

IMSIS Dissertation Feedback & Mark Sheet

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| Student Matriculation No. | Glasgow 2486142 DCU 19108451 Charles 31080023 |
| Dissertation Title | Security Sector Reform and Post Conflict Peacebuilding in Afghanistan |

INDIVIDUAL INSTITUTION GRADING

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| Reviewer 1 Initial Grade <i>Select from drop down list</i> | Reviewer 2 Initial Grade <i>Select from drop down list</i> | Late Submission Penalty <i>no penalty</i> |
| Word Count Penalty (1-15% over/under = 1gr point; 15-20% over/under = 2 gr points; 20-25% over/under = 3 gr points; more than 25% over/under = 0 fail) | | |
| Word Count: 23002 Suggested Penalty: no penalty | | |

JOINT GRADING (subject to agreement of the external examiner and approval at Joint Exam Board)

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| Final Agreed Mark. (Following correspondence reviewers should list the agreed final internal grade taking before and after any penalties to be applied). Before Penalty: B3 [15] After Penalty: B3 [15] |
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DISSERTATION FEEDBACK

| Assessment Criteria | Rating |
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| A. Structure and Development of Answer | |
| This refers to your organisational skills and ability to construct an argument in a coherent and original manner | |
| • <i>Originality of topic</i> | Very Good |
| • <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. Use of Source Material | |
| 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> | Very Good |
| • <i>Selection of relevant primary and/or secondary evidence to support argument</i> | Good |
| • <i>Critical analysis and evaluation of evidence</i> | Good |
| • <i>Accuracy of factual data</i> | Very Good |
| C. Academic Style | |
| 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> | Not required |

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- *Appropriate word count*

Yes

ADDITIONAL WRITTEN COMMENTS

Reviewer 1

The first three chapters of this thesis tend to overlap and often repeat. There was scope to better integrate them, namely the existing literature and the research design/conceptual approach. The second part of the thesis demonstrates very good knowledge of the case study. Yet, the thesis only superficially engages in critical analysis and examination of evidence. The discussion of spoilers is an important take but it is somehow disconnected to the early parts of the thesis. That noted, the final chapter of the thesis provides a timely and important overview of the obstructing actors to the peace process, SSR, and peacebuilding in general in Afghanistan.

Reviewer 2

While the dissertation is driven by an interesting idea, it rather makes an impression of a first draft. From language issues to the organization to the "hypothesis", the dissertation has a number of shortcomings. To start off, the hypothesis the author presents (a) isn't structured as a hypothesis, but rather a thesis; (b) in qualitative research, no hypotheses are nominally required, what matters is a strong research question; (c) the (hypo)thesis itself fails to focus on a direct relationship between the independent and dependent variables. In fact, in its current state, the thesis is rather useless. "The process of SSR can play a critical role in the post-conflict peacebuilding of Afghanistan; however, internal and external actors might likely derail the process" is conditional ("can play"); it is not falsifiable/provable as it stands. The author's conditioning of the conditional thesis by an array of internal and external factors adds little to our understanding of the phenomenon: as a matter of fact, any SSR might be curbed by internal and external factors. Second, following the Taliban's takeover of the country, the dissertation makes an aged impression. The puzzle described by the author implies that SSR is a necessary precondition of the increased level of violence in Afghanistan, yet the causality beyond this might be either unrelated to SSR, or rather conditioned by more potent factors, as some authors have suggested. The dissertation has a number of other weaknesses, as well, but the described ones belong to the most compelling as they form the basis of a somewhat flawed research design.