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:	Sevan Ghazaryan
Dissertation title:	Armenia's accession to the Customs Union: Gains and Losses?

	Excellent		Satisfactory		Poor
Knowledge *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.*			x		
Analysis & Interpretation *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.*			x		
Structure & Argument *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.*				x	
Presentation & Documentation *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.*				x	

ECTS Mark:	D	**UCL Mark:**	55	**Marker:**	Petra Cibulkova
		Deducted for late submission:		**Signed:**	
		Deducted for inadequate referencing:		**Date:**	13.6.2014

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 dissertation provides an analysis of expected Armenia's membership in the Eurasian Customs Union. The author quantifies the impact on Armenia's external trade and social welfare by using the partial equilibrium model. The topic as well as the methodology used are interesting and worth considering. Unfortunately, the text itself makes an impression that it arose under time pressure and most of the weaknesses listed below most likely stem from the lack of time to present a more elaborated analysis in a more reader-friendly form.

Grammar mistakes and misspelling (even in the title of the submitted electronic version of the dissertation) are disturbing.

The bibliography should include the URL sources quoted in the text. Thereto, the author uses only HTTP format without any further specification of the source. The main weakness represent some problems with inappropriate referencing. For example some of the numerical data for Armenia's external trade stated on p. 7 remained without a reference; the same goes for the whole "Investments" sub-chapter on p. 9.

The structure of the dissertation looks rather chaotic. The author uses terms and shortages before they are explained in a following chapter. He presents some of the conclusions while introducing the theoretical concept (e.g. p. 13) or reviewing the literature (e.g. p. 25). The literature on methodology (partial equilibrium model) is reviewed before the reader even gets to know that this model will be used in the analysis and why.

In the theoretical part the author introduces Viner's theory (50's) and then Cline's modification (late 70's) only.

On the other side, the author formulated clear and relevant research questions including some supplementary ones. The explanation of the model used is adequate, its application to the case study (Armenia) and calculations of the effects are done precisely. More attention should be then given to the explanation and assessment of the results (e.g. Chapter 4.2.). The limitations of the methodology are discussed too briefly and a critical assessment of the basic assumptions is missing (e.g. Russia's possible reaction if Armenia rejects membership).

To sum up, the author shows engagement with the topic and ability to conduct a research. The main contribution of the dissertation is that it tries to add some empirical evidence to the current discussion about the economic dimension of the integration projects in the post-Soviet space. Unfortunately, the reservations mentioned above necessarily degrease the final assessment.

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

1. Armenia rejects ECU membership. Russia responds by increasing prices for energy raw material deliveries to Armenia. Please, try to assess Armenia's economic losses in that case. How could such a possibility influence decision-making on ECU membership in Armenia?

2. Are there any recent studies developing the Viner's theory of customs union?

3. Please, briefly discuss the possible role of the EU and IMF (if any) on Armenia's decision-making about the ECU membership.