

IMESS DISSERTATION



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

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

Student:	Natalia Gajdosova
Dissertation title:	An alternative system of trade barriers in international trade. Case study on Slovakia

	70+	69-65	60-61	59-55	54-50	<50
	A	B	C	D	E	F
Knowledge <i>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.</i>	75					
Analysis & Interpretation <i>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.</i>	70					
Structure & Argument <i>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 argument's limitation or alternative views; Ability to use other evidence to support arguments and structure appropriately.</i>	71					
Presentation & Documentation <i>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.</i>		69				
Methodology <i>Understanding of techniques applicable to the chosen field of research, showing an ability to engage in sustained independent research.</i>	70					

ECTS Mark:	A/71	Charles Mark:	A	Marker:	Pavel Szobi
<i>Deducted for late submission:</i>			No	Signed:	
<i>Deducted for inadequate referencing:</i>			No	Date:	May 30, 2021

MARKING GUIDELINES

A (UCL mark 70+) = A (Charles mark 91-100 - excellent): *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 (UCL mark 69-65) = B (Charles mark 81-90 – very good)
C (UCL mark 64-60) = C (Charles mark 71-80 – good): 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 (UCL mark 59-55) = D (Charles mark 61-70 – satisfactory)
E (UCL mark 54-50) = E (Charles mark 51-60 – sufficient): 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) = F (Charles mark 0-50 - insufficient): 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.

Please provide substantive and detailed feedback!

Comments, explaining strengths and weaknesses (at least 300 words):

The aim of the thesis is 1) to study the ability of the customs duty to create balanced conditions for competing goods in one market, which originate from two mutually inhomogeneous production environments, 2) to recommend long-term policy solutions.

Ms. Gajdošová explains that she selected the case study of Slovakia as a study object to assure data accessibility and relevancy of the research, relying on the complex system of the EU Customs Union. I agree that the Slovak customs administration has troubling results in recognition of fraud. The author specifies that „burdensome customs controls may influence the traders’ choice of the customs office for importation, making Slovakia a potential target for fraudsters when trying to enter the EU common market“.

The author describes the aims of her thesis in detail, goes thoroughly through the methodological introduction, and reviews the state-of-art literature and existing data. This is highly appreciated and is evidence of a consistent heuristic process.

The author applied the grounded theory based on comparative analysis of quantitative data in the Slovak case study. She chose a complex and highly elaborated approach based on available data and the most relevant literature. Ms. Gajdosova further uses a coherent and educated style and does not violate the grammar rules. She provides the text with suitable charts and tables and an elaborated appendix with further data.

Ms. Gajdosova underscores several essential facts in the text; for instance, that in 2012, the EU’s shadow economy was worth approximately 2.35 trillion euros. In her case study, she scrutinizes the Slovak Republic and the issue of textile imports. She claims that Slovakia „fails to recognize fraud on clothes and shoes imported from China, which caused the EU to lose approximately 300 million euros in 2013 and 2014“.

I share the author’s lament about the existence of smuggling due to the existing tariffs and different domestic taxes across countries, as well as about the corrupted customs agencies.

I appreciate that the research concludes with a clear tax-tariff reform proposition and alternative to the existing system. The author articulates the apparent results of her research, the added value to the current discourse, but also highlights possible ways for further investigation.

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

You indicated that in the years 2013 to 2016, EU textile imports to the Czech Republic, France, Malta, Slovakia and UK has generated 2 billion euros in losses on custom duties. Could you follow up on this information and classify the worst vs. the best scoring EU members in custom duties?