



Marking Assessments with Rigour

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Summary

**What does it
mean to
'mark with
rigour'?**

To assess
student work in
a way that is
objective, fair,
and consistent

HOW CAN A
TEACHER ENSURE
THAT MARKING IS
RIGOROUS?



- **Be clear on the marking criteria:** Make sure you have a clear understanding of the marking criteria for each assessment task. Develop a marking rubric that sets out the criteria for each grade or level of achievement. This will help you assess student work in a way that is consistent with the standards set by NESA and assess student work objectively and consistently.
- **Use exemplars:** Familiarise yourself with exemplars of student work that demonstrate different levels of achievement. This will help you develop a clear understanding of what constitutes good work at each level.
- **Blind mark:** When possible, mark student work without knowing the student's name or background. This can help you avoid any unconscious biases that may affect your marking.
- **Use a second marker:** Consider having a second marker review student work to ensure consistency and objectivity in the marking process.
- **Continuously reflect on the marking process:** Continuously reflect on your marking process and consider ways to improve it. This could include seeking feedback from colleagues, attending professional development opportunities, or reviewing and updating your marking rubric.

Unpacking A Question

Sample Crime Question:

To what extent does law reform reflect moral and ethical standards within the criminal justice system? (Catholic Trial, 2019).

- Discuss – what is the question truly asking? (break it down)
- Write down the sorts of possible syllabus areas covered (focus on content here).

What We're Looking For

- What are the characteristics of an A, B, C, D, E?
- What are some common errors?
- How do we know?
- Predict the features of the answers you might expect.



Workshop – Practice Marking

Debrief

- The final mark will be determined by the Judges.
Read up about this here:
<https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/11-12/hsc/about-HSC/determining-HSC-results>
- The Judges do not know how the paper was marked – they refer to the standards (Performance Band Descriptions).
- NESA has published examples of responses in these bands. These are not the high or mid band responses, they are the ‘fingernail’ – responses which ‘just sneak in’ by one mark to each band. You can find them here
https://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/syllabus_hsc/stds-matl/legal-studies-sm.html
- The student’s HSC Exam mark will be adjusted (up or down) to these standards. You need to know the standards!



**Education
Standards
Authority**

Apply the Standards

- You need to apply the NESA performance standards (just like the NESA Judges). Judges use the performance bands to understand what a **typical** student looks like at the **midpoint of each band**. That's the relatively easy part.
- Judges then develop **predictions/descriptions** of **students performing at the borderlines** of bands. The standards materials are examples of these responses.
- They then apply these descriptions to the questions in the exam and find these responses – these then become the band cut-offs. As teachers, we can find our own cut-off scripts to discriminate our students.

YOUR TASK: COMPARE THE MARKED RESPONSES TO THE CHARACTERISTICS OF NESA PERFORMANCE DESCRIPTORS

Legal Studies Performance Band Descriptions

“extensive knowledge”

“synthesises and analyses”

Band 6

- analyses, synthesises and interprets information to evaluate the effectiveness of the **domestic and international** legal system in addressing issues
- demonstrates **extensive knowledge** and understanding of the operation of the legal system and the **processes involved in law reform**
- **synthesises and analyses** legal information from **a variety of sources** including **relevant** legislation, cases, media, international instruments and documents to support arguments in a **domestic and international context**
- communicates coherent arguments on **contemporary issues** from **differing perspectives and interpretations**
- communicates an argument using relevant legal concepts and terminology

“domestic and international context”

“contemporary” – not necessarily the issues listed the Syllabus options, but recent, present, up to date

“differing perspectives and interpretations”

Range	Example Characteristics
A	A strong selection of content which consistently engages with the question (not a memorised essay). Applies different perspectives and interpretations (eg different stakeholders or Federal, State and International). This student will do more than just examine the legal information in the question, they will synthesise (make something new of it), eg propose new ideas for law reform (conclusion). There is likely to be consistent support , but it may not always be perfect .
Fingernail A	This student will display bits and pieces of 'extensive'; sometimes the student will bring new meaning to a legal problem ; the student will show glimpses of new perspectives and try to apply law to a contemporary context but will not likely do this completely and frequently .
Mid B	Solid, but inconsistent judgment . Substantial means ' pretty strong '. Mistakes do not destroy the essay as long as the argument is cohesive . It is not sustained. There is fairly regular support, but not always accurate, substantial or up to date. This student will clearly examine and explain the meaning of legal information, but will tend to draw conclusions without really extending further .
Fingernail B	There will certainly be analysis (otherwise it is a lower range) but there will only partial interpretation of information ; the explanations are not likely to be consistent.

Range	Example Characteristics
C	The content is satisfactory ; there's understanding. The judgment might be attempted but not strongly supported . The student is providing some support with visible links to the question/point being made. Perhaps the student wished for a different question and gets a little off track; however there might be enough for them to 'pass' . Markers will positively award marks for responses which sneak into this range.
D	There's certainly some understanding but it is in bits and pieces . There might be some correct information given but also mistakes or general statements which do not add to the response. Markers will ignore the mistakes and award marks for the correct information. If partial support is provided it might not be strong, but there's some fact or link that is relevant . The student may describe and narrate, perhaps providing too much unnecessary detail or forgetting to make links to judgments/the question. Markers try to look for responses which can just sneak into this range (ie, mark them up from an E).
E	Very little . An effort is made. Some correct statements are provided. Perhaps the student identifies correct points or tries to make a judgment but it is not supported satisfactorily. There's no or very little support .

There are subtle differences in the mark ranges – markers need to find these (ie look to give the range of marks!!) Mark RIGOROUSLY (fairly, not as Santa Claus but POSITIVELY) - do not keep taking marks off for mistakes.

Performance Descriptions

- Your goal is to know what each mark looks like (this takes experience!)
- Performance band descriptions can be found at:
<http://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/11-12/stage-6-learning-areas/hsie/legal-studies/pbd>
- Once you're confident, you can tell students clearly what they need to do to move up a range (ie, be that fingernail response that just sneaks into the next grade/band)
- Example:
 - Does the response lack structure (eg TEEL)? Does the student waffle/describe/narrate? Is there a lack of key terminology? Does the student have a prepared response in mind, and in doing so fail to engage with the question? Does the support/evidence appear weak? (stronger students to try to quote author, title and date). Perhaps there was no counter-argument or the response omitted a solid range of law, including international law. The references to legislation might have been consistently vague or incorrect (sometimes more detailed responses quote sections of the law). Detail/jurisdiction can be shown by including (Cwlth) or (NSW) as well as the date (to show a context of law reform, for example). The response should have no abbreviated words/slang. It should not jump to conclusions without justifying the point. The conclusion can appear weak if it has no contemporary implications/law reform. Etc ... EVERY STUDENT IS DIFFERENT!
- It might only take **one feature** to move up to the next range (eg band 4 to 5, 5 to 6 etc)

Spot the Difference – Band 6 vs 5

Band 6

- analyses, synthesises and interprets information to evaluate the effectiveness of the domestic and international legal system in addressing issues
- demonstrates extensive knowledge and understanding of the operation of the legal system and the processes involved in law reform
- synthesises and analyses legal information from a variety of sources including relevant legislation, cases, media, international instruments and documents to support arguments in a domestic and international context
- communicates coherent arguments on contemporary issues from differing perspectives and interpretations

Band 5

- analyses and interprets information to evaluate the effectiveness of the domestic and international legal system in addressing issues
- demonstrates detailed knowledge and understanding of the operation of the legal system and the processes involved in law reform
- uses legal information from a variety of sources including relevant legislation, cases, media, international instruments and documents to support arguments in a domestic and international context
- communicates an argument using relevant legal concepts and terminology

Spot the Difference - Band 4 vs 3

Band 4

- provides some analysis of information and issues related to the effectiveness of the domestic and international legal system
- demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of the operation of the legal system and the processes involved in law reform
- uses appropriate legal information from sources including legislation, cases, media, international instruments and documents
- uses appropriate legal concepts and terminology

Band 3

- demonstrates some knowledge and understanding of the issues related to the domestic and /or international legal system
- demonstrates some understanding of the operation of the legal system
- makes reference to sources including legislation, cases, media, international instruments and documents
- uses some legal concepts and terminology

Positive Marking

Award marks for points made. Mistakes do not mean that marks are taken off – standards based/positive marking applies:

- Knowledge and understanding (answers the question asked, has written enough, breadth of content addressed, range of perspectives, is sustained in the arguments made)
- Structure (logical, organised and cohesive)
- Communication (third person, formal, no abbreviations, using legal language appropriately)
- Sources (a wide range, reputable sources, relatively recent/up to date, specifics add to authenticity)

Discussion

HOW DID YOU
GO? (APPLYING
THE STANDARD)

Unpacking A Question (2)

Sample crime question:

Explain the challenges for the criminal justice system in effectively dealing with young offenders. (Independent Trial 2020).

- Discuss – what is the question truly asking? (break it down)
- Write down the sorts of likely Syllabus areas covered (focus on content here).

What We're Looking For

- What should be the characteristics of an A, B, C, D, E?
- What are some common errors?
- How do we know?
- Predict the features of the answers you might expect.



Workshop – Practice Marking

Discussion

HOW DID YOU
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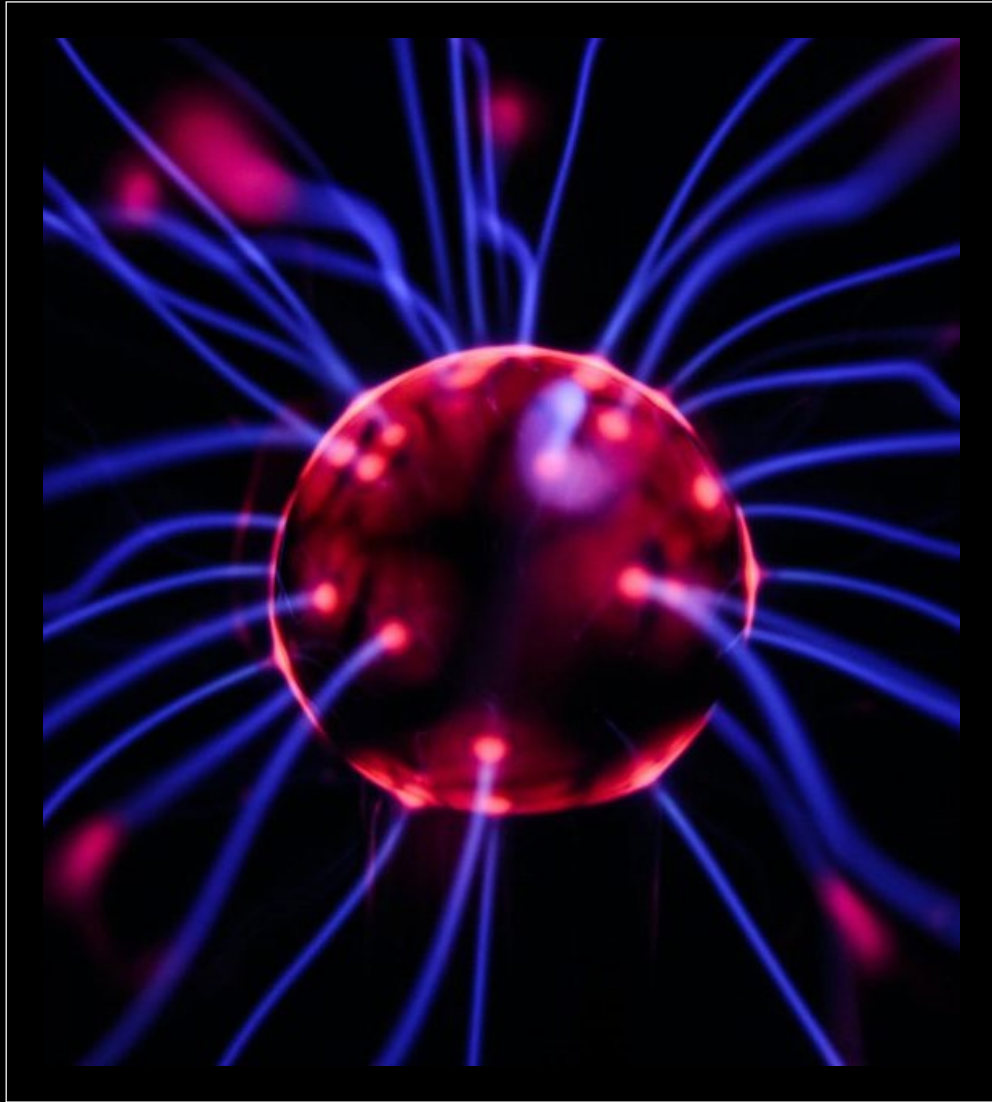
IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES



Need to Knows

Students (and teachers) need to know:

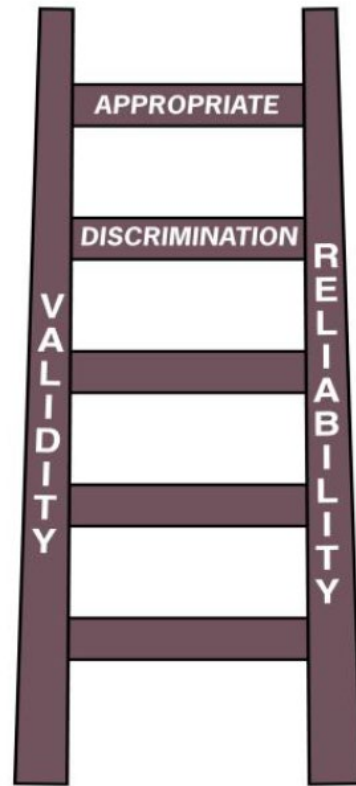
- Attack/time manage the exam
- Break down a question
- The correlation between the marks for a question and how much to write
- What the markers are looking for:
 - Appropriate content to select
 - How to structure responses effectively (eg TEE structure for short answers; TEEL for essays)
 - How to use evidence and the frequency of using evidence (ie, key LCMID)
 - How to communicate formally



Feedback and Feedforward

- Reliability and Accuracy
- Peer Marking using Success Criteria
- Teacher Feedback

Goal of Marking



In a timely and efficient manner!

Reliability and Accuracy

- **Reliability checking** – identifies whether the full range of marks is being awarded across the ranges, including full marks
 - You can compare features such as the average mark and standard deviation; you can also identify how many times a mark is awarded.
- **Accuracy checking** - determines whether the true marks have been awarded
 - You can check this by using blind double marking (eg to determine if a marker is marking too harshly or too generously)

Peer Marking using Success Criteria

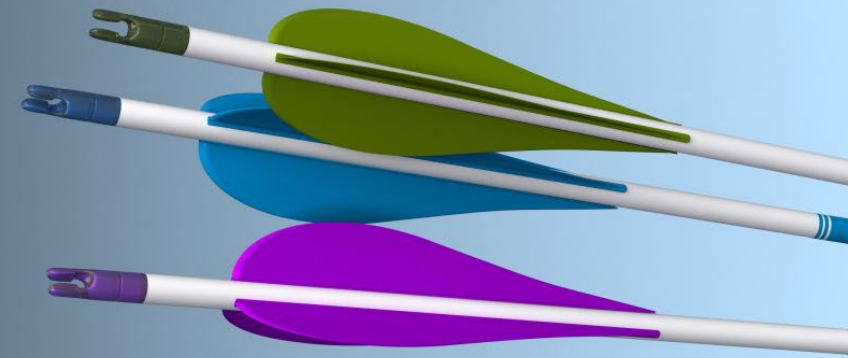
Use a Student Peer Marking Sheet (generic for all essays).

Write this in student friendly language.



Teacher Feedback

- Individual feedback
 - Focus on specific areas to improve (the performance descriptors). Don't overwhelm – some students improve by working on only one or two skills at a time. Give students lots of opportunities to improve.
- Whole Cohort feedback
 - Marker's Report (top mark, average mark)
 - General approaches
 - Strengths
 - How to Improve
 - Sample answers



Other strategies to improve?

- Set clear expectations: Communicate clearly with your students about what is expected of them in terms of HSC performance. [Share information about exam format, marking criteria, and the skills required to do well in the exams.](#)
- [Use past papers](#): Provide students with past HSC exam papers to help them familiarize themselves with the format and types of questions they may encounter in the exams. Encourage students to practice past papers under exam conditions.
- [Provide targeted feedback](#): Regularly provide feedback to students on their work, including strengths and areas for improvement. This can help students identify where they need to focus their efforts to improve their results.
- Differentiate instruction: [Tailor teaching to the needs of individual students](#). This might involve using a variety of teaching methods to engage students, identifying areas where students need additional support, and providing additional resources or challenging work as appropriate.
- [Encourage collaboration](#): Encourage students to work together in study groups or pairs to discuss concepts, practice problem-solving, and provide peer feedback. This can help students build confidence and a deeper understanding of the material.
- [Monitor progress](#): Regularly assess your students' progress through quizzes, assignments, and other formative assessments. Use this information to identify areas where students need additional support and adjust your teaching accordingly.
- [Foster a positive learning environment](#): Create a positive, supportive learning environment where students feel comfortable asking questions and taking risks. This can help students build confidence and a deeper understanding of the material.



THANK YOU FOR LISTENING.
QUESTIONS/FEEDBACK