

Masters Dissertation assessment criteria

Not all criteria may apply to all types of dissertation. And the criteria may have different weightings, depending on type.

Criteria	0 -24%	25 - 34%	35 - 49%	50 -59% Pass	60 – 69% Merit	70 - 79% Distinction	80 - 100% Distinction
1. Purpose & objectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research question or • Problem definition or • Theoretical focus or • Case study focus • The project /case study development 	Not stated, confusing, unrelated to title, difficult to understand, inappropriate study	Very limited lacks effective focus and clear rational Too ambitious or too basic	Poorly defined and presented, some confusion in rationale	Clearly stated, some relevance, straightforward	Well stated purpose, appropriate and realistic explanation of the context /problem/case	Very clearly stated, feasible, innovative	Exceptionally well stated, interesting, sophisticated, original, full and convincing justification
2. Literature Review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there evidence of appropriate selection and discussion of relevant literature? • Is there evidence of understanding of, and critical engagement with what has been read? • Does the literature add to the understanding of the problem/ planned development/ case study through effective evaluation and synthesis of a range of literature? 	Inadequate and/or irrelevant evidence, virtually no evidence of appropriate selection, no discussion of selection criteria, unsystematic or omitted referencing	Rudimentary coverage, very limited evidence of understanding	Lacks structure with clear gaps, no discussion of selection criteria, unsystematic referencing. Limited evidence of understanding and evaluation of the selected literature.	A basic coverage of relevant literature. Inconsistent referencing, The literature offers some additional understanding the problem/ project / development of project /case study	Good coverage, awareness of relevant prior research, clear structure, stated selection criteria, consistent referencing, clarity of understanding, the literature, informs and adds to the development of the project /case study	Comprehensive and inclusive use of highly relevant literature, good structure, clearly articulated discussion that relates to the topic of research	Exceptional section that fully demonstrates a discerning, creative and critical engagement with what has been read

<p>3. Research Methodology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the approach adequately explained, appropriate to the problem and data? Do the collected data avoid bias and are they carefully collected? 	<p>No theoretical basis, no discussion or justification of approach, highly inadequate, no evidence of critical evaluation of sources and data</p>	<p>Irrelevant, very limited explanation of approach to the study</p>	<p>Irrelevant theoretical basis, poorly explained approach</p>	<p>Some evidence of a theoretical basis, reasonably explained.</p>	<p>Clear and relevant theoretical basis, appropriate approach, useful and appropriate information. An awareness of strengths and weaknesses of approach.</p>	<p>Very clear and relevant theoretical basis, persuasive rational for research approach, or methods used for the development of a project/ case study, evidence of critical evaluation</p>	<p>Provides excellent theoretical understanding rigorously argued approach, exceptional understanding evident</p>
<p>4. Analysis of Primary and/ or Secondary Data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collection and analysis 	<p>None, totally inappropriate and unrelated</p>	<p>Extremely limited collection of data, poorly identified data, no criteria for evaluation, no analysis</p>	<p>Casual acquisition of data, lacks structure, limited evaluation against unclear or inappropriate criteria, mostly descriptive</p>	<p>Standard approach to collection, limited validity, limited and basic, but acceptable evaluation or techniques</p>	<p>Standard approach to collection, clear validity and reliability, critical analysis using appropriate techniques and appropriate criteria</p>	<p>Advanced approaches of collection, clear validity, critical analysis using appropriate techniques and appropriate criteria, fully justified</p>	<p>Outstanding analytical techniques and approaches, evidence of creation of new approaches (if appropriate), thorough and rigorous analysis, exceptionally well justified</p>
<p>5. Discussion & Findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do the discussion of findings reflect (personal) learning from analysis, and an understanding of the implications and limitations, the strengths and weaknesses of the research or development? 	<p>No attempt to relate findings to theory</p>	<p>Findings are not effective, discussion shows no learning from the evidence presented</p>	<p>Discussion shows a very limited awareness of theory and attempt to link this to the findings. There is a very limited discussion of the implications, and limitations of the research or development</p>	<p>Adequate level of critical analysis and reflection on personal learning. Adequate discussion of implications of the findings and reflection on the strengths and weaknesses of the research or development</p>	<p>Some links with theory, discussion justified with appropriate evidence, good critical analysis of the implications of the findings, and reflection on the strengths and weaknesses of the research or development</p>	<p>Comprehensive links with theory, complete justification with appropriate evidence, very good critical analysis of the implications of the findings, and reflection on the strengths and weaknesses of the research or development</p>	<p>Sophisticated and critical discussion of the issues involved, outstanding reflection on the strengths and weaknesses of the research, offers fresh/new insights on the problem or development</p>

<p>6. Presentation, Structure & Language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is it written in good English? • Is it presented using appropriate graphics, illustrations and accurate referencing? • Is it well structured, logical and coherent, using appropriate chapter headings? 	<p>Mostly inarticulate and incomprehensible, very hard to understand and follow, confused and unstructured</p>	<p>Poor presentation, many spelling and grammatical errors, difficult to understand, inappropriately structured</p>	<p>Basic layout, inconsistent flow, few spelling and grammatical errors, poor citation and reference list, poor structure, confused.</p>	<p>Adequate use of graphics and charts, good command of spelling and grammar, some typos, some omissions or inconsistencies in reference list, most sections have a logical flow and structure</p>	<p>Clear and effective use of graphics and charts, no spelling or grammatical errors, appropriate and consistent referencing, logical, clear and coherent structure</p>	<p>Very good logical flow and cohesion, Discerning use of graphics, charts and tables, no spelling of grammatical errors, appropriate and consistent referencing, well developed and appropriate structure</p>	<p>Outstanding logical flow, excellent use of language, appealing and effective use of graphics, charts and tables, appropriate and consistent referencing, very skilfully developed structure, outstanding logical flow, most effective use of conventions appropriate for purpose</p>
<p>7. Conclusion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do the conclusions do more than re-state the findings? Do they relate to the existing academic debates and /or current evidence? Are they effectively linked to the central theoretical themes/ story/ development? 	<p>Conclusions are not justified by evidence, they do not relate to the topic of the dissertation, their development is unclear and incomplete, no recommendations / opportunities for further development</p>	<p>Conclusions poorly justified by evidence, they have a poor relationship to the topic of the dissertation, their development is of poor quality, recommendations / opportunities for further development are not of practical use</p>	<p>Conclusions have limited justification in the evidence, there is limited relationship to existing theory and the topic of the dissertation, very limited recommendations / opportunities for further development</p>	<p>Adequate attempt to use evidence to reach appropriate conclusions that relate to the topic of the dissertation, conclusions may be general and uncritical, adequate recommendations / opportunities for further development</p>	<p>Clear conclusions relating to the topic of the dissertation and justified by the evidence. Identifies clear recommendation / opportunities for further development</p>	<p>Clear conclusions with a very good relationship to the topic of the dissertation and justified well by the evidence. Identifies clear and practical recommendation / opportunities for further development</p>	<p>Exceptional conclusions that relate strongly to the topic of the dissertation with excellent justification in the evidence. Conclusions add new insight to the topic of the dissertation and identify clear and practical recommendations / opportunities for further development</p>