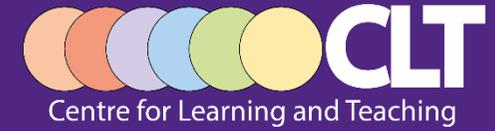


# Postgraduate Marking Descriptors

A Guide to Student Continuation,  
Completion and Success



Feb 2022



## LEVEL 7 MARKING DESCRIPTORS AND BANDINGS FOR TAUGHT COURSES

This tool is designed to support module teams as they consider the specific marking of their Level 7 students' assessed work. It has been mapped to the Level 7 Taxonomy of Assessment Domains. [clltaxonomy\\_of\\_assessment\\_domains.pdf \(leedsbeckett.ac.uk\)](https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/level-7-taxonomy-of-assessment-domains.pdf) and the approved bandings, where the pass mark is now 50%.

These general descriptors can be used to support a range of assessment modes (written, video, podcast, poster, or performances).

These descriptors are not designed to be prescriptive, but rather to be used as an adaptable flexible framework for staff as they develop and write their own assessment modes and marking criteria. These general descriptors are not intended to be student facing, or to be used in module handbooks. The wording of the general descriptors can be selectively modified and/or repurposed to suit staff's own assessment criteria, subject / disciplinary values, and assessment marking weightings.

## LEVEL 7 MARKING DESCRIPTORS

DOMAINS	100 - 86 ** Distinction	85 - 70 Distinction	69 - 60 Merit	59 - 50 Pass	49 - 40 Fail	39 – 30 Fail	29 – 15 Fail	14 – 0 Fail
<b>Organisation and planning</b> [From taxonomy: Set, negotiate and meet own objectives and deadlines, collaborating effectively with others to work towards identified objectives and standards]	Individual and/ or group objectives identified, negotiated, and met. Excellent, comprehensive planning evidenced either individually or collaboratively, leading to a full outcome which could not be improved at this level. Excellent detailed evidence of structure, organisation and planning that acknowledges, adapts, and acts sensitively upon the skills and abilities of diverse team members to achieve the objectives to a high standard to the identified deadlines.	Individual and/ or group objectives identified, negotiated, and met. Very good planning evidenced, either individually or collaboratively leading to a full outcome. Very good evidence of structure, organisation and planning that acknowledges, adapts, and acts upon the skills and abilities of diverse team members to consistently achieve the objectives to a high standard to the identified deadlines.	Individual and/ or group objectives identified, negotiated, and met. Good planning evidenced, either individually or collaboratively leading to a full outcome. Evidence of structure, organisation and planning that acknowledges, adapts, and acts upon the skills and abilities of diverse team members to achieve the objectives to a high standard to the identified deadlines	Individual and/ or group objectives adequately identified, negotiated, and mainly met. Adequate planning evidenced either individually or collaboratively leading to a satisfactory identified outcome. Adequate evidence of structure organisation and planning that acknowledges, adapts, and acts upon the skills and abilities of diverse team members to achieve the identified outcomes to identified deadlines.	Insufficient organisational skills evidenced either individually or as a group. Objectives and deadlines only partially identified. Little evidence of coherent structure. Only some consideration of the skills of group members (if appropriate) considered as part of the planning.	Sporadic evidence of organisational skills either individually or as a group. Objectives and deadlines identified inconsistently and these, and the confusing structure, need further development Minimal consideration of the skills of group members (if appropriate) considered as part of the planning.	Little evidence of organisation or forward planning and thinking. Planning, where it occurs, is inconsistent and sporadic. Confusing structure. Objectives and deadlines not fully identified either individually or as part of a group and need considerable further development.	No evidence of structure or organisation or forward thinking. Individual and/ or group planning not evident. Objectives and deadlines not identified either individually or as part of a group and thus not achieved to identified standard

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<b>Communication</b> [From taxonomy: Select, use, and modify appropriate styles and modes of communication for a wide range of tasks and purposes taking account of the audience/fellow participants.]	<b>Mode(s) of communication:</b> Excellent selection and use of different styles and appropriate modes of communication to suit audience. Content fully, succinctly & clearly explained. Tightly and consistently focused on all elements of the assessment’s aim/ scope/ title/ outcomes throughout <b>Presentation:</b> Presentation is polished and applied creatively to the topic Excellent use of visual aids (if applicable), that appropriately strengthen the presentation and could not be improved upon at this level	<b>Mode(s) of communication:</b> Very good, selection and use of different styles and appropriate modes of communication to suit audience. Content fully, succinctly & clearly explained. Consistently focused on all elements of the assessment’s aim/ scope/ title/ outcomes <b>Presentation:</b> very good with an imaginative approach to the topic. Very good use of visual aids (if applicable) that complement the presentation, are attractive and engaging <b>Academic expression:</b> Engaging and accomplished. Very high-quality,	<b>Mode(s) of communication:</b> Good, appropriate selection and use of different styles and modes of communication to suit the audience. Communicates effectively by being directly relevant to the title, scope and learning outcomes of the assessment. <b>Presentation:</b> is logically structured. Well written, with correct spelling and syntax. Style is lucid with appropriate format. Good use of visual aids (if applicable). However, some minor improvements could be made to enhance these	<b>Mode(s) of communication:</b> Appropriate selection for the chosen audience. Satisfactory communication of material which is mainly focused on the assessment title and learning outcomes but occasionally wanders from the point. <b>Presentation:</b> is adequate and the meaning is apparent, but language and style are not always consistently fluent. Some adequate use of visual aids (if applicable) however, these require improvement to enhance attractiveness and clarity. Spelling and syntax of academic writing is satisfactory.	<b>Mode(s) of communication:</b> Not suitable for the audience. Focus on the assessment title and outcomes demonstrated intermittently with the topic only superficially addressed and terms only sporadically fully explained. <b>Presentation:</b> is logical but has minor lapses from standard syntax and spelling. Basic use of visual aids (if applicable) that require improvement to strengthen the clarity and attractiveness of the presentation.	<b>Mode(s) of communication:</b> Not suitable for the audience. Inconsistent Minimal focus on the assessment title and outcomes demonstrated. The topic is only superficially addressed, and terms are not fully explained. <b>Presentation:</b> disorganised in some areas. Very basic use of visual aids (if applicable) that require significant improvement to enhance attractiveness, effectiveness, and clarity. Some errors, omissions, and inconsistencies in the referencing.	<b>Mode(s) of communication:</b> not appropriate for the task and/ or audience. Only intermittent connection to the assessment title and outcomes, with the assessment topic/focus only superficially addressed. Terms not fully or clearly explained. Communication is confused, <b>Presentation:</b> disorganised. Poor use of visual aids (if applicable) that require comprehensive changes and development to support the presentation effectively <b>Academic expression:</b> Poor quality writing with significant deficiencies in expression, flow, style, and format.	<b>Mode(s) of communication:</b> not appropriate to the task or audience. The nature of the audience is not considered. Poor connection to title and assessment outcomes with little or no consideration of the topic and terms not fully explained. <b>Presentation:</b> very disorganised. No or almost no use of visual aids (if applicable) <b>Academic expression:</b> Very significant deficiencies in expression and format. Very poor quality of academic writing. References incomplete, inaccurate and unacceptable

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<b>Communication</b> (continued)	<p><b>Academic expression:</b></p> <p>A fluent academic writing style is evident with accurate spelling and syntax. Thoughts and ideas clearly and tightly expressed. Appropriate, complete, and accurately cited referencing to the required style. References drawn from a diverse range of sources</p> <p>Excellent, high quality consistent communication with engaging &amp; high-quality academic expression that addresses all reasonable nuances and implications and could not be improved upon at this level.</p>	<p>fluent academic writing style with accurate spelling and syntax. Thoughts and ideas expressed clearly. Appropriate, accurately cited, and complete references from a range of sources*</p>	<p><b>Academic expression:</b></p> <p>Effective, good quality academic expression, and clarity. Stays on topic and addresses most implications and assumptions of the title. Appropriate, complete, and consistent references which may only have minor inaccuracies.</p>	<p>Some minor inconsistencies and gaps in referencing.</p> <p><b>Academic expression:</b></p> <p>Satisfactory quality of academic expression, meaning, and clarity demonstrated with only minor areas identified for improvement.</p>	<p><b>Academic expression:</b></p> <p>Meaning is not always clear and lucid. Style is not consistently fluid. Some inconsistencies and gaps in referencing. needs some improvement to improve the quality of the writing in some areas</p>	<p><b>Academic expression:</b></p> <p>Rather poorly written in parts with deficiencies in flow, coherence, clarity, and expression,</p>	<p>Significant errors in the referencing,</p> <p>Minimal coherence with a lack of clarity &amp; academic expression throughout.</p>	<p>No coherence or clarity &amp; failure to meet academic level of expression.</p>

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<b>Technical capabilities</b> [From taxonomy: Select and effectively apply a range of complex tools and techniques to novel situations to achieve innovative solutions]	Excellent demonstration of originality in knowledge generation from the tools and technique selection applied for the achievement of the innovative solutions	Very good selection and consistent effective application of a range of appropriate tools and techniques applied to novel situations to achieve innovative solutions	Good evidence of the selection and effective application of a range of complex tools and techniques to novel situations to achieve solutions	Demonstrates an appropriate selection and application of tools and techniques. Tool use and application may need some development at times to achieve solutions.	Demonstrates inadequate selection and application from a limited range of tools and techniques. Uses the tools and techniques somewhat inconsistently in the finding of solutions.	Demonstrates a limited awareness understanding or selection of the tools or techniques which can be used to generate develop solutions. Makes only a limited attempt to use the tools and techniques to find solutions	Demonstrates an extremely limited awareness or understanding of the tools or techniques which can be used to generate solutions. Makes only a very limited attempt to use the tools and techniques to find solutions	Fails to demonstrate any awareness and understanding of the tools or techniques which can be used to achieve solutions.
<b>Theory and principles</b> [From taxonomy: Select, critique, and apply relevant theory and /or strategies and methodologies for investigating/solving complex issues and research questions].	Demonstrates originality in knowledge generation by suggesting new effective theoretical or practical approaches to complex questions/ issues.	Demonstrates a very good, deep critical understanding, effective use, and mastery of the knowledge base from a comprehensive relevant range of theoretical and practice approaches. The knowledge base is used appropriately and consistently throughout.	Demonstrates a good critical understanding of a wide and relevant range of theoretical approaches and practice knowledge, key concepts and key debates and utilises them effectively	Demonstrates a satisfactory selection and critique of a range of relevant practice knowledge, key concepts, theoretical approaches, and key debates from the knowledge base and uses most of them appropriately.	Demonstrates insufficient critique, sporadic awareness, and limited selection from a range of practice knowledge, key concepts, theoretical approaches, and key debates. These may not always be used effectively or appropriately.	Demonstrates a limited awareness and selection of practice knowledge, key concepts, theoretical approaches, and key debates.  The lack of knowledge base means it is not always applied/ used consistently or appropriately	Demonstrates a very limited awareness and application of practice knowledge, key concepts, theoretical approaches, and key debates.  The lack of knowledge base means it cannot be applied/ used appropriately.	Fails to demonstrate any awareness, selection, or application of the knowledge base, key concepts, theoretical approaches, and debates. The lack of knowledge base means it cannot be applied /used appropriately.

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<b>Information/ data collection</b> [From taxonomy: Work autonomously to select, devise, apply and critically evaluate appropriate methods and tools for data and information collection for an extended piece of research]	The selection and depth of engagement with the source material /literature is excellent, comprehensive, and extensive. Coherent, critically evaluated evidence evaluating methods and research tools is demonstrated consistently. Independent thinking and reasoning shown throughout. Where original data are provided its collection, presentation and analysis are polished and well presented.	Demonstrates a very good, comprehensive approach and engagement with the critical use of appropriate methods and research tools. Where original data are provided its collection, presentation and analysis are polished and well presented. Very good consistent evidence of independent thought or reasoning throughout. Selection and use of source material is very good throughout but lacks the polish of the highest band	Demonstrates good depth of engagement with use of source material/literature , methods and research tools and shows independent thought but may have a few omissions. Where original data are provided its collection, presentation and analysis are consistently appropriate and well presented	Demonstrates satisfactory understanding and engagement with appropriate literature, methods, and tools. Shows some independent thought but may have some omissions. Where original data are provided its collection, presentation and analysis are appropriately presented. Some evidence of independent thought or reasoning demonstrated.	Demonstrates insufficient evidence of engagement with the selection and critical evaluation of source material/literature , methods, and research tools. Insufficient appropriate research tools selected. Where original data are provided, its collection, presentation and analysis show some omissions. Insufficient evidence of independent thought or reasoning	Demonstrates a limited selection of source material, methods, and research tools. Lacks consistent evidence as to the appropriate use and critical evaluation of source material, methods, and research tools. Where original data are provided, its collection, presentation and analysis are inconsistent. Limited evidence of independent thought or reasoning	Poor selection of source material, methods, and tools. Some inappropriate research tools selected. Lacks evidence as to the appropriate use and critical evaluation of source material, methods, and research tools. Where original data are provided, its collection, presentation and analysis are poor. Some minimal evidence of independent thought or reasoning with significant development required.	Poor, inappropriate, and inaccurate selection of source material, methods, and research tools. No evidence of engagement with the critical evaluation of source material, methods, and research tools. Where original data are provided, its collection, presentation and analysis are poor. No evidence of independent thought or reasoning with substantial development required.

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<p><b>Group/ interpersonal</b> [From Taxonomy: Interact effectively and ethically with individuals and groups in varied settings and with sensitivity to equality, diversity and culture, to achieve an identified research activity. Clearly delineate negotiate and subscribe to agreed parameters of responsibility in group/ team settings and ventures.]</p>	<p>Shows excellent evidence of making sound decisions readily in complex situations; demonstrable evidence of operating both autonomously, sensitively, self critically, inclusively, and collaboratively as a professional; a consistently strong contributor to any team, in any role. Complete synthesis of arguments with all team members working in full collaboration. Evidence of acknowledging and acting upon the skills and abilities of diverse team members to achieve the outcome.</p>	<p>Shows very good self-direction in tackling and solving problems in professional / subject area.</p> <p>Shows very good initiative and personal responsibility in actions. Shows evidence of strong coordination and teamwork between all team members to produce a coherent and unified piece of work. Able to consistently work effectively in diverse teams in a range of roles</p>	<p>Shows good self-direction in tackling and solving problems in professional/ subject area Able to demonstrate working consistently, sensitively, and collaboratively and effectively in diverse teams.</p> <p>Evidence of constructive collaboration and coordination between team members with minor improvements identified in synthesising individual work for a collective output.</p>	<p>Shows some self-direction in tackling and solving problems in professional/ subject area and the requirements of team working.</p> <p>Satisfactory evidence of coordination of individual efforts for a unified output. Some improvement needed to develop a more unified collective output through more constructive and sensitive collaboration in diverse teams.</p>	<p>Evidences some basic self-direction in tackling and solving problems in professional/ subject area.</p> <p>Inconsistent demonstration of working in a consistent sustained and collaborative manner in a group/ team.</p> <p>Some evidence of coordination of individual effort, although this needs substantial improvement to produce a more developed, unified collective output</p>	<p>Little self-direction or consideration of the need for joint problem solving.</p> <p>Minimal evidence of autonomous self-critical working.</p> <p>Reluctant collaborator with others. Little evidence of collective work, with either a disproportionate amount of work done by a single person or little coordination of individual outputs resulting in a weak, underdeveloped collective effort</p>	<p>Minimal evidence of autonomous self-critical working or collaboration with others.</p> <p>Reluctant collaborator with others and may at times show evidence of being unsupportive to others.</p> <p>Fails to evidence collective work. Extremely limited evidence of coordination or collaboration with other team members</p>	<p>Is unproductive working alone with minimal insight into indicators for collaboration.</p> <p>Reluctant collaborator with others and may show evidence of being unsupportive to others.</p> <p>No evidence demonstrated of collective work nor coordination of individual inputs</p>

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<p><b>Analysis and interpretation</b></p> <p>[From taxonomy: Examine problems and issues critically and in detail using the main theoretical perspectives of the cognate area and the appropriate research methods and strategies, seeking evidence to offer and support valid interpretations]</p>	<p>Excellent deep, detailed, and critical analysis and interpretation of the material resulting in illuminating, and elegant conclusions that extend the sum of knowledge in the area. A range of appropriate theoretical perspectives and research methods used to support robust and detailed interpretation. The consideration of complex ideas is robust and sustained throughout. Creatively demonstrates new concepts, ideas, or theories.</p>	<p>Very good, deep, detailed, systematic critical analysis and interpretation of the material resulting in well-reasoned conclusions that extend the sum of knowledge in the area. Theoretical perspectives and research methods used to support robust interpretation. Creatively demonstrates new concepts, ideas and/ or theories.</p>	<p>Demonstrates good evidence of systematic critical analysis and interpretation of the material resulting in reasoned conclusions. Consistent consideration of complex ideas evidenced. Good use of the theoretical perspectives and research methods to support interpretation. Demonstrates evidence of some new concepts, ideas and/ or theories.</p>	<p>Demonstrates adequate evidence of systematic critical analysis and interpretation of the material resulting in some measured conclusions. Some consideration of complex ideas evidenced. Adequate evidence of use of some appropriate theoretical perspectives and research methods to support interpretation.</p>	<p>Demonstrates some basic evidence of systematic critical analysis and interpretation of the material resulting in some weak conclusions.</p> <p>Reliance on description rather than critique. Inconsistent use of theoretical perspectives and research methods to support any interpretation. Minimal demonstration of new concepts, ideas, or theories.</p>	<p>Over reliance on description at the expense of critical analysis and interpretation. Minimal basic evidence of systematic critical analysis and interpretation resulting in simplistic conclusions that need significant development. Incomplete use of theoretical perspectives and research methods to support the interpretation.</p>	<p>Problems /issues are not consistently critically examined. The theoretical perspectives, research methods and strategies are used in a very limited way to support interpretation. Analysis of the material is primarily uncritical and not systematic. There is limited evidence to support the drawing of conclusions and those that are present are superficial.</p>	<p>No evidence of problems and issues being examined critically. The main theoretical perspectives, research methods and strategies are not used to support any interpretation. Analysis of the material is incomplete, unstructured superficial, and wholly descriptive rather than critical. There are no conclusions.</p>

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<b>Application</b> [From taxonomy: Use theories, methodology, techniques, and strategies in new situations in informed and valid ways, demonstrating empirical/experimental rigour in the identification of solutions to new situations/ problems]	Demonstrates excellent, application of conceptual frameworks, principles, and theories and this is embedded consistently, rigorously, and appropriately throughout Consistent evidence of critical appreciation, originality, and vision in the generation of new insights to inform practice/new situations.	Demonstrates very good use of conceptual frameworks, principles, and theories and how they underpin practice. Challenges received opinion, enabling development, and sustaining of a coherent, rigorous argument in the generation of insights/solutions to inform practice/new situations	Demonstrates good awareness and application of conceptual frameworks, principles, and theories and how they underpin practice. Good, robust evidence demonstrated to develop and sustain an argument which applies new insights to inform practice/new situations.	Demonstrates adequate awareness and application of conceptual frameworks, principles, and theories and how they might underpin practice. Some evidence demonstrated to develop an argument which applies new insights to inform practice/new situations.	Demonstrates inadequate application of conceptual frameworks, principles, and theories to practice with minimal evidence of a coherent, insightful, argument. Solutions and insights evidenced need development in argument.	Demonstrates unsatisfactory, poorly informed, and inadequate application of conceptual frameworks, principles, and theories to practice with minimal evidence of a coherent, focused argument. Few insights/ solutions demonstrated in argument.	Demonstrates unsatisfactory, invalid, and inadequate application of conceptual frameworks, principles, and theories to practice. Very limited insights /solutions demonstrated in argument.	Little or no evidence of application of knowledge, conceptual frameworks, principles, and theories to practice. No insights or solutions demonstrated in unreasoned argument
<b>Synthesis and evaluation</b> [From taxonomy: Critically evaluate and justify existing information and methodologies. Create new connections between theoretical perspectives, methods and the strategies applied.]	Excellent work, demonstrating new connections independent thought reasoned and critiqued from credible sources and the generation of innovative views	Very good demonstration of independent thought, new connections between ideas and critical, well-reasoned engagement with a range of consistently, well justified alternative views.	Good demonstration of independent thought with good evidence showing the combining of ideas and critical engagement. Consistent reasoned, justification of alternative views and perspectives.	Contains some independent thinking and justification. There may be some development required in the combining of ideas and critically engaging with the evaluation of alternative views from alternative sources.	Contains some independent thinking. Rather sporadic attempt to develop, justify and synthesise ideas and engage with the weighing up of alternative views from credible sources. Critical reasoning and evaluation of ideas needs development.	Minimal evidence of independent, critical thinking shown and little development and connection of ideas. Little attempt to engage with weighing up and combining ideas from different sources.	Very little evidence shown of understanding the relationship between sources or evaluating information. Expresses only a personal position and is uncritical in its conformity to one or more standard views of the topic.	No attempt to combine evidence or others' views to create a critical perspective of the topic. No evidence of understanding or weighing up the relationship /connections between sources.

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<b>Reflection</b> [From taxonomy; Give deliberate thought to the critical consideration of issues from a range of diverse settings and the methods, process, and outcomes by which new solutions or actions emerge and can affect self and others.]	Excellent evidence of a strong sense of motivation and commitment to personal and professional development, is explicitly communicated. Evidence that issues have been critically deliberated and considered from a wide range of perspectives/ settings and that there is evidence that the process and outcomes are articulated in terms of how they impact on self and others.	Very good, evidence demonstrated indicating full responsibility for own learning, the capacity to advance their knowledge and develop new skills to a high level. Very good, effective use of reflective cycles/ frameworks. Clear consistent evidence throughout that the process and outcomes are articulated in some detail in terms how they impact on self and others	Good evidence demonstrated of the capacity to continue to advance their knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level. Good, effective use of reflective cycles/ frameworks. Clear evidence that the process and outcomes are articulated in terms of how they impact on self and others.	Adequate evidence of a sense of motivation and commitment to personal and professional development, which is clearly communicated and evidenced. Some evidence that issues have been critically deliberated on and considered from different perspectives/ settings. Some development required on citing evidence that the process and outcomes are articulated in terms of how they impact self and others.	Inadequate evidence of awareness of personal qualities and areas for self-development and that issues have been critically deliberated on and considered from different perspectives/ settings.  Development required in using appropriate reflective frameworks and citing evidence that the process and outcomes are articulated in terms how they impact self and others	Limited awareness of personal strengths and areas for development in relation to task. Minimal evidence that the process and outcomes are considered in terms of impact on how they affect self and others. Ineffective and sporadic use of reflective cycle/frameworks used.	Little awareness of personal strengths and weaknesses in relation to task. Minimal evidence that the process and outcomes are considered in terms of impact on how they affect self and others. Insufficient evidence of reflective cycle/frameworks used.	No awareness of personal strengths and areas for development in relation to task. No evidence that the process and outcomes are considered in terms of impact on how they affect self and others. No evidence of reflective cycle/frameworks used.

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<b>Creativity</b> [From taxonomy: Propose alternative solutions and modifications by combining different sources of information in new patterns. Identify new areas for investigation/new problems /new methodological approaches.]	Authentic and true originality in the application of knowledge and creative invention; Innovative areas for new ideas/ and investigation identified and comprehensively explored.	Frequent indications of originality in the application of knowledge.  Significant new areas for development, innovation and exploration identified.	Demonstrates good, consistent understanding of specialised and/ or applied knowledge, with some indications of originality.  Some new areas for development, innovation and exploration identified.	Adequate indication of originality in the application of knowledge.  Satisfactory alternative solutions/ ideas proposed. Some approaches/ areas for exploration identified.	Inadequate, inconsistent indication of originality in the application of knowledge. Some development still required in proposing alternative solutions/ ideas.	Limited indication of originality in the application of knowledge. Significant development required in finding alternative solutions/ ideas. Few new approaches/ areas for exploration identified.	Minimal indication of originality in the application of knowledge. Few alternative solutions/ ideas proposed. And little attempt to identify approaches for further exploration.	No indication of originality in the application of knowledge. No alternative solutions/ ideas proposed. No new approaches/ areas for exploration identified.

**\*\*Work in the 86-100% band** meets and often exceeds the standard for distinction, as described in the 70-85% band, across all the Level 7 domains listed in our LBU assessment taxonomy.

This work might be of publishable quality, with only very minor amendments, to a suitable peer reviewed journal. Work is of such good quality that the student might be capable of doctoral research in the discipline and, in principle, could be signposted to opportunities to do this.