

A low first class (70-79)

Meets the majority of the above criteria.

For the most part, however, first class answers fall into one of two categories:

A mid-first class (80-89)

Meets the criteria outlined above.

Essay is well balanced, complete, maintains a good quality of discussion throughout, shows an ability to synthesise complex ideas, avoids repetition, and includes well-reasoned conclusions.

A high first class (90-100):

Meets the criteria outlined above and additionally demonstrates particular excellence in more than one of the following:

Range of coverage or depth of discussion

Creative use of existing ideas

Development/introduction of new ideas that are thought-provoking or which challenge received views

Use of illustrative examples which extend the range of the answer

Ability to work with complex theoretical ideas

Grade-related marking criteria for dissertations and project work

Fail

Dissertations in this class demonstrate little knowledge of relevant material. They contain little or no original research. Treatment of the topic is superficial. Knowledge of the key literature is minimal.

Bad Fail (0-19)

Demonstrates some basic awareness of course material, but shows virtually no evidence that material has been properly understood. No recognition of the demands of the task.

Clear Fail (20-29)

The work attempts to identify a clear research problem or answer a research question, but is too brief, superficial or poorly executed.

Marginal Fail (30-39)

There is some coherence and structure, but the treatment of the topic is superficial.

The piece of work includes some literature review, and makes references to research findings, but is deficient in knowledge/understanding of literature and fails to incorporate relevant findings. There may be some evidence of original material.

Third (40-49)

Dissertations/projects at this level show some knowledge of key literature and/or techniques and contain some original material. However, this knowledge may be used ineffectively, inaccurately or in an unreflective way.

Dissertations/projects in this class will have a poor grasp of methodological issues, omit some key points, or fail to identify and address a research problem/questions. Poorly developed writing skills and poor presentation may contribute to a third class mark.

A clear third (40-44)

Relevant material is presented, but in a manner that lacks order/organisation/argument.

The work contains some original material, but these are only partially described rather than fully explained, and discussion does not elaborate sufficiently on key themes and/or central research questions.

There is an attempt at a literature review but it contains too many omissions or inaccuracies.

Conclusions/findings are presented but include unsubstantiated assertions.

A strong third (45-49)

Some attempt has been made to organise the material and present an argument, although the arguments are weakly developed, or contain evidence of poor judgement.

Text may stray from the point and/or show limited comprehension of key themes.

Lower Second

Lower Second (50-59)

Dissertations/projects which though competent are lacking in content, focus, organisation, breadth of reference and/or depth of discussion.

Dissertations/projects which do work with a specified research problem which, however, may not be grounded in a wide ranging-literature review.

Dissertations/ projects which have upper second class qualities may also fall into this category if they are too short, unfinished or badly organised.

A clear lower second (50-54)

The work is appropriately structured but is poorly designed and/or contains little original material and/or fails to give a reasonable account of methodology.

A strong lower second (55-59)

The work contains some original material, is reasonably well-argued and shows a satisfactory understanding of the issues involved.

Upper Second

Upper Second (60-69)

Dissertations/projects...

1. whose design is inspired by the relevant research literature and which tackle a clearly defined research question (or questions).
2. which draw effectively on key readings supplied during the course of study, and refer at times to other literature and examples.
3. whose design and execution show clear thinking, together with an ability to write well and sustain an argument.
4. which are methodologically sound and include original materials.
5. which are well-presented (they are complete, comprehensive and are appropriately referenced and illustrated)

A clear upper second (60-64)

Meets the above criteria, but...

1. may have less new data/original material than would merit a strong upper second. analysis may be limited by less-than-ideal choice of methods.
2. there may be some unevenness in written communications skills, so that the best use of a otherwise good original materials is not made.

A strong upper second (65-69)

Meets the above criteria, and additionally includes one or more of the following qualities:

Careful research design

Methodologically commendable

Technically sound

Effectively combines own materials with a range of existing literature and ideas

Development of new ideas

First (70 or more)

Dissertations/projects...

1. whose design shows awareness and understanding of the research literature, and which succeeds in addressing a particular gap in that literature;
2. which build both on set readings and on a wider range of materials (either supplied as 'further reading' or discovered during independent library work);
3. which address a clearly defined and demonstrably significant research question;
4. whose design and/or execution shows a capacity for original thought, together with an ability to write clearly and to sustain an argument;
5. whose execution reflects an ability to adopt an appropriate qualitative or quantitative methodology, and to use that methodology effectively and imaginatively;
6. which combines competence with originality in data collection (where appropriate), analysis and interpretation.
7. which attain high standards of presentation (imaginatively but effectively organised into chapters/sections, appropriately illustrated with maps and diagrams, effective and appropriate writing style, thorough referencing, and complete bibliography in a recognised format)

A low first class (70-79)

Meets the majority of the above criteria.

A mid-first class (80-89)

Meets the criteria outlined above.

Dissertation/project is well balanced, carefully argued, maintains a high quality of discussion throughout, shows an ability to synthesise and build on complex ideas, avoids repetition, and employs an appropriate methodology to produce well-reasoned conclusions from original materials (either from new data or from other kinds of original work)

A high first class (90-100):

Meets the criteria outlined above and additionally demonstrates sustained excellence in more than one of the following:

1. Originality in, and careful thorough application of, research design
2. Methodological innovation; Application of appropriate techniques
3. Creative synthesis of wide ranging literature/ability to work with complex theoretical ideas
4. Range of coverage, theoretical sophistication and/or or depth and imagination of discussion
5. Development/ introduction of new ideas that are thought-provoking or which challenge received views
6. Wide range and high quality of original materials.