

## Using grade descriptors

### Contact:

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Grade descriptors assist teachers in making comparable judgements about the grades awarded at the conclusion of a unit. They do not stand alone and are not used to “grade” individual assessments. They are one of a number of mechanisms available to teachers in deciding summative assessments to be reported to Curriculum Council. They are best used as a point of reference in determining cut-offs after the evaluation of the assessment data collected.

The following steps characterise the way in which assessment for a unit of work would be carried out.

1. Using the unit assessment outlines, which show what will be assessed and when and how a teacher will gather evidence in relation to the assessment types, identify the syllabus component(s) to be assessed.
2. Develop each assessment task which will enable students to demonstrate their achievement.
3. For each assessment task, set the marking key based on explicit criteria that derive naturally from the task and anticipated student responses. Allocate marks or score points. Where possible, validate the marking key using a sample of student responses
4. Mark the assessment task.
5. Combine the results of various assessments using weightings in the unit assessment outline.
6. Rank students based on their aggregate results.
7. Compare achievements of students at grade boundaries with grade descriptors and associated exemplars. Allocate grades (A – E) by identifying grade cut-off points.