

IMESS DISSERTATION




Note: Please email the completed mark sheet to Year 2 coordinator
(cc Allan Sikk a.sikk@ucl.ac.uk and Louise Wassell l.wassell@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:	Ioana-Raluca Iordache
Dissertation title:	Health care: necessity or luxury good? A meta-regression analysis

	Excellent	Satisfactory	Poor
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 arguments 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	

ECTS Mark:	A	UCL Mark:	95	Marker:	
<i>Deducted for late submission:</i>				Signed:	 PhDr. Jana Votápková
<i>Deducted for inadequate referencing:</i>				Date:	July 8, 2014

MARKING GUIDELINES

A (UCL mark 70+): 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/C (UCL mark 60-69):

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/E (UCL mark 50-59):

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):

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.

CONTINUES OVERLEAF

PLEASE PROVIDE SUBSTANTIVE AND DETAILED FEEDBACK!

Constructive comments, explaining strengths and weaknesses (*at least 300 words*):

The thesis analyses the relationship between per capita income and aggregate health care expenditure using a meta-regression analysis (further "MRA"). In other words, the thesis gathers results of previous analyses using as many as 220 estimates and econometrically tries to find out reasons for their heterogeneity which was found to be substantial among studies already published. The thesis also takes into account potential publication bias which is very important since in many cases unfavourable results do not get published. Not accounting for publication bias, if present, may cause a substantial bias when one wants to make conclusion from the papers written so far.

The author found a slight bias under a simple MRA, but did not find any in the multiple MRA (when accounting for heterogeneity determinants). Rather, in the multiple MRA, among a number of significant determinants, the presence of "economic research cycle" was discovered, which means that literature on the determinants of health care expenditure follows certain cyclical trends when reporting its results. These findings are very interesting and seem to complement each other since in the latter, the effect of publication bias is likely to be captured by the "economic research cycle" variable.

The thesis is an excellent piece of scholarly work. It uses quite a sophisticated methodology which the author studied thoroughly. Besides, Ioana did a great job reviewing the literature which she very nicely puts into context. Ioana was an extremely hard-working student from the beginning and showed a great devotion to what she was doing. She also learnt to use LaTeX to edit her thesis which makes her thesis look professional. There are some minor issues in the thesis related primarily to typesetting and the use of a reference manager together with LaTeX. The issues include:

- 1) Wrong spacing, e.g. leaving a space before the beginning of a bracket, e.g. section 3.1.1 "That is why the weights...)(..."
- 2) Missing paging
- 3) Egger et al., 2008, reference for figure 2.2., was not found in bibliography. However, I do not consider this to be a huge problem. It seems just to be a problem of communication between LaTeX and a reference manager.
- 4) At the beginning of section 2.3. "The first article on the use of meta-regression analysis in the field of economics was published in 1989 in the Journal of Economic Surveys." However, rather a name of the article should be given.
- 5) The last paragraph on page 31 should be excluded since it is not very appropriate for the methodology section
- 6) Typo on page 31 "Once the conversion completed", instead of "Once the conversion is completed".

Based on all what has been said, I suggest that Ioana should be awarded **grade A (excellent)** and if there is a possibility I suggest that **she should be awarded some special prize for her thesis**. In addition, I will strongly support her to rewrite the thesis into a working paper and send it to the IES WP series after the defence.

Specific questions you would like addressing at the oral defence (at least 3 questions):

1. The significant effect of publication bias under simple MRA and the insignificant one under the multiple MRA seem to at first sight contradict each other. Do you think that the “economic research cycle” variable could have captured some of its effect?
2. How did your thesis contribute to the existing research?
3. Are there any potential extensions of the thesis?