IMESS DISSERTATION

Note: Please email the completed mark sheet to Year 2 coordinator
(cc Chiara Amini chiara.amini@ucl.ac.uk and Lisa Cagnacci l.cagnacci@ucl.ac.uk)

Please note that IMESS students are <u>not</u> required to use a particular set of methods (e.g. qualitative, quantitative, or comparative) in their dissertation.

Student:	Fei Song
Dissertation title:	Social Determinants of Life expectancy in Transition economies

	Excellent		Satisfactory		Poor
Knowledge *Knowledge of problems involved, e.g. historical and social context, specialist literature on the topic. Evidence of capacity to gather information through a wide and appropriate range of reading, and to digest and process knowledge.*			x		
Analysis & Interpretation *Demonstrates a clear grasp of concepts. Application of appropriate methodology and understanding; willingness to apply an independent approach or interpretation recognition of alternative interpretations; Use of precise terminology and avoidance of ambiguity; avoidance of excessive generalisations or gross oversimplifications.*			x		
Structure & Argument *Demonstrates ability to structure work with clarity, relevance and coherence. Ability to argue a case; clear evidence of analysis and logical thought; recognition of an arguments limitation or alternative views; Ability to use other evidence to support arguments and structure appropriately.*			x		
Presentation & Documentation *Accurate and consistently presented footnotes and bibliographic references; accuracy of grammar and spelling; correct and clear presentation of charts/graphs/tables or other data. Appropriate and correct referencing throughout. Correct and contextually correct handling of quotations.*	x				

ECTS Mark:		UCL Mark:	55	Marker:	Chiara Amini
Deducted for late submission:				Signed:	
Deducted for inadequate referencing:				Date:	

MARKING GUIDELINES

A (UCL mark 70+): *Note: marks of over 80 are given rarely and only for truly exceptional pieces of work.*
Distinctively sophisticated and focused analysis, critical use of sources and insightful interpretation. Comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to the chosen field of research, showing an ability to engage in sustained independent research.

B/C (UCL mark 60-69):
A high level of analysis, critical use of sources and insightful interpretation. Good understanding of techniques applicable to the chosen field of research, showing an ability to engage in sustained independent research. 65 or over equates to a B grade.

D/E (UCL mark 50-59):
D/E (UCL mark 50-59):
Demonstration of a critical use of sources and ability to engage in systematic inquiry. An ability to engage in sustained research work, demonstrating methodological awareness. 55 or over equates to a D grade.

F (UCL mark less than 50):
Demonstrates failure to use sources and an inadequate ability to engage in systematic inquiry. Inadequate evidence of ability to engage in sustained research work and poor understanding of appropriate research techniques.

CONTINUES OVERLEAF

Comments, explaining strengths and weaknesses (_at least 300 words_):

The dissertation has a very clear research question, namely it analyses the determinants of life expectancy in transition economies. The overall content is well structured however to use of several sub-sections within each part makes the reading a little descriptive.

There is a good effort in motivating the interest in the chosen topic however section 1.4 comes across as not very academic. The choice of including china in the analysis is questionable, then why not including other emerging economies? Eveen the student acknowledge that China needs to be excluded from the regrression analysis, so what was the purpuse of including China?

Section 2 offers a good summary of the existing literature, although it could have started with a discussion of the relevant theretical framwork that underlies much of the empirical evidence discussed, namely the grossman model.

The discussion in parts remains superficial and some statements are not properly explained or justified. For instance at p.18 it is claimed that institutions in CEE countries are similar to Western european ones. But it is not clear how this conclusion it is reached and which political institutions are exactly been considered. Moreover the content in section 3 could have been better organised. The section starts with an assessment of institutions in transition countries today and then it moves back to the transition process. It would have been better revert the order of these points. The overall overview of the transition process is very brief and superficial and I am not convinced it was needed, it would have been better to include few sentences regarding this point in the instruction.

Naming section 4 as a metanalysis is misleading as the section simply presemts a summary of the literature, it appears that the student is not aware of what a metanalysis actually is. It is rather unclear why some empirical evidence is discussed here and not in the litearure review section earlier on.

The framework discussed in section 4.2 makes sense but there is no reference to theory and it would have been better to present it earlier on, before the discussion of the empirical literature.

The empriical analysis employs adequate measures of both dependent and independent variables. There is a good effort in presenting detailed descriptive statistics but again the analysis remains a little superficial. The panel data regression analysis does not fully address not discuss problem of endogeneity and roboustness.

Overall the dissertation shows some effort in carrying out independent research, however many aspects of this work could have been improved.

Specific questions you would like addressing at the oral defence (_at least 2 questions_):

Can you better explain why you included China in your analysis ?

The only regression result presented are the one in table 6. Did you try to run additional specifications?