

%		70-100	60-69	50-59	< 50
Classification	Notes	Distinction	Merit	Masters (pass)	Fail
Introduction and rationale For all dissertations this component is worth 5% of the total marks.	This component is the same for all dissertation types. It will provide a clear introduction to the research context – the wider research or problem area, provide clear research questions being tackled and provide a summary of what was achieved. It will be similar to the introduction of journal and conference articles.	An excellent introduction that provides a succinct and evidenced need for the research contained within the dissertation, clear outlines of the research methods and major findings and clear description of the dissertation contents.	A good introduction that provides some evidence of research context and gaps and a description of the main research outcomes. However, the research context will probably be general and the research questions may be weakly motivated.	A fair introduction but the description of the prior research context will be generic and lack specificity, the research questions will be simply presented without explanation and the research outcomes will be lightly described.	A very limited introduction with little explanation or insight into why the research is necessary or valuable. There will be only cursory descriptions of the dissertation contents and achievements.
Background analysis Literature review dissertations: 15% of total marks Case study dissertation: 15% of total marks Application dissertation: 15% of total marks Evidence-based dissertation: 15% of total marks Experiment dissertation: 20% of total marks	For all dissertation types, this component describes how the student generated the background knowledge necessary to create good research questions and a good research process. It may also inform their choice of methods, e.g. identification of best practice, identification of standard data sets or experimental techniques. It may take different forms depending on the nature of the dissertation, e.g. it may contain a combination of literature review, market analysis, comparison of existing products, stakeholder interviews, etc. It is expected however that the research literature is the first source of knowledge considered.	The depth and breadth of the background study is outstanding. The analysis demonstrates high levels of independent thinking, the ability to critique obtained material and the ability to create clear and compelling research questions. The review demonstrates the ability to identify key theories and concepts and these are clearly articulated. There is a clear process of investigation with explanations of key decisions. The findings are clearly articulated.	The depth and breadth of the background study is good. The analysis demonstrates some levels of independent thinking, the ability to critique material but such independent thinking may be limited. There are a set of reasonable research questions but they may lack precision or may not be clearly related to the review material. The review presents some key theories and concepts but may only present them in a very generic way. There is some process of investigation but aspects of the process, e.g. how review material was obtained, may be unclear.	The depth and breadth of the background study is reasonable. The analysis demonstrates little independent thinking, e.g. being only summaries of obtained material, or generic descriptions of the need for a research solution. There may be little in the way of a process for obtaining the background knowledge. The material obtained is relevant to the dissertation topic and demonstrates some knowledge of the research area. However, there is little depth of analysis and the research questions may be rather generic. The review describes a research problem	The review is inadequate at demonstrating the knowledge required to describe a research problem or create a research solution. There is little or no process for creating this knowledge. The material presented is too little or too weakly described or insufficiently relevant to form the background for a research project. There appears to be a general lack of understanding key concepts, theories or techniques in the problem area.

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	This stage is about defining the research problem; it is not about specifying the solution to the research problem. For literature review dissertations, this component outlines the initial review that motivates the research questions – it is not the main review itself. For case studies this review will most likely include literature from the organization that is participating in the case study.			sufficiently well to form the basis of a research solution but does not offer much in the way of specifics.	
Methodology Literature review dissertations: 10% of total marks Case study dissertation: 25% of total marks Application dissertation: 20% of total marks Evidence-based dissertation: 30% of total marks Experiment dissertation: 30% of total marks	This component describes the research methods used in the dissertation. For literature review dissertations, this will describe the search strategy for obtaining the review material, including descriptions of databases and search terms/phrases, and the process for analyzing the material. For case study dissertations this will describe the process for conducting the case study, including materials used, people spoken to, and	There is clear evidence of a reasoned and justified approach throughout. The dissertation will demonstrate knowledge of how to select appropriate research and technical tools for a research problem and how to best use them. There will be specific reference to the research literature. There will be clear descriptions of any research instruments or tools developed, including their validation, and of any primary or secondary data	There is clear evidence of a reasoned approach. The dissertation will demonstrate some knowledge of how to best use the research methods employed. There will be only general reference to the research literature. There will be fair descriptions of any research instruments or tools developed, including their validation, and of any primary or secondary data collected. The choices may have limited explanation or	There is little evidence of a reasoned approach. The dissertation will demonstrate knowledge of how to use the research methods employed but little or no evidence of best practice in their use. There will be little or no reference to the research literature. There will be short descriptions of any research instruments or tools developed and of any primary or secondary data collected. The choices may have no explanation or rely	It will be difficult to understand how the methods have been created and used to obtain the dissertation results. There will be insufficient descriptions of the methods used or data obtained. There is no evidence of research knowledge being used to create the methods. There will be no or almost no reflective discussion on any limitations or potential weaknesses, e.g. bias, in the study and how such

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	the approach for analyzing the research material and synthesizing the research findings. For applications, this will describe the process for developing a solution, e.g. how requirements were established, the process of creating a technical solution, including design documents and descriptions of technology used, and testing approaches. Most of the detail can be included in appendices. For evidence-based dissertations such as interviews, textual analysis and surveys, this will describe the main dissertation choices such as how the research tools were developed, sampling, analysis methods, etc. For experimental dissertations, this will describe the experimental components: data, conditions, environment, technology. For experiments where there is technology development this component will also describe the technology and how it was developed. It is	collected. All choices will be explained and justified. There will be a good reflective discussion on any limitations or potential weaknesses, e.g. bias, in the study and how such weaknesses have been mitigated. It will be possible to replicate, to a reasonable approximation, the dissertation's methods based on the descriptions provided. There is a high degree of originality in the development of the methods.	rely mostly on convenience purposes. There will be some reflective discussion on any limitations or potential weaknesses, e.g. bias, in the study and how such weaknesses have been mitigated. It will be possible to replicate, to a reasonable approximation, parts of the dissertation's methods based on the descriptions provided but there may be gaps resulting in challenges in attempting to replicate the methods.	mostly on convenience purposes. There will be little reflective discussion on any limitations or potential weaknesses, e.g. bias, in the study and how such weaknesses have been mitigated. It will be challenging to replicate parts of the dissertation's methods based on the descriptions provided but the outline of the methods are clear and the overall approach is also clear.	weaknesses have been mitigated. It will be virtually impossible to replicate the dissertation's methods based on the descriptions provided.

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	expected that there is less technological component here than for an application dissertation.				
Analysis Literature review dissertations: 45% of total marks Case study dissertation: 30% of total marks Application dissertation: 35% of total marks Evidence-based dissertation: 25% of total marks Experiment dissertation: 20% of total marks	This component describes the dissertation results and evaluation. For literature review dissertations, this will describe the main findings from the review, e.g. the main themes developed or the outcome of other analytical approaches. For case study dissertations this will describe the main findings from the study including descriptions of how the data has been synthesized into the findings. For applications, this will describe the evaluation of the system and how this evaluation answers the research questions. It will describe the evaluation framework, e.g. usability tests, use of external datasets and benchmarks, customer acceptance tests, and the results. For evidence-based dissertations such as interviews, textual analysis	The dissertation results and evaluation are detailed, appropriate and demonstrate critical and independent thought. The evaluation methodology has been implemented and presented to an outstanding standard. The evaluation is extremely thorough and the quality of the analysis is very high. There is evidence of best practice, e.g. through use of tests of statistical significance or inter-rater reliability tests, to add rigor to the results and our confidence in them.	The evaluation methodology and results are appropriate and demonstrates some evidence of critical thinking. It will mostly rely on applications of standard approaches. The evaluation methodology has been implemented and presented to a comprehensive standard. However, there are likely to be clear aspects for improvement. The evaluation is thorough in places and the quality of the analysis is good. There is some evidence of best practice but this may be inconsistent.	The evaluation methodology and results are of satisfactory depth, with one or two substantial aspects for improvement. The evaluation methodology identified is a satisfactory approach for the project and it has been implemented and presented to an acceptable standard. The evaluation is limited in its scope, and analysis leaves room for improvement.	The evaluation methodology and results are weak. A minimal attempt is likely and the result is cursory. The evaluation and analysis are inadequate in scope and may not be appropriate for the dissertation topic.

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	and surveys, this will describe the findings, which may include descriptions of the data itself, e.g. response rates, demographic profiles of respondents, etc. and the analysis that leads to answering the research questions, e.g. thematic analysis, statistical analysis, etc. For experimental dissertations, this will describe the experimental findings in a way that is appropriate to the discipline in which the experiment is conducted and may involve quantitative and qualitative analysis.				
Conclusions and recommendations For all dissertations this component is worth 15% of the total marks.	For all dissertation types, this section should (a) provide a critical discussion section that links the findings back to the original review, similar to the discussions section of a journal or conference article and (b) provide recommendations to practice, e.g. recommendations of how government, industry or charity, should change its practices based on the findings, and recommendations for future academic research and (c)	The dissertation will provide a robust and clear description of the advancement in knowledge and situate that advance within the context of what is already known within the discipline. The dissertation will provide clear and specific recommendations to practice and academia based on the outcomes of the research – who will benefit from the research and how can the new	The dissertation will provide a fair description of the advance in knowledge and relate it generally to the state of the art in the field. This section may lack specificity in the knowledge gained or what parts of the field are relevant. The dissertation will provide clear recommendations to practice and academia based on the outcomes of the research but these may be generic.	The dissertation only provides general claims of novelty with relatively weak discussions of how the findings relate to the field. The dissertation will provide recommendations to practice and academia based on the outcomes of the research but there may be little consideration as to their viability or appropriateness. The dissertation will provide a reflection on the research process and experience of	There is little or no discussion, only a summary of what was done. There is little or no recognition of prior knowledge or how this was updated and few useful recommendations on how the knowledge gained could be used by others. Reflection is missing or very weak.

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	provide a short critical reflection on the dissertation as a whole, e.g. outlining major achievements, barriers to its success and particularly innovative aspects.	research knowledge be put into practice? The dissertation will provide a clear and insightful reflection on the research as a whole.	The dissertation will provide a good reflection on the research as a whole but this may lack precision or insight.	undertaking the research but this may be rather limited and lacking in insight.	
Structure, presentation and referencing For all dissertations this component is worth 10% of the total marks	For all dissertations, this component grades the use of scholarly approaches to information presentation, including style, structure, appropriate use of graphics and recognised referencing conventions.	The report communicates all appropriate aspects of the project in a clear and organised manner. It demonstrates a high level of critical and reflective thought processes. It is also highly literate and very easy to read. It shows excellent use of information presentation and referencing skills.	The report communicates most appropriate aspects of the project in a mostly clear and organised manner. It demonstrates good reflective practices. There are likely to be one or two larger aspects which could have been improved. It shows good use of information presentation and referencing skills.	The report communicates most appropriate aspects of the dissertation in a somewhat clear and organised manner. It demonstrates satisfactory critical and reflective thought processes. It is also mostly literate. There are clear areas for improvement. It shows satisfactory use of information presentation and referencing skills.	The report is likely to have missed many appropriate aspects of the dissertation and is likely to be very disorganised and unclear. It demonstrates no critical and reflective thought processes. It is often illiterate. There are many areas for substantial improvement and unsatisfactory use of information presentation and referencing skills.