

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

ECTS Mark:	F	Charles Mark:	F/30	Marker:	Tomáš Weiss
<i>Deducted for late submission:</i>			No	Signed:	
<i>Deducted for inadequate referencing:</i>				Date:	24/08/2021

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 thesis written by Fan Jingyi focuses on the Bologna process. It is, however, fully unclear what it wants to achieve, why it should be relevant for the reader and to what extent the data presented in the thesis have any relevance.

The only strength of the thesis is the selection of the topic, which is highly relevant for Europe, the international cooperation, future competitiveness of European economies and educational institutions, and, naturally, for any students and academics at European universities. Unfortunately, Fan Jingyi fails to capitalise on the relevance of the topic and does not present a coherent piece of research that would contribute to our understanding in an original manner.

There is not enough space to account for all the problems with this thesis, so I will restrict myself to the main issues: connection to the existing knowledge, the research question(s), methodology, and handling the sources.

Firstly, the thesis lacks a proper literature review. Even though there is a section of the thesis labelled as such, it does not provide an overview of our current knowledge that could feed into an interesting and original research question. The "literature review" contains strange bulks of empirical data (p. 13-14) that do not connect to any literature. The section merely lists the objectives of the Bologna process, but does not provide the reader with a clear overview of how the process could be and has been studied, what remains unknown and where a potential research problem may reside. Much of what is presented relies on Chinese papers (sometimes with badly translated titles, see for example the original source of Li and Shi 2006 which lists a different English title on the journal website) that are, judging by the titles, descriptive accounts of what Bologna process is and how it has been implemented in various countries. Such a "literature review" is not really a literature review as it does not provide an overview of the current state of knowledge that would allow for an identification of a valuable research question. With all due respect to the Chinese authors who publish in Chinese outlets in Chinese, I am not entirely sure that this is where the academic debate on the Bologna process is taking place. Or, where the most up-to-date and reliable information about the process can be obtained (see comments below).

Secondly and consequently, the thesis fails to identify a relevant research question. The three questions listed on p. 10 are just descriptive (question 2), very confusing (question 1 – what is meant by "the corresponding correlation degree"?!), or impossible to answer (question 3). They do not build on any research puzzle and in fact, with the exception of the descriptive question 2, the thesis does not even try to answer them. The questions are not analytical, they do not relate to the theoretical framework and they are not connected to the methodology in any sense.

Which brings me, thirdly, to the methodology. There is a section with such a title in the thesis, but unfortunately, there is no methodology included there. Instead, it is a very confusing mix of theory and empirics that does not provide what it should, namely the explanation of the individual analytical steps taken further, sources of data, and the discussion on the limitations. The part titled "Neofunctionalism" contains empirical data on Switzerland and (partially) Austria with no real discussion of the theory at all. The first part of the chapter discusses the steps that should have been taken to conduct the literature review (but apparently were not, see my comments on literature review). The very last sentence of the whole chapter (p. 35) comes closer to the issue of method but, again, in a very confusing manner. It is unclear what should be analysed, how the very broad concepts of politics, economy and society should be operationalised, how predictions could be made. There are two case studies in the thesis, but there is no explanation of what purpose the case studies should serve, what insight they can (and cannot) offer, what aspects would be studied in the individual cases, whether the aim is to compare them (there is no comparison).

Fourthly, the thesis works with sources very poorly. There is no discussion of what has served as sources of the information reviewed and "analysed". Sometimes, the thesis relies on secondary sources in Chinese where there is surely plenty of primary sources that could have been used (e.g., part 4.2.2, p. 39). Often, there are no sources given for the data (e.g., part 6.1, p. 55) or they are clearly not right (how can a piece of work from 2006 serve as the source of information about the year 2014? see p. 57). The bibliography is messy. While I can understand the confusion between first and last names (Martina 2013 should be Vukasovic 2013), the source listed as Maryna 2018 (should be Skyba 2018) has got the name of the journal wrong as well despite the fact that the suggested citation is written on the first page of the article.

Overall, the thesis submitted by Fan Jingyi does not meet the basic requirements for an MA thesis. It does not constitute an original and independent analysis and should not be accepted as the final product of the IMESS programme.

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

What is the original contribution of your thesis?

What is the method used in this thesis? What are its advantages and limitations?

How can the policy network analysis help us predict future?