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 of 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:	F	**UCL Mark:**	40	**Marker:**	Karel Svoboda, Ph.D.
Deducted for late submission:				**Signed:**	
Deducted for inadequate referencing:				**Date:**	

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*): Although I am called "supervisor" in the thesis, my role was limited only to my agreement to act in this role. We had no consultations at all…

The formal side of the thesis is not particularly strong. Even in the contents page, there are misprints ("contens" instead of "contents"), the list itself is left with the "*1**Error! Bookmark not defined.**"* References are made only as links to the websites (without the necessary information). Half page (no 9) is left without any reference, although it contains specific information. In the second part, references are made via Harvard type, others as footnotes. Furthermore, the definition of the customs union (chapter 1.1) contains no reference to the academic literature. Bibliography is simply listed without any order. The most indicative thing about the author's approach to the thesis is that there is a misprint even in the title: "Armenia's accession to the Customs Union: Gains of Losses?" instead of "Armenia's accession to the Customs Union: Gains or Losses?"

The theory part is represented by two titles (only one referenced, the other left with "Clive distinguishes…"). This cannot suffice as a theoretical basis for the whole thesis. It is partly covered by the "literature review" chapter.

The structure of the thesis is not understandable for me. The introduction contains specific and relatively detailed information, but not the information about the structure. The chapters are not structured they contain information on other topics (theory part is filled with the numbers of real economy etc.). Furthermore, author's writing style brings a lot of repetitions of what was already said: *The literature on economic impact of Armenia's accession to the ECU is limited. It's not easy to find reliable assessments of costs and benefits of Armenia's accession to the ECU. Actually, there are not academic studies discussing the economic implications of potential membership. The questions such as how the accession would impact the Armenian economy or what are the social implications of accession were not studies thoroughly."*

Furthermore, in some cases, the discussion of the literature is superfluous. This is the case of the study of Eurasian Development Bank on the effects of Armenia's accession to the Eurasian Customs Union (pages 18-19). Author rightly says that it is material aimed at justifying the accession. However, the sole fact that the institution is not independent entity but a part of the ECU organization should have been mentioned and could suffice, especially when the author states that ECU is mainly political organization. Last but not least, author opposes the views of the study, but it is unclear, what are his and what the views of the authors of the study are.

Additionally, the author gives conclusions about disadvantages of Armenia's accession to the Customs Union even before the analysis is conducted. Although I agree with the conclusion that the accession to the Customs Union is generally right, the analysis is unconvincing and chaotic.

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

In your analysis, you state that Armenia gets nothing but costs from the ECU accession compared to the current state. However, starting with 2015, the customs barriers may be raised even against Armenia, if it does not join the ECU. Could you please elaborate this possibility?

Usually, Russia's integration initiatives are connected with short term gains but long term losses. Is it the case of Armenia's accession to the ECU as well or the situation differs in this instance?

What are the alternative scenarios to Armenia's accession to the ECU?