

## SECINTEL Dissertation Feedback & Mark Sheet

<b>Student Matriculation No.</b>	Glasgow 2273872	Charles
<b>Dissertation Title</b>	A small state's influence within the EU and NATO: Lithuania's countermeasures against Russia	

### INDIVIDUAL INSTITUTION GRADING

<b>Glasgow Marker</b> Office Use	<b>Charles Marker</b> Office Use	<b>Charles Additional Info</b> Please advise ranking
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### JOINT GRADING (subject to agreement of the external examiner and approval at Joint Exam Board)

**Final Agreed Mark. Markers should make reference to the Joint Charles University-University of Glasgow Grade Conversion Table**

B2 [16]    B [Very Good]

### DISSERTATION FEEDBACK

Assessment Criteria	Rating
<b>A. Structure and Development of Answer</b>	
This refers to your organisational skills and ability to construct an argument in a coherent and original manner	
• <i>Originality of topic</i>	Excellent
• <i>Coherent set of research questions and/or hypothesis identified</i>	Good
• <i>Appropriate methodology and evidence of effective organisation of work</i>	Good
• <i>Logically structured argument and flow of ideas reflecting research questions</i>	Good
• <i>Application of theory and/or concepts</i>	Good
<b>B. Use of Source Material</b>	
This refers to your skills to select and use relevant information and data in a correct manner	
• <i>Evidence of reading and review of published literature</i>	Excellent
• <i>Selection of relevant primary and/or secondary evidence to support argument</i>	Very Good
• <i>Critical analysis and evaluation of evidence</i>	Good
• <i>Accuracy of factual data</i>	Very Good
<b>C. Academic Style</b>	
This refers to your ability to write in a formal academic manner	
• <i>Appropriate formal and clear writing style</i>	Good
• <i>Accurate spelling, grammar and punctuation</i>	Good
• <i>Consistent and accurate referencing (including complete bibliography)</i>	Very Good
• <i>Is the dissertation free from plagiarism?</i>	Yes
• <i>Evidence of ethics approval included (if required based on methodology)</i>	Yes
• <i>Appropriate word count</i>	Yes

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### ADDITIONAL WRITTEN COMMENTS

#### ***Glasgow Marker***

This dissertation addresses a topic of obvious relevance to the programme - namely, the ability of small states to exert influence within multilateral organisations in a way that enhances their security. A lot of effort has gone into preparing the finished work, which engages with an impressive array of secondary literature dealing both with relevant theoretical frameworks and the case study (Lithuania) at hand. Beyond this, the author has also engaged in substantial empirical research, by conducting interviews and gathering together relevant policy documents. When it comes to the case study, the dissertation is especially effective in analysing gaps in the existing literature, showing that while a number of studies have alluded to the Baltic States' ability to exert influence within the EU and NATO, there has been little detailed of consideration of how they actually do this. Herein lies the main original contribution of this work, which identifies various factors and means that have enabled Lithuanian foreign policy actors to exercise power within this context. This said, the dissertation could have been better structured in terms of its application of theory and its organisation and presentation of the overall argument. The statement of the underlying research problem, for instance, would have been improved by fuller reference to traditional neo-realist interpretations and (especially) a fuller discussion of 'bandwaggoning', which is referred to in passing at various points but only defined very briefly. To have done this would have helped to give a clearer picture of how the 'alliance shelter' theory actually moves the debate forward. Altogether, the different theories referred to here could have been integrated more effectively - the relevance of the regional security complex in this context might have been clearer, and more could have been said about the concept of 'smart state' (other authors not referenced here (e.g. Marko Lehti) have previously used this concept in relation to the Baltic States. Also, in reading the empirical section, it was not immediately clear to me how the author had identified the various tools referred to in the diagram on p.34 and then used to structure the analysis - some were clearly taken from existing secondary literature, while others seem to have come out of the expert interviews. Also, while the empirical discussion usefully illustrates the interplay between Lithuanian agendas and actors on the one hand and those of the EU and NATO on the other, the analysis did not offer consistently strong evidence of Lithuania having exerted influence - there seems quite a strong case for saying this in the case of energy security initiatives; however, could one not argue that when it came to the post-Crimea situation (at least up until 2017), Lithuanian elites were already pushing at an open door when they framed events in terms of a Russian threat to European security? To have offered fuller proof of Lithuanian influence would probably have required the kind of in-depth process-tracing that is too ambitious for a dissertation of this nature. Overall, this work represents a creditable effort that sheds interesting new light on small state influence. The nature of the underlying research problem and the overall argument could, however, have been presented in such a way as to give the work greater clarity and impact.

#### ***Charles Marker***

In this case, I do not have too much to add to what the other co-supervisor has already written. I think the research project was, by and large, a success - as far as realistic expectations for a master thesis are concerned. The author should be complimented for carrying out independent empirical research - considering also the limitation in time and resources. (I am saying this also because some other SENTINEL students have clearly failed in their empirical research). The main defects of this thesis have to do mostly with how it is written, in other words with issues of structure and style. The literature review and theory part is easier to read, but the empirical section is not always easy to follow which, for the author, is basically shooting oneself in the

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foot, as normally one should try to make the most of one's empirical evidence, by presenting what one has in the most convincing and accessible way. Hence, as the other reviewer already noted, the influence of the small state is not clearly demonstrated in all instances. As I have not seen the original dataset, I am not sure if this is an empirical problem or a stylistic one. Perhaps, the author should address these issues in more depth during the defense, drawing additionally on his dataset.

There are also occasional issues of style, grammar, and spelling. The last name of one of the supervisors is misspelled on the title page. I can certainly live with that, but in principle, this is not a very good start (I am saying this for the future benefit of the student).

### Charles University > University of Glasgow Grade Conversion

CU General Grade	Grade Specification for Conversion	Percentage	UoG equivalent
<b>A - excellent</b>	Excellent upper (1)	100 – 96	22 (A1) Excellent
	Excellent lower (2)	95 - 91	19 (A4) Excellent
<b>B – very good</b>	Very good upper (1)	90 - 86	17 (B1) Very Good
	Very good lower (2)	85 – 81	16 (B2) Very Good
<b>C - good</b>	Good upper (1)	80 – 76	15 (B3) Very Good
	Good lower (2)	75 – 71	14 (C1) Good
<b>D - satisfactory</b>	Satisfactory upper (1)	70 – 66	13 (C2) Good
	Satisfactory lower (2)	65 – 61	12 (C3) Good
<b>E - sufficient</b>	Sufficient upper (1)	60 - 56	11 (D1) Satisfactory
	Sufficient lower (2)	55 – 51	9 (D3) Satisfactory
<b>F - fail</b>		50 – 0	8 (E1) Weak

### University of Glasgow > Charles University Grade Conversion

UofG General Grade	Grade Specification for Conversion	Percentage	CU equivalent
<b>A1-A3</b>	Excellent upper (1)	100 – 96	A - Excellent
<b>A4-A5</b>	Excellent lower (2)	95 - 91	A - Excellent
<b>B1</b>	Very good upper (1)	90 - 86	B – Very Good
<b>B2</b>	Very good lower (2)	85 – 81	B – Very Good
<b>B3</b>	Good upper (1)	80 – 76	C - Good
<b>C1</b>	Good lower (2)	75 – 71	C - Good
<b>C2</b>	Satisfactory upper (1)	70 – 66	D - Satisfactory
<b>C3</b>	Satisfactory lower (2)	65 – 61	D - Satisfactory
<b>D1</b>	Sufficient upper (1)	60 - 56	E - Sufficient
<b>D2-D3</b>	Sufficient lower (2)	55 – 51	E - Sufficient
<b>E1-H</b>		50 – 0	F - Fail

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**Notes for Markers:** When grading the SECINTEL Dissertation markers are asked to reflect upon the aims and learning outcomes for the dissertation. Each dissertation should also adopt a clear security focus reflecting the relevant programme pathway

**Aims:** The course aims to provide students with independent research opportunities. It will include engagement with research methods training leading up to a period of independent research and the production of a substantial dissertation that builds upon themes and issues covered within the MSc International Security, Intelligence and Strategic Studies. Students will be encouraged to develop their own ideas and demonstrate their capacity for original thought and independent research. The dissertation element aims to enable students to identify and research particular issues or problems, linked to security, intelligence and strategy, at a deeper level than is possible within assessed essays and to develop a critical analysis of the existing body of academic work relating to their topic of choice. Students taking this course will be prepared for further research, study or professional careers through the development of their skills in data collection and analysis, use of original and secondary sources and the conducting and writing up of a detailed research project.

**Intended Learning outcomes:** By the end of the dissertation, students will be able to:

- > Devise a realistic programme of research on a topic reflecting the main themes of the programme;
- > Collect, select and critically analyse relevant background literature and arguments of a range of scholars;
- > Understand and select the appropriate methodology for dealing with information sources and data;
- > Apply these methods to gather and interrogate data in an open-minded, rigorous and undogmatic manner;
- > Be able to critically evaluate competing theories and apply relevant theoretical frameworks to guide the study
- > Organise the data collected and analyse the findings in a competent manner that allows for a fluid and logical argument to be presented;
- > Be reflexive and self-critical about findings and the limitations of analysis;
- > Work independently, organising and maintaining own programme of study to meet academic deadlines so as to produce work containing a substantial element of originality.

### **Word Count:**

Dissertations should be 20,000 words in length for students undertaking work-placement as part of the independent study portfolio and 22,000 words in length for standard dissertation students. Word counts exclude the title page, abstract, contents, bibliography and appendices). There is a 10% leeway for words above the upper limit, but no leeway for dissertation that fall under the word requirement. All dissertations must display an accurate word-count including the citations, footnotes/endnotes and chapter/section titles. One point (on the Glasgow 22-point scale) will be deducted for each 750 words under the minimum or over the 10% upper limit.

### **Language:**

The dissertation **must** be written in British English. A Czech Language cover page / abstract may be included

### **Late Submission Penalty:**

Dissertations that do not have an extension or are submitted after an extension deadline are subject to a penalty of 2 secondary bands per day (this includes weekends and holidays) on the Glasgow grading Scale.

### **Plagiarism:**

Dissertations which suffer from excessive (e.g. serious and/or deliberate) plagiarism will be subject to a grade of 0/Fail and be referred to the appropriate authorities at both universities. Dissertations that contain some elements of plagiarism, but which are deemed not to be excessive (e.g. minor instances that are not considered deliberate) based on consultation of both internal markers, should be graded accordingly and will be subject to scrutiny from the external examiner and could still result in a mark of 0 as well as referral to appropriate authorities for disciplinary action.

### **Consultation prior to final grading:**

First marking by both institutions should be completed blind with no prior consultation. Once both markers have graded the dissertation and provided written comments, they should consult on the grading and come to a joint final grade, taking into consideration any late submission or excessive word count penalty. It is the responsibility of the Glasgow marker to oversee this. Where markers cannot come to a joint agreement then the dissertation should be referred to the Programme Convenors at Glasgow and Charles (Dr. Eamonn Butler & Dr Vít Střítecký). The external examiner will be used to moderate any dissertation in this position and the comments referred back to the internal markers for confirmation.