

Appendix D: Grading Criteria

MPhil in Development Studies 2017–2018

** This document may be amended at the meeting of examiners in January, 2017*

1. The examining scheme for the MPhil in Development Studies is as follows:

60-69: Pass

70-74: High Pass / PhD entry level

75 and above: Distinction

If the work submitted is of an exceptionally high standard, examiners should be ready to give marks far above the 75 Distinction border line — to 85 and even beyond in exceptional circumstances.

2. In order to receive a Pass mark, the answer/essay should display a good knowledge of the directly relevant theoretical and empirical literature. The understanding and knowledge underlying it do not have to be original, but should display the ability to go beyond mere paraphrasing of the literature. It may contain some minor analytical errors, but anything that affects the validity of the main argument will not be acceptable. Essays should be fully referenced and should include a complete bibliography.

3. In order to receive a mark of 70, the answer/essay should demonstrate the ability to engage directly with the question, rather than simply reproducing the revision note in the broad area of the question. The argument should be tightly structured and there should be no more than a hint of superfluous or repetitive element. The answer/essay should be based on a good critical understanding of the relevant theoretical and empirical literature, going beyond merely digesting it competently. It should display good analytical ability as well as the ability to use the relevant empirical facts in a systematic way. Essays should be fully referenced and should include a complete bibliography.

4. In order to receive a Distinction mark, the essay/answer should show the following characteristics. It should be more than a direct response to the question, but should "see through" the question and situate it in the proper analytical and empirical contexts. It should not only be based on a good critical understanding of the relevant literature, but also demonstrate the ability to go beyond the conventional wisdom in the literature and identify new issues, perspectives, and facts. The argument should be made in an original way, and there should be no superfluous or repetitive element in it. The answer/essay should also show that the candidate is not merely able to use the relevant empirical facts systematically but use them in an original way. Essays should be fully referenced and should include a complete bibliography.

5. Dissertations and essays over the word limit will not be accepted. The word count must be indicated on the essay/dissertation.