



Scottish Wider  
Access Programme

# SWAP Profile Grading: Guidance for Tutors

The SWAP East team are there to assist throughout the year. If you have questions about the information in this booklet or if you need advice or guidance at any point, please get in touch by email: [Swap.East@ed.ac.uk](mailto:Swap.East@ed.ac.uk)

## 1. Introduction

At the end of the academic year, SWAP tutors are asked for a set of three overall profile grades for each student who has completed the programme. These grades are an assessment of the student's performance throughout the year of their access programme. Profile grades are viewed as an indicator of a student's potential ability to succeed at degree level study and are used by universities when deciding on admission. Profile grade requirements will vary depending on the degree course and the university. The [\*Possible Degree Progressions\*](#) search facility on the SWAP website indicates the profile grades required for progression to individual degree courses at SWAP East partner universities.

It can also be useful for the student to have an idea of their predicted grades in February/March, when those who are considering their university offers may benefit from knowing the grades they are on track to achieve so that they can choose their Firm and Insurance choices on UCAS accordingly.

The subjects and skills assessed and the evaluation criteria used to grade performance will depend on the access programme studied. Tutors for the Access to Nursing, Arts & Social Sciences, Languages, Humanities & Teaching programmes should read Section 2. Science, Medical Studies and Engineering course tutors should go directly to Section 3.

**Section 2** provides information on profile grading for access programmes in arts, humanities, social sciences, languages and nursing.

**Section 3** provides information on profile grading for access programmes in sciences and engineering.

**Section 4** provides information on submission of students' results to SWAP in June.

## 2. Performance assessment for students in arts, humanities, social sciences and nursing

At the end of the access programme, each individual SWAP student is assessed by their tutors on their overall performance throughout the year. Students on access programmes in arts, humanities, social sciences and nursing are awarded three grades reflecting their level of performance in the three key academic skills: knowledge, understanding and analysis. One grade is awarded for each skill to reflect how well the student has demonstrated that skill across all of the units completed as part of their programme.

### Definitions of the key skills

- **Knowledge:** The ability to quickly absorb new information and acquire and develop broad knowledge of a variety of subject areas.
- **Understanding:** The ability to develop a depth of understanding of the central concerns and approaches to a variety of subject areas.
- **Analysis:** The ability to evaluate differing points of view with insight and engage.

### Evaluation Criteria

A student's performance in each of the above skills will be assessed according to the following evaluation criteria:

Grade	Grade descriptor
A	Summary Very able overall performance suggesting that degree level work will be well within the capabilities of this student.
	Evidence Assessed work consistently exceeds the minimum requirements and demonstrates very effective independent study skills.
	<i>Features which may characterise this typical performance: Clear understanding of tasks set.</i>

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		<i>Focused solutions/analysis/criticism which draws upon knowledge and understanding from a range of areas.</i> <i>Critical evaluation of approach to tasks.</i>
<b>B</b>	Summary	Able overall performance suggesting degree level work will be within the capabilities of this student.
	Evidence	Assessed work always meets and sometimes exceeds the minimum requirements and demonstrates effective independent study skills.  <i>Features which may characterise this typical performance:</i> <i>Competent approach to the preparation/organisation need to tackle tasks.</i>  <i>Acceptable solution to/adequate analysis of problems set.</i> <i>Competent handling of material.</i> <i>Ability to evaluate approach to task.</i>
<b>C</b>	Summary	Diploma level work may be more appropriate for this student.
	Evidence	Assessed work meets the minimum evidence requirements and demonstrates independent study skills.  <i>Features which may characterise this typical performance:</i> <i>Understanding of tasks may be variable.</i> <i>Quality of work is occasionally below standard.</i> <i>Tasks are not always executed in the most appropriate manner. Key elements are not always given due importance.</i> <i>Sometimes requires additional direction.</i>

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*When considering their grades, the tutor can also take into consideration other factors, such as:*

*Attendance*

*Engagement with college*

*Participation in group learning/relationship with others*

*Development of independence of study*

*Responsiveness to learning opportunity*

*Application to study*

## *Commitment & motivation*

### Overall SWAP profile-grading

Towards the end of the academic year, the SWAP course tutor must request three grades, one for each of the key skills, from every individual subject tutor. Subject tutors should work with the course tutor to compile assessment evidence to reach a decision on each student's grading. How these decisions are reached should be recorded. This is especially important if the student decides to appeal their grades. By recording how these decisions have been made, you can then present the evidence if required for an appeals process. The SWAP course tutor will then create an average of those grades obtained from each subject tutor to arrive at the student's overall SWAP profile grading, which can range from AAA (the highest) to CCC (the lowest). A student must successfully complete the programme by passing at least 18 credits in order to be given an overall SWAP profile grading. Students who withdraw early from the programme, or who do not pass enough credits, will not be given a profile grading, as there is insufficient evidence on which to base the final assessment. If a student only narrowly misses passing 18 credits (e.g. by 1 or 2 credits), the SWAP tutor should contact the SWAP office for advice.

### 3. Profile grading for students in sciences and engineering

At the end of their access programme, each individual SWAP student is assessed by their tutors on their overall performance throughout the year. Students on access programmes in sciences and engineering are awarded three grades reflecting their level of performance in each of the three key subject areas of their programme:

Access programme	Key subject areas
Medical/Biological/Life Sciences	Maths, Biology, Chemistry
Physical Sciences	Maths, Physics, Chemistry
Engineering	Maths, Engineering, Technology

These three grades are known as the student's SWAP profile-grading. A student must pass all of the units on the programme in order to be given an overall SWAP

profile grading. Students who withdraw early from the programme will not be given a profile-grading, as there is insufficient evidence on which to base the assessment.

### Evaluation Criteria

SWAP tutors in sciences and engineering will assess the performance of their students using the detailed evaluation criteria set out on pages 5/6. Each individual student will be awarded three grades, one for each key subject area. These grades range from AAA (the highest) to DDD (the lowest). **The grade for each subject must be listed in the order given in the above table** so that it is clear to SWAP which subject each grade is for (e.g. a physical sciences student with a profile grading of ABA has achieved an A for Maths, a B for Physics and an A for Chemistry). Universities sometimes specify a level of achievement in a specific subject as a condition of entry (e.g. they may ask for a grade A in maths for entry to degrees with a high level maths content). Please note, however, if the university hasn't specified a grade in the condition of offer, then the order of the grades for them is usually not relevant and a student shouldn't worry if his profile grading was BBA and his condition of offer was ABB. If a student is concerned, they should contact the SWAP office.

### Evaluation Criteria

A student's performance in each of the key subject areas will be assessed according to the following evaluation criteria:

Grade	Grade Descriptors
A	Summary Achieved the units with great ease and displayed a very able overall performance. Degree level study should be well within the capabilities of this student.
	Evidence Assessed work is submitted on time and is usually complete and accurate. This may include any relevant assessed coursework e.g. research reports, laboratory reports, presentations, and practical assessments. Assessments are sat on time and passed at the first attempt and with no or few minor errors. Student demonstrates good practical laboratory skills.

<b>B</b>	<b>Summary</b>	Achieved the units with relative ease and required little or no assistance. Displayed an able overall performance. Degree level study should be within the capabilities of this student.
	<b>Evidence</b>	Assessed work contains some errors, but shows a clear understanding of most topics. This may include any relevant assessed coursework e.g. research reports, laboratory reports, presentations, and practical assessments. Student demonstrates satisfactory practical skills. Student may have been required to retake an assessment. Assessments are of an acceptable standard with little revision required.
<b>C</b>	<b>Summary</b>	Achieved the units but required considerable assistance. Diploma level study may be more appropriate than degree level work for this student at this stage.
	<b>Evidence</b>	Assessed work is adequate. This may include any relevant assessed coursework e.g. research reports, laboratory reports, presentations, and practical assessments. Student required to repeat most assessments following remediation.
<b>D</b>	<b>Summary</b>	Achieved some units or some outcomes but with great difficulty. Student is not yet ready for higher level study.
	<b>Evidence</b>	Much of the assessed work is either unsatisfactory or not completed. This may include any relevant assessed coursework e.g. research reports, laboratory reports, presentations, and practical assessments. Assessments frequently require to be repeated. Assessed work is frequently submitted late and / or is of a poor standard or incomplete. Considerable assistance is required to enable the student pass units or outcomes.

Applicants on the Access to Medical Studies programme, who are hoping to progress to Medicine, Veterinary Medicine or Dentistry, must also be given percentage marks for all assessed work in the 3 key subjects of Maths, Biology & Chemistry and this should be recorded on the transcript that you send us in June.

## 4. Returning SWAP Results

We will contact you in May to ask you to send us the results for all the students in your class. We will ask for SWAP profile grades and a full academic transcript for every student who has completed the programme. We will send you out a results summary spreadsheet (with all your students listed) and an academic transcript template for you to compile and return. These documents are password protected and must be sent back, still data protected. The transcript lists all the units on the programme framework, based on what we received from the college in June the previous year and which were sent to the universities to obtain agreed progression routes. An individual transcript should be completed for each student in your class. It should show which units the student has passed (or failed). Any results that are still pending (e.g. National 5 Maths exam), if relevant to their progression to university, should also be included in the transcript. The number of credits the student has achieved should be totalled at the foot of the page. **Please do not include any credits for pending exam results.**

Page 2 of the transcript gives the tutor the opportunity of adding any comments/ information about the student's performance throughout the year and if there were significant extenuating circumstances that you feel the university should be aware of, or any comments that you wish to make in support of the student and their potential to study successfully in higher education.

On the summary spreadsheet, we will also ask for information on the progression plans of all SWAP students who passed the programme, including those who aren't going to university, and we will ask for details regarding those who have withdrawn. This information allows us to gather data and monitor trends, for example, on retention rates, reasons for withdrawal and post-access programme progression. SWAP tracks former SWAP students who go on to university and those who continue their studies at college. We will also pre-populate the spreadsheet with the UCAS information that we have, for students who are progressing on to university if we have this detail already.



We need the fully completed documents returned to us by mid-June at the latest. For all students who are holding a conditional offer for university, SWAP will send the profile grade results and the individual academic transcripts to the universities that the students have chosen as their Firm and Insurance choices. Students/college tutors do not need to send the results, SWAP will do this at the beginning of July. It is extremely helpful if you can submit the results to us at least 2 weeks before your summer break to allow us time to check and query any issues before you go. If there is a problem and we cannot get a hold of you, a student's place at university could be at risk.

Please let us know if any of your students are going to university but did not apply through SWAP's UCAS school. If we know this, we can still send on their results.

## 5. Further Information or Advice

If you need clarification about anything in this document, please do not hesitate to contact the SWAP East team - we are there to help. If you want to speak on the phone, please email us with your number and we'll call you back.

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