

Department of Geography Undergraduate Exam Grading Expectations:

Note: this document should be used as a general guide and is not meant to replace the marking criteria that your course instructors and lecturers are currently adopting. When in doubt, always check with your course instructors and lecturers.

(A+): A mark at this grade is indicative of an outstanding answer. Marks in this range will be awarded for answers that exhibit all the qualities befitting of an A grade as listed below but have, in addition, very substantial elements of critical insight and flair. There is also clear evidence of independent thinking and advanced comprehension of the topic. Answers will make excellent use of detailed examples as well as relevant illustrations. Where appropriate, references to key works and authors will be made though full referencing is not expected.

(A): A mark at this grade is indicative that the answer is of an excellent standard. The answer will exhibit excellent levels of knowledge and understanding comprising all the qualities listed in the A- to B+ range but with additional elements of flair and critical insight. The answer will also go beyond the prescribed course reading list and demonstrate awareness of the nuances and underlying assumptions of the question. Essays will make excellent use of detailed examples as well as relevant illustrations. Where appropriate, references to key works and authors will be made though full referencing is not expected.

(A- to B+): A mark in this range is indicative that the answer is of an excellent to very good standard. Answer of this quality shows a good level of knowledge and understanding of relevant course materials as well as some critical thinking skills. It will show evidence of reading a wide range of materials and being able to synthesize ideas to support and develop arguments. Essay answer should be well organized and exhibit good writing skills with arguments substantiated by relevant examples and illustrations. Any quantitative answer will be clearly presented; the results should be correct and any conclusions accurately expressed. Where appropriate, references to key works and authors will be made though full referencing is not expected.

(B to B-): A mark in this range is indicative that the answer is of a very good to good standard. Answer of this quality will show clear knowledge and understanding of the relevant course materials. It will focus on the question posed and demonstrate basic understanding and application of key concepts and ideas. The answer should also exhibit sound essay writing and critical analytical skills. It will be reasonably well structured and coherently presented. For quantitative work, it should be possible to follow the logical steps leading to the results obtained or the conclusions reached. Arguments and issues should be illustrated by relevant examples though these may not fully documented or detailed.

(C+ to C): A mark in this range is indicative that the answer is of a good to satisfactory range. Answer will show partial knowledge and understanding of the relevant course materials with very little critical thinking. The answer may be weakly structured, covering only a limited range of the relevant materials or have a weakly developed or incomplete argument. The answer also tends to exhibit weak essay writing and/or analytical skills. In the case of a quantitative answer, it may not be possible to follow the logic and reasoning steps leading to the results obtained or the conclusions reached.

(D+ to D-) Probationary grade: A mark in this range is indicative that the answer is below the satisfactory standard. This will be because either the answer is too brief; is very poorly organized and/or is poorly directed at the question asked. It will show very limited knowledge and understanding of the course materials and display weak writing and/or analytical skills. Essay answer has no clear argument and may contain major factual errors. Quantitative answer may contain obvious errors (such as violation of basic assumptions) with incorrect conclusions drawn.

(F) Fail Grade: A mark at this grade indicates that the answer is below the minimum standard required at the current level of the degree programme. It indicates that the answer is extremely weak and seriously inadequate. This will be because either the answer is badly jumbled and incoherent in content, and/or not addressing the essay title or question asked at all. It will show minimal evidence of basic knowledge and understanding of the course materials and may exhibit very weak writing and analytical skills. Quantitative answer may contain significant errors (such as incorrect usage of methods) with incorrect conclusions drawn.

Undergraduate Studies Committee, August 2014.