

## IMSIS Dissertation Feedback & Mark Sheet

<b>Student Matriculation No.</b>	<b>Glasgow</b>	<b>DCU</b>	<b>Charles</b>	<b>Trento</b>
<b>Dissertation Title</b>				

### INDIVIDUAL INSTITUTION GRADING

<b>Reviewer 1 Initial Grade</b> <b>A2 [21]</b>	<b>Reviewer 2 Initial Grade</b> <b>A2 [21]</b>	<b>Late Submission Penalty</b> <b>NONE</b>
<b>Word Count Penalty</b> (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)		
<b>Word Count:</b> <b>Suggested Penalty:</b> NONE		

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

**Final Agreed Mark.** (Following correspondence reviewers should list the agreed final internal grade taking before and after any penalties to be applied).

**Before Penalty: A2 [21]      After Penalty: A2 [21]**

### DISSERTATION FEEDBACK

<b>Assessment Criteria</b>	<b>Rating</b>
<b>A. Structure and Development of Answer</b>	
This refers to your organisational skills and ability to construct an argument in a coherent and original manner	
• <i>Originality of topic</i>	Excellent
• <i>Coherent set of research questions and/or hypothesis identified</i>	Excellent
• <i>Appropriate methodology and evidence of effective organisation of work</i>	Excellent
• <i>Logically structured argument and flow of ideas reflecting research questions</i>	Excellent
• <i>Application of theory and/or concepts</i>	Excellent
<b>B. Use of Source Material</b>	
This refers to your skills to select and use relevant information and data in a correct manner	
• Excellent	Excellent
• <i>Selection of relevant primary and/or secondary evidence to support argument</i>	Excellent
• <i>Critical analysis and evaluation of evidence</i>	Excellent
• <i>Accuracy of factual data</i>	Excellent
<b>C. Academic Style</b>	
This refers to your ability to write in a formal academic manner	
• <i>Appropriate formal and clear writing style</i>	Excellent
• <i>Accurate spelling, grammar and punctuation</i>	Yes

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• Consistent and accurate referencing (including complete bibliography)	YES
• Is the dissertation free from plagiarism?	Yes
• Evidence of ethics approval included (if required based on methodology)	N/A
• Appropriate word count	Yes

### ADDITIONAL WRITTEN COMMENTS

#### Reviewer 1

This is an outstanding piece of work that combines rare language skills with impressive powers of analysis to make an original and important argument. The student takes on a formidable task in applying a Bourdieusien to an analysis of Chinese official security discourse on the United States (borrowing from Michael Williams).

The dissertation has a clear, effective structure that supports a coherent overall argument. The student demonstrates an impressive grasp of Bourdieu's core concepts and their application to the security studies literature. This framework is then applied to an impressive body of primary source material on Chinese official (or semi-official) writing.

This is unusually ambitious for a dissertation that already works in English and Chinese sources. There are some unresolved issues in the use of this theoretical framework at different levels of analysis, but the payoff in terms of insight is undeniable. What is more the student acknowledges the potential problems that arise.

Overall, this is a superb piece of scholarship at this level that demonstrates undeniable promise to continue on to doctoral research should the student choose to do so. There is also clear scope to turn this research into a peer-reviewed article, which in itself is testimony to the quality of this dissertation.

#### Reviewer 2

This is not only a master's dissertation, but a masterful analysis. Practically everything is done not just right, but clearly above the average: the selection of the research issue, the theoretical framework, the methodology (including the acknowledgement of its limitations), the analysis itself. The result is a complex, authoritative and vivid illustration of China's perception/construction of its rivalry with the United States. The fairest and shortest assessment from the perspective of this reviewer is: kudos to the author.

A feature I would still contradict is the application of Bourdieu's theory on the systemic level of analysis. The theory represents a potent (if somewhat solipsistic) tool for the analysis of securitization processes at the state level; it helps us peek inside the opaque bureaucracies and make sense of the battles and contests taking place there. Through this, it shows how the 'grand' strategies and 'major' policies often rely on rather mundane competition for attention, position in the administrative pecking order, influence et al. The author's decision to apply the theory on the level of the international system means, essentially, that rivalry is explained as an effect of competition, thus coming very close to pure tautology. The complexity of the dissertation and the author's analytical acumen largely contain possible negative fallback of this decision, but I still find it controversial (which is a good thing, after all).

Finally, a minor terminological comment is due on the difference between military and strategic culture: Though the author refers to the former when discussing prominent cultural features of China's approach to warfare, he

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really discusses the latter. Although nothing is set in stone here, military culture usually denotes cultural aspects of the functioning of the armed forces while strategic culture characterizes a state's attitudes to the use of force.