

IoA Marking Criteria and Qualitative Rubrics for Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Students

Marking Scheme

Mark	BA/BSc	Grad Diploma	MA/ MSc
70+	First Class	Distinction	Distinction
60-69	Upper Second	Merit	Merit
50-59	Lower Second	Pass	Pass
40-49	Third	Pass	Condonable Fail (see Academic Manual for regulations)
39 and below	Fail (see Academic Manual for condonement regulations)	Fail (see Academic Manual for condonement regulations)	Fail

Students are marked on the following criteria:

- **Argument:** Does the essay answer the question, use a clear structure and build to a relevant conclusion.
- **Understanding:** Understanding of relevant issues and their broader implications
- **Sources:** Use of an appropriate range of relevant sources, discrimination of relative value of different sources, (for 3rd year and MA/ MSc students: reading beyond the reading list)
- **Analysis:** Critical reflection, thought, & conceptual framework, ability to recognise and evaluate own assumptions
- **Evidence:** Empirical knowledge and use of case-studies or examples
- **Writing:** Spelling, grammar, fluency; use of appropriate vocabulary
- **Visuals (where appropriate):** Table, charts and illustrations (clarity, labelling, appropriateness), effectiveness in supporting argument
- **Referencing:** Detail, accuracy and completeness of citations; bibliographic formatting

70+: A distinctive response that develops a clear argument and sensible conclusions, with evidence of nuance; thorough understanding of issues with some sophisticated insights; extensive reading and thorough understanding of literature consulted; evidence of innovative analysis; concepts deftly defined and used with excellent sense of theoretical context; impressive, highly relevant and detailed evidence used to support most claims; awareness of unresolved issues with the evidence; style and word choice show fluency with ideas & flashes of verve; visuals actively highlight points and contribute to argument; claims supported by accurate citations and bibliography. Marks in the higher 70s range are used for outstanding work which shows several of the following qualities: exceptional thoroughness and clarity; exceptional enterprise in reading, exceptional insight or originality in the use of primary sources and relevant evidence, unusually clear perception in suggesting future research.

80% and above: These marks are used for outstanding work of exceptional originality and insight. Marks above 85% are uncommon. A mark of 90-94% might be given to the best dissertation in a particular area over, say, a five to ten year period, and a mark of 95-98% for the best piece of work ever submitted on a topic, a piece of work that could hardly be bettered.

60-69: A sound response with a reasonable argument and straightforward, logical conclusions; sound understanding of issues, with insights into broader implications; evidence of plentiful relevant reading and sound understanding of literature consulted; evidence of student's own analysis; Concepts defined and used systematically and effectively; significant amount of quality evidence, used to support most claims; style & word choice rarely detract from conveying of ideas; visuals are generally presented effectively; citations and bibliography are generally accurate and complete.

50-59: A reasonable response with a limited sense of argument, poor structure & partial conclusions; reasonable understanding of the issues and their broader implications; evidence of relevant reading and some understanding of literature consulted; reasonable reproduction of ideas from taught materials; rudimentary definition and use of concepts; some use of evidence but limited in quality and not always effectively used to support claims; style and word choice sometimes detract from conveying of ideas; visuals occasionally distract from argument or are poorly presented (size, legibility); citations and bibliography are sometimes inaccurate and incomplete.

40-49: An indirect response to the task set, with a gesture towards a relevant argument and conclusions; rudimentary, intermittent understanding of the issues with confusions; significant omissions in reading with weak understanding of literature consulted; analysis relying on the partial reproduction of ideas from taught materials; some concepts absent or wrongly used; evidence is limited in quality and quantity; claims rarely backed up; style and word choice seriously detract from conveying of ideas; visuals are missing or seriously detract from argument; citations are limited in accuracy.

30-39: A response that may attempt to answer the question but exhibits some or all of the following failings: either no argument or argument presented is inappropriate or irrelevant; conclusions absent or irrelevant; general misunderstanding of the issues under discussion; very limited or irrelevant reading; erroneous analysis or misunderstanding of the basic core of the taught materials; no conceptual material; evidence absent or irrelevant/ inaccurate; no evidence to support claims made; style and word choice seriously interfere with comprehension; visuals absent or irrelevant/ inaccurate; bibliography/ citations missing or inaccurate.

- **30-39:** Work that fails to meet the criteria for a pass and exhibits several distinct failings.
- **20-29:** Work that, although failing seriously, does show some reason and structure and an attempt to address the question.
- **5-19:** attempts to address the question which are largely incoherent or irrelevant, and show limited understanding of the topic.

Qualitative Criteria for the Assessment of Undergraduate, Affiliate and Graduate Diploma Students (NB: Excellent ≈ First; Outstanding ≈ 76+)

CRITERIA	SCALES					
	Outstanding	Excellent	Good	Fair	Adequate	Inadequate
Argument Does the essay answer the question, use a clear structure and build to a relevant conclusion.	Impressive response with relevant & nuanced argument, presenting significant nuanced & insightful conclusions.	A distinctive response that develops a clear argument & sensible conclusions, with evidence of nuance.	A sound response with a reasonable argument & straightforward, logical conclusions.	A reasonable response with a limited sense of argument, poor structure & partial conclusions.	An indirect response to the task set, with a gesture towards a relevant argument & conclusions.	Either no argument or argument presented in inappropriate & irrelevant. Conclusions absent or irrelevant.
Understanding Understanding of relevant issues and their relation to core concepts in arch theory/ methodology.	Striking understanding of complexities & significance of issues.	Thorough understanding of issues with some sophisticated insights.	Sound understanding of issues, with insights into broader implications.	Reasonable understanding of the issues & their broader implications.	Rudimentary, intermittent understanding of the issues with confusions.	General misunderstanding of the issues under discussion.
Evidence Empirical knowledge and use of case-studies, selection of appropriate case-studies	Claims supported by impressive, detailed, distinctive and reflexive analysis of data.	Impressive, highly relevant & detailed evidence used to support most claims.	Significant amount of quality evidence, used to support most claims.	Some use of evidence but limited in quality & not always effectively used to support claims.	Evidence is limited in quality and quantity. Claims rarely backed up.	Evidence absent or irrelevant/ inaccurate. No evidence to support claims made.
Analysis Critical reflection + ability to recognise and evaluate own and other scholars' assumptions.	Impressive and original thought, insights & analysis. Concepts deftly defined & accurately used with a strong sense of context.	Evidence of innovative analysis. Concepts deftly defined & used with some sense of theoretical context.	Evidence of student's own analysis. Concepts defined & used systematically & effectively.	Reasonable reproduction of ideas from taught materials. Rudimentary definition & use of concepts.	Analysis relying on the partial reproduction of ideas from taught materials. Some concepts absent or wrongly used.	Erroneous analysis. Misunderstanding of the basic core of the taught materials. No conceptual material.
Sources Use of an appropriate range of relevant sources, discrimination of relative value of different sources. (3 rd years: reading beyond reading list)	Ambitious reading & impressive understanding of relevant literatures.	Extensive reading & thorough understanding of literature consulted.	Evidence of plentiful relevant reading & sound understanding of literature consulted.	Evidence of relevant reading & some understanding of literature consulted.	Significant omissions in reading with weak understanding of literature consulted.	Very limited or irrelevant reading.
Writing Spelling, grammar, fluency; use of appropriate vocabulary	Style & word choice greatly enhances ideas & demonstrates verve.	Style & word choice show fluency with ideas & flashes of verve.	Style & word choice rarely detract from conveying of ideas.	Style & word choice sometimes detract from conveying of ideas.	Style & word choice seriously detract from conveying of ideas.	Style & word choice seriously interfere with comprehension.
Visuals Appropriate use of tables, charts & illustrations. Clarity and effectiveness in supporting argument.	Visuals actively contribute to argument & synthesise data in original forms.	Visuals actively highlight points and contribute to argument.	Visuals are generally presented effectively.	Visuals occasionally distract from argument or are poorly presented (size, legibility).	Visuals are missing or seriously detract from argument.	Visuals absent or irrelevant/ inaccurate.
Referencing Accurate citations and bibliographic formatting following IoA guidelines.	Claims fully supported by accurate citations and bibliography.	Claims supported by accurate citations and bibliography.	Citations and bibliography are generally accurate and complete.	Citations and bibliography are sometimes inaccurate and incomplete.	Citations are limited in accuracy.	Bibliography/ citations missing or inaccurate.

Qualitative Criteria for the Assessment of Institute of Archaeology Master's (Taught Postgraduate) Courses (NB. Excellent ≈ Distinction; Outstanding ≈ 76+)

CRITERIA	SCALES				
	Outstanding	Excellent	Good	Fair	Inadequate
Argument Does the essay answer the question, use a clear structure and build to a relevant conclusion.	Impressive response with relevant & nuanced argument, presenting significant nuanced & insightful conclusions.	A distinctive response that develops a clear argument & sensible conclusions, with evidence of nuance.	A sound response with a reasonable argument & straightforward, logical conclusions.	A reasonable response with a limited sense of argument, poor structure & partial conclusions.	Either no argument or argument presented is inappropriate & irrelevant. Conclusions absent or irrelevant.
Understanding Understanding of relevant issues and their relation to core concepts, clear statement of research problem.	Striking understanding of complexities & significance of issues.	Thorough understanding of issues with some sophisticated insights.	Sound understanding of issues, with insights into broader implications.	Reasonable understanding of the issues & their broader implications.	Rudimentary understanding of the issues with confusions.
Evidence Empirical knowledge and use of case-studies or examples	Claims supported by impressive, detailed, distinctive and reflexive analysis of data.	Impressive, highly relevant & detailed evidence used to support most claims. Awareness of unresolved issues with the evidence.	Significant amount of quality evidence, used to support most claims.	Some use of evidence but limited in quality & not always effectively used to support claims.	Evidence is limited in quality and quantity. Claims rarely backed up.
Analysis Critical reflection & conceptual framework, ability to recognise and evaluate own assumptions. Independent analysis & interpretation	Impressive and original thought, insights & analysis. Concepts deftly defined & accurately used with a strong sense of context.	Evidence of innovative analysis. Concepts deftly defined & used with some sense of theoretical context.	Evidence of student's own analysis. Concepts defined & used systematically & effectively.	Reasonable reproduction of ideas from taught materials. Rudimentary definition & use of concepts.	Analysis relying on the partial reproduction of ideas from taught materials. Some concepts absent or wrongly used.
Sources Appropriate range of relevant sources, discrimination between sources. Reading beyond the reading list.	Ambitious reading & impressive understanding of relevant literatures beyond the reading list.	Extensive reading & thorough understanding of literature consulted beyond the reading list.	Evidence of plentiful relevant reading & sound understanding of literature consulted.	Evidence of relevant reading & some understanding of literature consulted.	Significant omissions in reading with weak understanding of literature consulted.
Writing Spelling, grammar, fluency; use of appropriate vocabulary	Style & word choice greatly enhances ideas & demonstrates verve.	Style & word choice show fluency with ideas & flashes of verve.	Style & word choice rarely detract from conveying of ideas.	Style & word choice sometimes detract from conveying of ideas.	Style & word choice seriously detract from conveying of ideas.
Visuals Clarity and effectiveness in supporting argument, data synthesised in original format	Visuals actively contribute to argument & synthesise data in original forms.	Visuals actively highlight points and contribute to argument.	Visuals are generally presented effectively.	Visuals distract from argument or are poorly presented.	Visuals are missing or seriously detract from argument.
Referencing Accurate citations and bibliographic formatting following IoA guidelines.	Claims fully supported by accurate citations and bibliography.	Claims supported by accurate citations and bibliography.	Citations and bibliography are generally accurate and complete.	Citations and bibliography are sometimes inaccurate and incomplete.	Citations are limited in accuracy.