MARKING GUIDELINES

The pass mark for all modules of the Masters degree is 50, but the marking scale for each individual item of assessed work is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Mark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Distinction level</td>
<td>70 plus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merit level</td>
<td>60 - 69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>50 - 59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fail (but in some circumstances may be condoned)</td>
<td>40 - 49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fail</td>
<td>0 - 39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The marking criteria for postgraduate programmes draw upon minimum criteria, which are applicable to the assessment of most or all assignments:

- understanding of the subject;
- utilisation of proper academic [or other] style (e.g. citation of reference);
- relevance of material selected and of the arguments proposed;
- planning and organisation;
- logical coherence;
- critical evaluation;
- comprehensiveness of research;
- evidence of synthesis;
- innovation / creativity / originality.

The language used must be of a sufficient standard to permit assessment of the above criteria.

The guidelines below reflect the standards of work expected at postgraduate level. The different levels set out are for each item that is assessed.

70% and above (distinction level)

As for the 60-69% range plus:

- shows strong evidence of wide and relevant reading and a critical engagement with the conceptual issues;
- develops a sophisticated and intelligent argument;
- shows a rigorous use and a sophisticated understanding of relevant materials, balancing appropriately between factual detail and key theoretical issues. Materials are evaluated directly and their assumptions and arguments challenged and/or appraised;
- shows an original/creative contribution and a willingness to take risks;
- shows excellent analytic skills.

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1 Refer to the rules of assessment for further details
Marking Guidelines

60-69% (merit level)

As for the 50-59% range plus:

- shows sound evidence of critical insight and critical thinking;
- shows a detailed understanding of the major factual and/or theoretical issues and directly engages with the relevant literature on the topic;
- develops a focused and clear argument and articulates clearly and convincingly a sustained train of logical thought;
- shows clear evidence of planning and appropriate choice of sources and methodology.

50-59% (pass)

- shows a reasonable understanding of the major factual and/or theoretical issues involved;
- shows evidence of planning and selection from appropriate sources;
- demonstrates some knowledge of the literature;
- the text shows, in places, examples of a clear train of thought or argument;
- the text is introduced and concludes appropriately.

40-49% (fail but in some circumstances may be condoned¹)

- shows some awareness and understanding of the factual or theoretical issues, but with little development;
- misunderstandings are evident;
- shows some evidence of planning, although irrelevant/unrelated material or arguments are included.

0-39 % (fail)

- fails to answer the question or to develop an argument that relates to the question set;
- does not engage with the relevant literature or demonstrate a knowledge of the key issues;
- contains clear conceptual or factual errors or misunderstandings.

The University's rules of assessment determine whether a Distinction or Merit is awarded for a student's overall performance on the Masters. These are available at:

http://www2.essex.ac.uk/academic/students/pgt/pgtrulesmenu.htm

Students should refer to the rules of assessment for details of the criteria and eligibility for an award, condonement of marks and reassessment opportunities.