

What is standards based assessment?

Standards based assessment consists of two elements:

1. a set of assessment criteria that explicitly communicate to students what knowledge and skills will be assessed.
2. a set of pre-defined statements outlining different standards of achievement normally expressed in relation to each of the stated assessment criteria.

The grades awarded to students reflect the level of performance (or standard) they have achieved relative to the pre-defined standards.

Example

Assessment criteria	Standards – each of these would represent a grade (First, 2.1. etc) or a range of numerical marks			You would also need to outline the standards that would be considered to meet the lowest pass grade.
A critical engagement with key terms and concepts of the course	Wide-ranging knowledge of key terms and concepts and confident ability to interrogate and use them effectively and critically to inform discussion of theme/issue.	Sound knowledge of course terms and concepts and some capacity to use them to engage critically to explore theme/issue.	Competent reflecting adequate knowledge of key terms and concepts but less successfully engaged with their value for exploring the theme/issue.	Some/little knowledge of key terms and concepts and some attempt to use them in the assignment. Incorrect usage and/or misunderstanding of their meanings may characterise the weakest answers
The use of and engagement with relevant theoretical perspectives	Excellent understanding of relevant theoretical perspectives throughout.	Adequate use of theoretical perspectives with some critical engagement and integration to inform analysis/discussion.	Some use of relevant theoretical perspectives to inform analysis and discussion.	Poor or implicit or incorrect use of theory or use that suggests weak understanding. The very weakest answers are likely to be those where no attempt has been made to use or refer to any theoretical perspective.
The inclusion and evaluation of research evidence	Confident, consistent and effective use from appropriate sources (including own research) to inform discussion of theme/issue and a critical awareness of its value/shortcomings.	Adequate but less consistent and effective use of evidence (across the course and from own research etc.) to inform discussion.	Some inclusion of research evidence to exemplify discussion but in less consistent ways and/or understanding of how it might be evaluated.	Little use of research evidence from own studies and or discussion its value. The absence of any research evidence and/or reference to questions of evidence may mark out the weakest answers.
A structured and well-presented discussion with a consistent line of argument in relation to a clearly identified focus or topic.	Addresses the question in an organised, structured and consistent way, showing thought, reflection and insights, with effective use of topic or focus throughout. Consistent and appropriate referencing throughout.	Addresses the question in an organised, structured and consistent way. A relevant discussion is constructed covering the key points but with less insight and critical reflection. Generally effective use of a focus or topic throughout and appropriate referencing throughout.	Reasonable structure and an adequate coherence related to the question set, clearly using a topic/theme with generally appropriate referencing.	Problematically structured or lacking structure, with poor/no referencing and/or suggestions of plagiarism. The very weakest answers may have ignored the question completely, and it may be difficult to identify a topic/focus, or will be heavily plagiarised.