

RESEARCH ESSAY/DISSERTATION/THESIS PORTFOLIO GRADING SYSTEM

Grade		Description
A+	Exceptionally high level of performance	<p>A thesis/portfolio in the A range is a <i>sustained, coherent</i> contribution that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrates broad understanding of the subject, including current debates • demonstrates clear evidence of a scholarly stance, including a high level of independent and critical thinking • demonstrates evidence of effective synthesis of ideas • demonstrates coherence between theoretical position, methodology and questions
A	Clear high level of performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gathers original high quality data (where applicable) and analyses it in a careful and coherent manner • demonstrates thorough investigative research, high level problem- solving and/or high level creative performance • demonstrates the student's ability to critically evaluate their own research in the context of the existing body of literature
A-	First class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • may demonstrate originality in topic, method, theoretical development, creative practice or findings and conclusions (this would be expected at A+ level) • may include material of publishable quality • may include work that is exceptional or highly original in one area, but not fully realised or consistent in other sections/elements. Such work may reach A- standard • is presented to a consistently high standard • demonstrates that the student has the capacity for doctoral research and would be a viable scholarship candidate.
B+	Very good	<p>B grade theses/portfolios are sound and compelling, and demonstrate evidence of critical thinking and an understanding of a significant body of knowledge. Work at this level also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provides a logical overall argument • selects and applies suitable methods • gathers original data (where applicable) and analyses it in a careful and coherent manner

B	Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> provides evidence which clearly supports its findings and arguments may in parts be more descriptive than evaluative or synthesised may not fully realise the possibilities of the research data/findings includes discussions and/or conclusions which show some appreciation of the significance of the findings may make fewer or weaker links to existing research, theoretical concepts or creative practice than would be expected in A level work
B-	Competent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> is presented to a generally high standard but may contain noticeable errors in referencing, punctuation, grammar and/or spelling at the B+ level, demonstrates that the student could be expected to be successful in doctoral research with strong supervisor support and further skill development in some areas. at the B or B- level, does not demonstrate that the student has capacity for doctoral level research.

Grade		Description
C+	Clear pass	<p>A thesis/portfolio in the C range:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrates understanding and analytical ability at a level that is clearly beyond undergraduate level presents an overall argument, but may not be fully developed or consistent in its application
C	Pass	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> outlines a research plan and applies appropriate methods demonstrates competence in the formulation, conduct and analysis of an independent piece of research is generally sound but may be uneven or limited in some respect may demonstrate limited evidence of synthesis and critical engagement with literature
C-	Marginal pass	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> is likely to focus more on description than analysis of findings has appropriate, but limited, evidence in the support of its findings and arguments does not demonstrate that the student has capacity for doctoral level research is competent in its presentation, but may have numerous, obvious errors of referencing, punctuation, spelling and/or grammar.
D	Fail	<p>A thesis/portfolio in the D range demonstrates serious deficiencies in one or more expected elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> may present research literature, theory or methods ineffectively, inaccurately or in an unreflective way may lack an overall argument lacks breadth and depth lacks cohesion across the thesis/portfolio contains limited or inappropriate evidence interpretation may be minimal or flawed presentation is poor with numerous errors of referencing, punctuation, spelling and/or grammar.