

MARKING CRITERIA
MML YEAR ABROAD DISSERTATIONS

Please note: Examiners should not deduct marks for a choice of topic. All topics/titles have been approved by relevant Heads of Department.

There are only four hours of supervision allowed for this examination as opposed to eight for a regular scheduled paper.

Examiners should give due recognition to originality and the difficulties posed by topics where there are few scholarly resources available.

Mark	Class	Keyword	Content/ Argumentation	Research/ Presentation	Subdivision
80-85	I* Dist.	OUTSTANDING	The dissertation represents either a new approach to a topic or a very thorough overview of traditional arguments that have been evaluated critically, leading to a clear and strong conclusion. The argument underlying the dissertation is sophisticated and challenging, enunciated in a clear and individual voice. The dissertation could serve as the basis of a proposal for future graduate work.	Extensive background research is supplemented with thorough critical and analytical assessment of the major contributions; primary and secondary source materials are handled with dexterity and critical acumen; presentation and referencing are immaculate.	
75-79 ↓ 70-74	I	EXCELLENT ↓ VERY GOOD	Demonstrates comprehensive knowledge of the topic in its broader context; is very well structured with clear expression and judicious illustration. The argument represents an interpretive and considered approach to the question, not excessively reliant on secondary sources.	Demonstrates extensive use of available research resources. Primary and secondary sources are handled judiciously and analyzed. Polished presentation and referencing.	75-79: Shows unquestioned mastery of the topic and confidence in the exposition. 70-74: Consistently well-crafted, independent and enterprising.
60-69	II.1	GOOD	A good, sound argument containing competent discussion of the topic while demonstrating good overall knowledge of the field. The dissertation should show signs of clarity and organization with appropriate selection of material, though it might not go much beyond standard interpretations.	Competent use has been made of available research resources. Account is taken of secondary sources, although perhaps not uniformly or exhaustively. Presentation and referencing are good.	65-69: Cogent and resourceful arguments. 60-64: Keeps to a fairly routine but valid set of ideas.

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Mark	Class	Keyword	Content/ Argumentation	Research/ Presentation	Subdivision
50-59	II.2	FAIR	Average level of argumentation containing basic ideas, although they might be limited to simplistic narrative treatment (e.g., synopsis) at the lower level. Shows knowledge of the field but not beyond what is found in scholarly summaries. The structure is adequate but often not very well developed and illustration is not always to the point.	Secondary sources substituting for first-hand knowledge of primary materials. While use of secondary literature is acknowledged, it is not dealt with critically or analytically. Presentation and referencing will often have inconsistencies.	55-59: A number of ideas of interest are discernible but the whole is flawed by inconsistencies in argument, referencing or presentation. 50-54: Marked tendency towards padding; paucity of own ideas; unsatisfactory presentation.
40-49	III	POOR	Very basic approach; does not have a consistent thesis; ideas are unstructured or tacked together; often irrelevant and undirected argumentation; little apt illustration. The dissertation should nonetheless show some knowledge of source material.	Little or inappropriate use of available research resources has been made. Ideas will often be heavily dependent on the work of others, amounting to no more than uncritical paraphrase; possibly sloppy presentation and severely inconsistent referencing.	45-49: A valid but commonplace underlying argument is discernible, but marred by bad presentation and organization. 40-44: Directionless, often padded, showing evidence of great haste and little attempt to mount an argument of any kind.
15-39	F	FAIL	Fails to demonstrate knowledge or understanding of source material. Little attempt to present any evaluation or the evaluation is hasty and ill-considered.	Very few research resources are used or acknowledged; presentation will often show extreme carelessness.	

Examiners may call any candidate to sustain his or her dissertation in a viva voce examination to help ascertain in which of these categories a dissertation should be placed. The Year Abroad Project Dissertation must be not more than 8,000 words in length. This includes quotations, footnotes and endnotes but excludes preliminary material (title page, contents page), appendices and bibliographies.

An examiner who has reason to believe that a dissertation has exceeded the word limit and thus infringed the rubric, should ask the Faculty Office to ascertain the exact word count. One mark will be deducted for every 100 words or part thereof above the maximum length.

Approved 27 11 2017