MARKING CRITERIA
MMLL SCHEDULED PAPER ESSAYS

Examiners are reminded that these marking criteria are for papers at multiple Parts of Tripos, and judgments should be appropriate to the level being examined.

In the following marking criteria higher grades should demonstrate not only the qualities specified for that class but also all the qualities expected of lower grades.

Mark	Class	Keyword	Description	Subdivision
80-85	I* Dist.	OUTSTANDING	An outstanding performance, excellent in all aspects: range of material covered, including references, argument, analysis and exposition. Virtually without flaw, lapse or inconsistency, in which all the qualities deemed to constitute first-class work are present in a remarkable degree. Data questions: The answer includes a detailed, accurate and comprehensive presentation of the dataset/exercise and articulates the significance and implications of the specific dataset/exercise for the wider theoretical debates and alternative approaches and contributes new directions to the theoretical debate in a sophisticated and innovative way.	
75-79 ↓ 70-74	I	EXCELLENT ↓ VERY GOOD	Work that is very good or excellent both in the range and command of the material covered and in argument and analysis. The answer engages closely and critically with the question; provides full supporting evidence; shows evidence of originality, using examples beyond those presented in lecture; brings in relevant material from a wide but coherent range of sources; demonstrates attention to detail; and is well-planned and complete. Part II coursework essays: includes consistent and full references supported by a complete bibliography. Commentaries demonstrate clear analysis of and close engagement with textual detail of grammar, style, and expression, provide insights to the text, and are structured in a way which is not simply dictated by a linear reading of the passage. Data questions: work that identifies all the analytical challenges raised by the dataset and engages critically with aspects of methodology and/or the empirical adequacy/limitations of a given dataset. The theoretical analysis identifies hypotheses relevant to the phenomena in question,	75-79: Excellent performance, meeting all, or virtually all, of these criteria. 70-74: Very good performance meeting many of these criteria.

			employs and combines elements from varying theoretical proposals and perspectives in an innovative way and articulates concrete predictions of proposed analysis beyond the given dataset.	
60-69	II.1	GOOD	Work that shows a good broad-based knowledge of the topic, presented in an organised way, clearly argued and focused on the set question, and with appropriate, but routine, exemplification. Broadly accurate in technical detail. Part II coursework essays: includes references supported by a complete bibliography. Commentaries pay some attention to textual detail, show good organisation, and offer perceptive comments on the text. A 'linear' commentary (which offers a running commentary on the text from beginning to end) may be in this class if the comments are perceptive and accurate and it does not fall into précis and paraphrase. Data questions: Work that shows good understanding of the analytical challenge posed by a dataset. Broadly accurate in technical detail. Good comments on methodological aspects and/or empirical adequacy of a given dataset. Identifies relevant hypotheses and offers a well organised analysis.	65-69: A persuasive and effective answer, regularly, but not consistently, sophisticated in analysis and impressive in displaying relevant knowledge; includes some attempt to treat the evidence critically and to synthesise arguments. 60-64: Competent and accurate in the reproduction of received ideas, and supported with reasonable exemplification. The answer shows evidence of reading of the principal sources of published work on the subject, though the range of references may be more limited than answers that fall into the 65-69 range. 65-69 Data questions: The answer identifies most of the analytical challenges, identifies specific hypotheses relevant to the empirical phenomenon in question and shows some attempt for a critical evaluation of methods and the dataset; shows attempts to combine elements from varying proposals and perspectives. 60-64 Data questions: Competent and accurate in identifying the main points of interest in the data and commenting on methods and scope of dataset. Competent in identification of relevant theoretical hypotheses/proposals to account for the data, reasonably applied and explained.

50-59	II.2	FAIR	Competent and broadly relevant work, but lacking in breadth of reference, or poorly related to the question or clumsy in presentation. May contain some fairly basic factual errors. An answer that would normally fall into the II.1 class may fall into this class if it is too short, rushed, unfinished or badly organised. Part II coursework essays: references are inconsistent or the bibliography may be incomplete or very limited. Commentaries pay little attention to textual detail, and tend to rely on précis, paraphrase, or uncritical description to make their points. Some attempt is made at analysis. Data questions: Identifies salient analytical questions but may miss some key patterns or misinterpret some data points. Uncritical description of data without engaging with questions of methodology or the scope and adequacy of the dataset.	55-59: Competent understanding of the basic material with reasonable organisation and focus, but may tend to state ideas rather than explain or justify them. 50-54: Deficiencies in understanding and coverage together with poor organisation and focus (the argument may emerge in a fragmentary unfocused or incoherent way). Some material may be irrelevant or its significance left unclear. Data questions: 55-59: Competent understanding of key points of interest in the data and connection to relevant hypotheses/analyses but mostly descriptive discussion without explanation. 50-54: Deficiencies in understanding of the main points of interest in the data, misinterpretations and factual mistakes, weak analysis and poor organisation.
40-49	III	POOR	Work which shows some knowledge of the material, but is seriously deficient in understanding, breadth of reference and/or organisation and/or presentation of evidence. May miss the point of the question, or be unduly brief. Part II coursework essays: references are inconsistent and the bibliography is incomplete or missing. Commentaries consist largely of précis and paraphrase, with technical details (e.g. rhyme schemes or rhetorical figures in literary texts, the presence of linguistic features) mentioned without analytical comment. Data questions: Work which shows some knowledge of the material, but is seriously deficient in understanding. May fail to observe the key patterns and miss the core analytical questions raised by the data and be unduly brief. Theoretical hypotheses discussed are irrelevant and/or proposed analyses do not account for the observations.	45-49: A valid underlying argument is discernible. 40-44: Directionless and/or padded. Data questions: 45-49: Some correct observations and plausible attempts for an analysis. An answer which provides a reasonable description of the data but with no attempt of analysis. 40-44: Incorrect or irrelevant observations; incorrect data description.

| 15-39 | F | FAIL | Completely fails to demonstrate understanding of material; or irrelevant or extremely superficial.
Part II coursework essays: no attention to references or bibliography.

Data questions:
Completely fails to make any relevant observations about the data and attempt an interpretation or analysis. | |

Notes:

Exceptions: An essay which fails to address the question adequately will receive a lower mark than its overall quality would otherwise gain.

Examiners should note that where an essentially similar paper is set in the MML Tripos for both Part II and Part IB and in the Linguistics Tripos for Part IIA and IIB, Part IB scripts should be marked separately from Part II scripts and Part IIA scripts should be marked separately from Part IIB scripts. In the marking of Part IB scripts, credit should be given for sophistication or subtlety of argument, even if the range of texts or information referred to is more limited than would be expected at Part II. Priority should be given to rewarding original ideas and interesting arguments, even if this means condoning the occasional lapse on inaccuracy.

In MML Papers Sp4 and Sp9 students may write one or more of their essays in Spanish rather than in English. Examiners are to follow the marking criteria in exactly the same way, irrespective of language chosen. A student will not be advantaged or disadvantaged for writing in either language.

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