

LAW5082: MASTERS RESEARCH UNIT

Assessment criteria for the research paper

Aspects of the research paper that will be relevant to the determination of a final grade are as follows:

Problem Definition and Methodology

- Statement of the research problem, the aims of the paper and the significance of the research. Explanation of scope of the study.
- Use of a research methodology appropriate to the task.
- A discerning selection of the relevant, current and seminal law (legislation, cases, main texts and journal articles)

Analysis and Argumentation

- Analysis of the research sources used to address the research problem.
- Discussion of implications of the analysis and its relationship to the research problem.
- Use of logical argument.
- Suggestions for law reform, directions of future research or other avenues to promote resolution of the issues (as appropriate to the specific task).

Structure and Writing

- Articulation and progression of major components or sections of the project.
- Maintenance of overall theme or point that gives the project coherence and significance.
- Clarity, precision and economy of writing.
- Accurate use of academic language and writing conventions appropriate for the specific task.

Presentation and Referencing

- Good overall presentation of paper as appropriate to the task.
- Appropriate pagination, layout, margins, typographical accuracy, consistent and appropriate citation style, use of headings, etc.
- Correct attribution of sources through citations.
- References listed in bibliography.

Examiners will be guided by the following grading descriptors but are not required to make a positive finding in relation to each individual descriptor in a category before placing a thesis into this category. Higher achievements in some areas may be balanced against lower achievements in other areas.

High Distinction (80-100)

- 95 plus *Truly exceptional*
Truly exceptional achievement equivalent to the best scholarship in its field (eg, equivalent to material publishable in a quality refereed journal, with minor revisions if necessary). The research paper exhibits rare interpretive and analytic insight and contains writing of the highest quality.
- 90-94 *Exceptional*

The research papers makes a contribution to knowledge, demonstrates exceptional research skills, exhibits great interpretive subtlety and is exceptionally well written.

- **85-89 Outstanding**

Above average for the HD grade. The research papers provides new insights, demonstrates independence in research, provides original treatment of primary and secondary materials and some interpretive subtlety, and is very well written throughout.

- **80-84 Accomplished**

The research paper demonstrates very thorough research, accomplished grasp of primary and secondary materials and incisive analysis, and is well written.

Distinction - Good (70-79)

A research paper that is solid on most indicators but also has some weaknesses or limitations, e.g. gaps in research; limited insights or intellectual evaluations; flaws in structure, writing or presentation.

Credit - Modest (60-69)

The research paper presents adequate treatment of the topic but reveals some flaws which exclude it from higher honours categories. The flaws may consist of, or be equivalent to, the following: research has overlooked much important material; some materials have been misunderstood or distorted; analysis shows limited insight; the thesis is inappropriately structured; written expression is deficient.

Pass - Fair (50-59)

The research paper evidences adequate independent research but contains significant flaws such as: methodology or quality of research is only fair; poor treatment of materials; limited analysis; defective structure; distracting errors in written expression or presentation.

N - Fail (below 50%)

The thesis is not sufficiently well-researched or written to meet the requirements of a Masters research paper. The quality of research may be inadequate, the basic argumentation unsound or irrelevant to the thesis topic, and presentation unscholarly or incomprehensible.