

## Dissertation Evaluation Guidelines (MIntSt)

### The Dissertation

The Dissertation is regarded as the capstone experience of the Programme and allows the student to develop and display in-depth understanding of a theme in International Studies, as well as an in-depth understanding of the appropriate research tools, approaches and theories applicable to that theme. It is not required that the dissertation makes an original contribution to the literature. ***It is a requirement, though, that the dissertation be based on a well-defined and clear research question of scholarly significance, and that the dissertation develops a theoretically and methodologically informed and evidence-based answer to that question.***

The word limit for the dissertation is 20,000 words of text, exclusive of appendices, footnotes, tabular material, bibliography or equivalent.

### Criteria for Evaluating a MIntSt Dissertation

The following criteria should be applied when assessing a MIntSt dissertation. The grade assigned depends on the extent to which the criteria have been met.

#### *Definition of research scope and goals*

- The research scope has been appropriately defined, preferably in the form of a clear and scholarly significant research question
- The goals of the thesis are stated clearly
- The research question and line of intellectual enquiry are evident from an early stage in the dissertation

#### *Grasp of the topic*

- The student demonstrates an intellectual grasp of the topic and understanding of the scope of research
- The student demonstrates understanding of the relevant theoretical literature
- The student demonstrates skills in making use of literature and other relevant sources of information

#### *Methods, conclusions*

- The student demonstrates an ability to devise an appropriate research design for reaching the goals of the project
- The student demonstrates ability to apply the chosen methods
- The dissertation contains references to the relevant scholarly publications in the field
- The dissertation presents well-founded conclusions drawn from the results
- The dissertation answers the research question(s) presented

*Contribution to knowledge and thesis structure*

- The dissertation is relevant to the set goal and arrives at an answer to the research question
- The dissertation is a well-organized logical whole
- The dissertation rigorously develops and offers research-based arguments and analysis that substantiates, modifies, challenges or in other ways adds to the current understanding of the relevant subject/issue

*Presentation and language*

- The dissertation is proofread, edited, and technically of the high standard expected of scholarly outputs
- The dissertation is written in a coherent, formal style and forms a well-ordered whole
- The dissertation observes the conventions and practices of the chosen referencing style (any style can be used, as long as it is used consistently and correctly)

The marking scale for the dissertation is as follows:

DISTINCTION: 80% or above

CREDIT PASS: 70-79%

PASS: 50-69%

FAIL: 1-49%

Note that the assessment of a MIntSt dissertation involves an internal and external examiner.