

LLM Marking Guide

Topics should have been settled with a view to the level of performance required of an LLM student. Sometimes the degrees of difficulty will vary between assigned topics in a class and this should be taken into account when marking. The following are guidelines to assist in deciding the grade. The final grade is to be expressed as a percentage. The grades are translated into letter grades according to the scale below. A student's academic transcript will show only the letter grade but they will learn their percentage grade when their research paper is returned. The percentage grade is used to determine eligibility for Honours and also, when necessary, to determine eligibility for prizes.

Mark	Grade	Criteria
90-100	A+	A clear argument or objective, consistently explored in a very well-organised manner; highly original research, argument or theory; analysis at an outstanding level, breaking new ground and suitable for publication in terms of quality; excellently written; well-referenced; precise adherence to style-guide and other forms.
85-89	A	As above, while not as consistently outstanding in terms of form, style, content or analysis.
80-84	A-	Nearly an A; minor defects of form, style, or analysis; not as original. Or strongly original, but with some defects of form or analysis.
75-79	B+	Very good work in general terms, but not excellent in terms of originality, coverage or form.
70-74	B	Solid research; some originality; major areas covered; some inadequacies of treatment, but sound in major respects; acceptable adherence to style and format requirements.
65-69	B-	Weaker in some key areas, but with signs in analysis, originality and research indicating a paper of higher potential; reasonably written and referenced; fair originality.
60-64	C+	Adequate as Masters research; some originality; some omissions or errors; weak but acceptably accurate analysis; reasonably referenced; fair form and style.
55-59	C	Adequate as Masters research; some originality; some omissions or errors; containing weak but acceptably accurate analysis; reasonably referenced; fair form and style.
50-54	C-	Barely adequate as Masters research; little originality; omissions or errors; weak but acceptably accurate analysis; reasonably referenced; fair form and style.
45-49	D+	Poor analysis, significant omissions or errors; negligible originality poor referencing/style
40-44	D	Poor analysis, significant omissions or errors; negligible originality poor referencing/style
0-39	D-	Poor analysis, significant omissions or errors; negligible originality poor referencing/style

Note: distinctions between C+ and C and between D+ and D come down to questions of degree. Marks under 50 are a fail.

The approach to assessment should enable students to understand why they received a particular grade and mark, so as to be able to learn from the experience. Please include detailed comments about the research papers or take-home exam on a separate A4 sheet of paper.

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- Assessment standards should be rigorous.
- Given the relatively small class size in the postgraduate programme, it is not appropriate to insist on a marking curve or to nominate the proportion of high honours that should be given. If the work of a majority of students is excellent, it should be marked accordingly; conversely, if work is poor, it should always be given the lower appropriate mark. If a piece of work is not up to postgraduate standard, it should be failed. If a teacher suspects that the work is not the original work of the student, the Postgraduate Manager should be notified and options for dealing with the problem explored.
- As a minimum, for a pass, assessed work must communicate effectively and must demonstrate a competent understanding of relevant legal principles and a competent grasp of legal techniques. Teachers should make some allowances for the written expression of students whose first language is not English.
- For a higher honours grade, teachers should take into account the extent to which work submitted for assessment:
 - Has clearly defined and properly focused aims
 - Contains significant original thought on the part of the student
 - Is presented in a coherent, structured and convincing manner
 - Provides an appropriate review of existing literature
 - Provides appropriate and accurate citations for all materials referred to by the student, consistently with an accepted legal style
 - Has the potential to be published in an appropriate refereed journal