

SECINTEL Dissertation Feedback & Mark Sheet

Student Matriculation No.	Glasgow 2161208	Charles 98767333
Dissertation Title	Gas security in Central and Eastern Europe – A comparison between Czech Republic and Hungary’s approach to gas security	

INDIVIDUAL INSTITUTION GRADING

Glasgow Marker <i>Office Use</i>	Charles Marker <i>Office Use</i>	Grade Conversion <i>UoG-CU CU-UoG</i>	Charles Additional Info <i>Please advise ranking</i>
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JOINT GRADING (subject to agreement of the external examiner and approval at Joint Exam Board)

Final Agreed Mark A5 [18] 1 [Excellent]
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DISSERTATION FEEDBACK

Assessment Criteria	Rating
A. Structure and Development of Answer	
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>	Good
• <i>Logically structured argument and flow of ideas reflecting research questions</i>	Very Good
• <i>Application of theory and/or concepts</i>	Good
B. Use of Source Material	
This refers to your skills to select and use relevant information and data in a correct manner	
• <i>Evidence of reading and review of published literature</i>	Excellent
• <i>Selection of relevant primary and/or secondary evidence to support argument</i>	Very Good
• <i>Critical analysis and evaluation of evidence</i>	Good
• <i>Accuracy of factual data</i>	Excellent
C. Academic Style	
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>	Excellent
• <i>Consistent and accurate referencing (including complete bibliography)</i>	Excellent
• <i>Is the dissertation free from plagiarism?</i>	Yes
• <i>Evidence of ethics approval included (if required based on methodology)</i>	Yes
• <i>Appropriate word count</i>	Yes

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ADDITIONAL COMBINED FEEDBACK COMMENTS

Combined comments of Glasgow and Charles markers:

This was a well-written and intelligent thesis in the main. The research questions were good and you set out to answer an interesting question from a comparative perspective. The research was meticulous in many respects, with a clear sense that you had done some serious research into this area and had good factual knowledge.

We did feel, however, that there was room for improvement in this dissertation. Firstly, the theoretical framework was concise but more could have been said: It was generally a little simplistic. I understand that you were keen to get to the empirical sections, but this meant that certain issues were undertheorised. (At the same time, perhaps the whole area of energy security is undertheorised and the general literature is overly descriptive.) For example, while it was ambitious to combine rational choice with securitisation, I was not convinced by your application of rational choice as a central analytical tool. You claim that it was rational for Hungary to pursue certain policies with Russia as it helped Orbán gain electoral support. At the same time, the Czech Republic allowed the market to have a greater say. To a certain extent I see your argument. However, I felt that we needed more on this from an abstract perspective. Otherwise it is too easy to suggest that any action can be explained by rational choice theory. Also, the agents are quite different: in the Czech Republic, there seems to have been a long-standing understanding that the market should have a predominant role. Therefore it presumably was less possible for specific political actors to nationalise certain sectors or to increase state involvement. Orbán, on the other hand, has come to power in a particular set of circumstances including his super majority in parliament. It is not therefore abundantly clear where the rationality manifests itself in these two cases, and whose rationality we are talking about for the case of the Czech Republic.

The way that the dissertation is divided into small sections is good in some respects. However, sometimes it makes the text a little disjointed. I also felt that sometimes you were repeating yourself unnecessarily. Sometimes it means that you lack a clearer narrative that would go through the whole of the thesis, or at least run more coherently through the chapters. The sections on 'domestic factors', for example, seemed largely to repeat what had already been said above. You note that 'Czech Republic has access to other exporters of gas, such as Norway and Germany, through other pipelines and are therefore not as vulnerable as Hungary regarding Russia, which allows them to pursue other gas security strategies.' Is this not a major explanation for the different policies pursued? I wonder if you should have perhaps given more credence to the impact of these factors.

Page 33: You discuss the possibility of Hungary buying gas from Croatia if it built an interconnector. This section is densely descriptive. You note that Hungary is instead building a power plant at great cost and backed up by a large loan from Russia. There was great scope here for more analytical insight. In terms of securitisation (your main framework of reference), what does this tell us about how Hungary does or does not securitise various issues? In fact, large sections of the text were densely descriptive. This meant that your arguments were sometimes secondary to the factual data that we had to plough through.

Overall then, this was a good thesis with some interesting findings. It was thoughtful and well researched. However, there were some methodological and conceptual weaknesses that detracted

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from the argument you could have made.

Please note that this grade is recorded as the provisional final grade for the University of Glasgow degree. All grades remain provisional until confirmed at the joint examination board.

The Czech State Exam/Oral Defense may make a difference to the final grade for the Charles University degree.

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Notes for Markers: When grading the SECINTEL Dissertation markers are asked to reflect upon the aims and learning outcomes for the dissertation. Each dissertation should also adopt a clear security focus reflecting the relevant programme pathway

Aims: The course aims to provide students with independent research opportunities. It will include engagement with research methods training leading up to a period of independent research and the production of a substantial dissertation that builds upon themes and issues covered within the MSc International Security, Intelligence and Strategic Studies. Students will be encouraged to develop their own ideas and demonstrate their capacity for original thought and independent research. The dissertation element aims to enable students to identify and research particular issues or problems, linked to security, intelligence and strategy, at a deeper level than is possible within assessed essays and to develop a critical analysis of the existing body of academic work relating to their topic of choice. Students taking this course will be prepared for further research, study or professional careers through the development of their skills in data collection and analysis, use of original and secondary sources and the conducting and writing up of a detailed research project.

Intended Learning outcomes: By the end of the dissertation, students will be able to:

- > Devise a realistic programme of research on a topic reflecting the main themes of the programme;
- > Collect, select and critically analyse relevant background literature and arguments of a range of scholars;
- > Understand and select the appropriate methodology for dealing with information sources and data;
- > Apply these methods to gather and interrogate data in an open-minded, rigorous and undogmatic manner;
- > Be able to critically evaluate competing theories and apply relevant theoretical frameworks to guide the study
- > Organise the data collected and analyse the findings in a competent manner that allows for a fluid and logical argument to be presented;
- > Be reflexive and self-critical about findings and the limitations of analysis;
- > Work independently, organising and maintaining own programme of study to meet academic deadlines so as to produce work containing a substantial element of originality.

Word Count:

Dissertations should be 20,000 words in length for students undertaking work-placement as part of the independent study portfolio and 22,000 words in length for standard dissertation students. Word counts exclude the title page, abstract, contents, bibliography and appendices). All dissertations must display an accurate word-count including the citations, footnotes/endnotes and chapter/section titles.

Language:

The dissertation **must** be written in British English. A Czech Language cover page / abstract may be included

Late Submission Penalty:

Dissertations that do not have an extension or are submitted after an extension deadline are subject to a penalty of 2 secondary bands per day (this includes weekends and holidays) on the Glasgow grading Scale.

Plagiarism:

Dissertations which suffer from excessive (e.g. serious and/or deliberate) plagiarism will be subject to a grade of 0/Fail and be referred to the appropriate authorities at both universities. Dissertations that contain some elements of plagiarism, but which are deemed not to be excessive (e.g. minor instances that are not considered deliberate) based on consultation of both internal markers, should be graded accordingly and will be subject to scrutiny from the external examiner and could still result in a mark of 0 as well as referral to appropriate authorities for disciplinary action.

Consultation prior to final grading:

First marking by both institutions should be completed blind with no prior consultation. Once both markers have graded the dissertation and provided written comments, they should consult on the grading and come to a joint final grade, taking into consideration any late submission or excessive word count penalty. It is the responsibility of the Glasgow marker to oversee this. Where markers cannot come to a joint agreement then the dissertation should be referred to the Programme Convenors at Glasgow and Charles (Dr. Eamonn Butler & Dr Vít Střítecký). The external examiner will be used to moderate any dissertation in this position and the comments referred back to the internal markers for confirmation.