinking and creativity to produce exceptional professional and innovative ideas and outcomes.

### 80–89

Selecting, testing and interpreting an in depth range of relevant and specialist research, and applying accomplished highly fluent critical thinking and creativity to produce outstanding professional and innovative ideas and outcomes.

### 70–79

Selecting, testing and interpreting a comprehensive range of relevant and specialist research, and applying confident highly fluent critical thinking and creativity to produce excellent professional and innovative ideas and outcomes.

### 60–69

Selecting, testing and interpreting a thorough range of relevant and specialist research, and applying strong highly fluent critical thinking and creativity to produce very good professional and innovative ideas and outcomes.

### 50–59

Selecting, testing and interpreting a sound range of relevant and specialist research, and applying competent highly fluent critical thinking and creativity to produce good professional and innovative ideas and outcomes.

### 40–49

Selecting, testing and interpreting a basic range of relevant and specialist research, and applying adequate highly fluent critical thinking and creativity to produce reasonable professional and innovative ideas and outcomes.

### 30–39

Selecting, testing and interpreting a surface level range of relevant and specialist research, and applying limited highly fluent critical thinking and creativity to produce rudimentary professional and innovative ideas and outcomes.

### 0–29

Selecting, testing and interpreting an inadequate range of relevant and specialist research, and applying little or no highly fluent critical thinking and creativity to produce poor or no professional and innovative ideas and outcomes.

## Application (Postgraduate)

### 90–100

Applying exceptional specialist personal and graduate skills to initiate and sustain studies and professional practice, and extensive specialist and relevant practical, technical, and communication skills to articulate ideas, and outcomes effectively.

### 80–89

Applying accomplished specialist personal and graduate skills to initiate and sustain studies and professional practice, outstanding specialist and relevant practical, technical, and communication skills to articulate ideas, and outcomes effectively.

### 70–79

Applying confident specialist personal and graduate skills to initiate and sustain studies and professional practice, excellent specialist and relevant practical, technical, and communication skills to articulate ideas, and outcomes effectively.

### 60–69

Applying strong specialist personal and graduate skills to initiate and sustain studies and professional practice, and very good specialist and relevant practical, technical, and communication skills to articulate ideas, and outcomes effectively.

### 50–59

Applying sound specialist personal and graduate skills to initiate and sustain studies and professional emerging practice, and good specialist and relevant practical, technical, and communication skills to articulate ideas, and outcomes effectively.

### 40–49

Applying basic specialist personal and graduate skills to initiate and sustain studies and professional practice, and reasonable specialist and relevant practical, technical, and communication skills to articulate ideas, and outcomes effectively.

### 30–39

Applying limited specialist personal and graduate skills to initiate and sustain studies and professional practice and rudimentary specialist and relevant practical, technical, and communication skills to articulate ideas, and outcomes effectively.

### 0–29

Applying poor or no specialist personal and graduate skills to initiate and sustain studies and professional practice, and inadequate or no specialist and relevant practical, technical, and communication skills to articulate ideas, and outcomes effectively.