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	Fail	Fail
	(see Academic Manual for condonement regulations)	(see Academic Manual for condonement regulations)	

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

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

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