

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:	Fan Jingyi
Dissertation title:	ANALYZE THE BOLOGNA PROCESS AND EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION INTEGRATION FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF GOVERNMENT NETWORK STRUCTURE THEORY

	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>				D/57		
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>					E/53	
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>					E/53	
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>				D/57		
Methodology <i>Understanding of techniques applicable to the chosen field of research, showing an ability to engage in sustained independent research.</i>					E/53	

ECTS Mark:	D	Charles Mark:	D	Marker:	Mitchell Young
<i>Deducted for late submission:</i>			No	Signed:	
<i>Deducted for inadequate referencing:</i>				Date:	

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 thesis claims that it will analyse the Bologna Process post-2010 using policy network theory. This could be an interesting project. However, there is little in the thesis in the way of actual empirical research, and the methodology is unclear. The research questions which are stated on p.10 are not adequate for master's level work.

In terms of knowledge of the subject, the author has clearly read widely about the Bologna process. She includes literature from both inside and outside of Europe giving an interesting perspective on the process as a whole. She summarizes the key aspects of the process accurately enough; however, it is simply too big a topic to cover. As a result, the text seems arbitrary in terms of what bits of information are provided. For example, section 2.2.1 feels like both too much and too little information at the same time – too much if it's just supposed to identify a policy objective but too little to really explain it. Sometimes one or a few countries are mentioned, then other times, there is a different set of countries for which data is given. The reader is never told why. There is also a lack of structure and argument within the literature review – why are we being told about these particular elements of the Bologna Process? How does it advance the purposes of the thesis?

The thesis lacks precision and tends often to generalize. It is not clear to me whether the author fully understands the difference between the Bologna Process and the European Higher Education Area. Much has been written on this topic, but references are lacking. Another example, in the section with two short case studies, it is claimed that Germany is a representative 'European' country, because its "educational, economic, and political background" is similar to the UK, France, and Finland. A student of area studies should know better than to make such a claim.

I don't find a clear argument in the thesis at all. Towards the end, the author states "we intend to find if there is a better cooperation between Eastern and Western Europe in Higher Education Area and policy areas" (p.54). This is a possibly interesting topic, but it comes basically at the end of the thesis which is too late; also, it is not specified what the author means by 'better' and how she hopes to study and provide evidence for the truth (or not) of this claim?

In terms of methodology, it is purportedly a policy analysis with a comparative case study; however, the cases don't appear to apply the policy network analysis. Rather they give a very brief history of the Bologna Process in two countries. The author also includes information about the research policy of the countries, which is unrelated to the Bologna process and therefore not relevant to the topic. The chapter on methodology, doesn't discuss the methodology of the empirical work, but, it seems, of the literature review. The rest of the chapter is focused on theory. Again, concepts, like the "iron triangle" that are brought up in this section, never reappear in the analysis of the cases. The justification for the case selection is weak: Germany was already mentioned, but Kazakhstan seems to have been chosen because it is the most recent signatory. Perhaps that is meaningful, but it is not clear why.

The presentation and documentation are acceptable. There is a long and good list of references. The writing includes frequent grammatical errors – including even in the title, which presumably should be 'An analysis of...' - and misspellings.

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

What is the difference between the Bologna Process and the European Higher Education Area and what impacts does that have on their respective policy processes?

What is the main finding of your thesis? What does it add to the field of studies of the Bologna Process?