

**DEPARTMENT OF GOVERNMENT POSTGRADUATE ESSAY MARKING CRITERIA**

Mark range	Marking criteria
<p><b>Distinction: 70 or above</b></p>	<p><b>OUTSTANDING</b> work that is at the upper limit of performance. The work clearly displays an outstanding command of the subject, with insights relevant to the problem being addressed. Such answers show assurance in the selection, handling &amp; presentation of material. Work displays several of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Wide knowledge of relevant literature and insight into what is at stake in debates within the literature in the broadest context.</li> <li>▪ Insights into political theories AND/OR into political arguments and their implications which are evidently the result of independent, original and highly innovative thinking.</li> <li>▪ Subtle, discriminating and sophisticated arguments.</li> <li>▪ Flawless or nearly flawless presentation.</li> <li>▪ Graduate level work.</li> <li>▪ Sophisticated understanding of the theory.</li> <li>▪ Clarity in the presentation of complex analytical ideas.</li> <li>▪ An element of originality in analysis or presentation.</li> <li>▪ Exceptional comprehensiveness without irrelevance.</li> <li>▪ Effective, accurate and creative presentation of data in graphical or tabular form.</li> <li>▪ Appropriate and correct use of sophisticated research methods</li> <li>▪ Appropriate and correct use of statistical analysis.</li> <li>▪ Effective, accurate and creative application of quantitative information to support or critique political arguments.</li> <li>▪ Sophisticated understanding of the strengths, limitations and underlying assumptions of the applied research methods.</li> <li>▪ A large proportion of correct answers to technical questions.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Merit: 60-69</b></p>	<p><b>VERY GOOD</b> achievement, generally worth of merit. An essay of merit quality shows a good knowledge of material, arguments and original and secondary sources, demonstrating several of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Evidence of extensive (and comprehended) reading including relevant primary and secondary literature.</li> <li>▪ Attentive and detailed presentation of political ideas.</li> <li>▪ Awareness of broader issues raised by the topic and ability to bring them to bear upon its discussion.</li> <li>▪ Sustained discussion of political theories, concepts, positions &amp; arguments and their implications.</li> <li>▪ Clear and well-structured argument based on detailed analysis and subtle observation demonstrating some political insight.</li> <li>▪ Generally lucid style of presentation, clear and concise writing demonstrating a grasp of research methods and scholarly conventions throughout.</li> <li>▪ Control of empirical material, sound use of that material, its relation to appropriate theoretical and conceptual frameworks and development of argument.</li> <li>▪ Some grasp of principles and development of theoretical argument.</li> <li>▪ Accurate presentation of data in graphical or tabular form.</li> <li>▪ Correct use of research methods</li> <li>▪ Correct use of statistical analysis.</li> <li>▪ Accurate application of quantitative information to support or critique political arguments.</li> <li>▪ Some understanding of the strengths, limitations and underlying assumptions of the applied research methods.</li> <li>▪ Capacity to make a clear point or points and to show some critical acumen.</li> <li>▪ Generally lucid style of presentation, clear and concise writing demonstrating a grasp of research methods and scholarly conventions throughout.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Pass: 50-59</b></p>	<p><b>GOOD/SATISFACTORY</b> achievement generally, demonstrating:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Evidence of appropriate reading, including relevant primary and secondary literature, and a competent grasp of the problems posed by the topic.</li> <li>▪ Generally sound presentation of political concepts and theories.</li> <li>▪ Competent sense of historical or critical context</li> <li>▪ Coherent argument and sound reasoning</li> <li>▪ Evidence of some capacity for critical appraisal and independent thought.</li> <li>▪ Reasonably well presented, attention to grammar and syntax.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Essays will show a basic, clear and generally correct knowledge of material, arguments and sources, particularly original sources.</li> <li>▪ Generally sound presentation of data in graphical or tabular form.</li> <li>▪ Generally satisfactory use of research methods</li> <li>▪ Generally satisfactory use of statistical analysis.</li> <li>▪ Generally satisfactory application of quantitative information to support or critique arguments.</li> <li>▪ Correct summary of empirical or theoretical material, showing some understanding of the material and its importance and drawing reasonably appropriate conclusions.</li> </ul>
<b>Fail: 1-49</b>	<p><b>UNSATISFACTORY</b> achievement generally, reflecting: inadequate conceptual grasp of the topic, little or no evidence that reading has been done around the topic, failure to draw on appropriate sources.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ An overreliance on description with scant evidence of analysis and interpretation</li> <li>▪ Failure to properly distinguish normative and positive arguments.</li> <li>▪ Inaccurate or weak visual analysis AND/OR obscurity and vagueness of argument.</li> <li>▪ Poor grasp of the historical or critical context AND/OR sweeping generalizations unsupported by textual reference or argument.</li> <li>▪ Poorly constructed arguments and lack of critical reasoning AND/OR superficial exposition or commentary which fails to explore relevant issues.</li> <li>▪ Poor presentation (grammar, spelling, paragraphing, footnoting, etc)</li> <li>▪ Selective AND/OR inappropriate use of quantitative information.</li> <li>▪ Inappropriate/inadequate use of research methods,</li> <li>▪ Little knowledge of basic material.</li> <li>▪ Use of material ill-judged or even mistaken in some significant way(s).</li> <li>▪ Lack of clear conclusions drawn from the material, none that could be drawn from the material or where drawn they are significantly flawed or irrelevant.</li> </ul>
<b>Fail: 0</b>	<b>MARK RESERVED FOR NON-SUBMISSION OR ACADEMIC OFFENCES</b>