

SOCIM0011: Introduction to Quantitative Research Methods

Teaching Block: 1

Weeks: 1-12

Unit Owner:	Paula Surridge	Level:	M/7
Phone:	0117 928 7689	Credit points:	20
Email:	p.surridge@bristol.ac.uk	Prerequisites:	None
Office:	1.06, 11 Priory Road	Curriculum area:	N/A
Unit owner office hours:	Please check the unit Blackboard site for office hours (Please note, there are no regular office hours during Reading Week)		

Timetabled classes:

Please check your online timetable for day, time and venue of each seminar
You are expected to attend **ONE** two-hour seminar each week. Your online personal timetable will inform you to which group you have been allocated. Seminar groups are fixed: you are not allowed to change seminar groups without permission from the office.

Weeks 6, 12, 18 and 24 are Reading Weeks; there is NO regular teaching in these weeks.

In addition to timetabled sessions there is a requirement for private study, reading, revision and assessments. There is an expectation that students will engage in further practical work outside of timetabled sessions, on a weekly basis. The University Guidelines state that one credit point is broadly equivalent to 10 hours of total student input.

Learning Outcomes

Successful completion of the module will entail:

- An awareness of main secondary data sources and the ability to access them
- Awareness of strengths and limitations of data sources and analytical techniques
- Ability to utilise data analysis software with proficiency and confidence
- Capacity to evaluate the research practice, data and interpretations of others
- Ability to communicate results of data analysis both in writing and verbally

Requirements for passing the unit:

- Satisfactory attendance at seminars
- Attainment of a composite mark of all summative work to a passing standard (50 or above)

Details of coursework and deadlines

Assessment:	Word count:	Weighting:	Deadline:	Day:	Week:
Formative (analysis)	1,500 words	0%	9.30am 30 th November 2017	Thursday	...
Summative (project)	3,000 words (excluding tables)	100%	9.30am 11 th January 2018	Thursday	Assessment Week 1

- Please note the word count for the summative assessment excludes tables for this unit (SOCIM0011) only due to the unusually large number of tables expected in the assessment
- Summative essay questions will be made available on the SPAIS MSc Admin Blackboard site.
- Instructions for the submission of coursework will be emailed prior to the submission deadline.
- Assessment in the school is subject to strict penalties regarding late submission, plagiarism and maximum word count. See Appendix.

- Marking criteria can be found in the Appendix.

Unit Schedule

Week 1	Introduction to Quantitative Research
Week 2	Surveys and Samples
Week 3	Secondary Analysis
Week 4	Managing and Summarising Data
Week 5	Bi-variate Analysis using Crosstabs and the Chi-Square Test
Week 6	Reading Week (No classes)
Week 7	Causation, Control and the Chi-square Test
Week 8	Data Analysis Task I: Original Analysis
Week 9	Data Analysis Task II: Presentations
Week 10	Hypothesis testing beyond the Chi-Square test
Week 11	Reading (and Writing) Quantitative Analyses and Project work
Week 12	Reading Week (No classes)

Please note that formal teaching breaks in weeks 6 and 12 for reading week.

Unit Summary

This unit is an introduction to using quantitative methods in social research; the problems and issues surrounding their use; research design for quantitative research and basic analysis techniques for quantitative data. It includes sampling; questionnaire design; secondary data; using SPSS; descriptive statistics; cross tabular analyses; hypothesis testing and measuring associations.

Unit Structure

All of the 10 teaching weeks will take place in one of the social science computing labs. Sessions will focus primarily on the practical application of quantitative social research skills. During the session time will be spent both on formal tuition in lecture format and one-to-one tuition for practical work. The structure of each teaching slot will vary depending on the material being covered in the session.

Unit Requirements

No previous experience of computing or statistics is required, although a basic level of mathematics (GCSE or equivalent) is expected. Full guidance on the use of statistical procedures will be given, however it is expected that students supplement the weekly session with additional private study using the computers and application package discussed. This unit is a practical introduction to quantitative data analysis and students should therefore expect to spend their private study time working with data rather than in further reading.

Attendance and required work

The success of the weekly sessions - as well as your final result - will depend on your willingness to practise data analysis skills outside of the timetabled computer sessions. It is essential that students attend all sessions as they are closely linked and skills demonstrated in one session will be assumed for later sessions. If you are, unavoidably, absent from a session please contact Paula Surridge as soon as possible. All materials are made available via blackboard and therefore, where possible, the exercises for missed sessions should be completed before the following week's session, this is especially important in this unit as analysis skills are developed incrementally and build up week by week.

The presentation of quantitative data represents a key learning outcome of this unit, therefore, all students on this unit are required to prepare and deliver a group presentation in week 9 of the unit. This will receive feedback and will also form the basis for the optional formative assessment.

Assessment

Summative Assessment: Coursework Project

This project will require students to undertake an analysis of the secondary data set used during the unit, using cross tabulations and appropriate statistical tests. Full details of the assessed project will be available later in the semester, in addition detailed guidance on conducting this project will be given out during the unit and some class time will be dedicated to the practical aspects of the project.

Formative Assessment and Group Presentation

This exercise allows students to prepare a piece of secondary data analysis; the exercise also prepares students for the assessed coursework project. The Group presentation will be prepared during week 8 of the unit and delivered to the class in week 9. Students will receive oral feedback on the presentation during classes in week 9. The group presentation is a required element of the unit for all students and completion is necessary for credit points.

Formative assessment is by an *individually* written 1500 word report based on the group presentation. This element is optional. However, for students unfamiliar with writing research reports based on data analysis this is strongly recommended as an opportunity to get written feedback on this style of written work before submitting the summative assignment.

Resources

Access to software

The main software used in the unit is SPSS for Windows. All computer labs in the Faculty of Social Sciences and Law have SPSS installed for use by student, it is also possible to access this for your own computer. Details will be given out in week 1.

Blackboard Use: A Course Requirement

The use of Blackboard is required. All students taking this unit will be automatically registered for Blackboard. It is the student's responsibility, however, to regularly check the site for information and postings. The homepage for Blackboard access is (<https://www.ole.bris.ac.uk/webapps/login>). Students must check Blackboard on a regular basis. All information circulated on and through Blackboard will be considered to be seen by all students. Blackboard will be used to communicate with students, post lecture outlines, make announcements, provide unit materials and provide access to data sources used in the unit.

References

Each week you will be given 'workbooks' which take you step by step through the analysis procedures. These will also contain weekly exercises and if applicable, a guide to further reading on the topic. However, you should note that textbooks rapidly go out of date in terms of the software packages used and whilst the references are useful for supplementing the lectures with regards to statistical techniques you should not rely on them as guides to using the software packages.

Whilst the readings listed for each session will provide a useful supplement, this unit is a practical one and you are advised to balance your independent study for the unit towards time spent practising the analysis techniques using the appropriate software. You will be provided with handouts which cover all the techniques necessary for the unit and do not need to purchase any additional textbooks.

Quantitative Data Analysis Texts using SPSS

For students taking Introduction to Quantitative Social Research only:

Marsh, C and Elliott, J (2008) *Exploring Data: An Introduction to Data Analysis for Social Scientists*, Polity
This book is strongly recommended. It covers most of the topics in the unit in an accessible way.

Fielding, J and Gilbert, N (2006) *Understanding Social Statistics [2nd edition]*, Sage. This text provides an accessible overview of most of the techniques to be covered in the unit. It is recommended for those who would like more detail on the statistical procedures used in the unit.

De Vaus, D. A. (2013) *Surveys in Social Research*, [6th edition] Routledge.

This book covers the material in the course, including the design and implementation of surveys. It is a little less accessible in style than Marsh and Elliott but is recommended for anyone who wishes to design their own survey instruments.

For students also taking Advanced Quantitative Research:

Field, A (2013) *Discovering Statistics using SPSS [4th edition]*, Sage.

Although this text covers the material in this unit it also goes considerably further in data analysis than this introductory unit. However it provides an excellent resource for students intending to use quantitative methods in their own research and/or also taking the Advanced unit in teaching block 2.

British Social Attitudes Reports

Any of the British Social Attitudes reports are useful background reading for the unit as they demonstrate the kinds of research that can be done with the data used in the unit. The 31st report covers the data set we will be using in the unit. There is a link to it on Blackboard.

Detailed Week by Week Unit Outline

Week 1 (w/c 25th September) : Introduction to quantitative research

This session sets out the aims and structure of the unit. An overview will be given of quantitative research including the use of concepts, measurement, reliability and validity.

Topics to be covered

- ❖ The unit, scope and aims, requirements, assessments, references and resources
- ❖ Concepts and their measurement
- ❖ Reliability and validity

Practical work

- ❖ Thinking about how best to present data in graphical form

Further Readings

- Bryman, A. (2015) *Social Research Methods* [5th edition] Oxford: Oxford University Press [Chapter 6](#)
- Bryman, A. (1984) 'The debate about Quantitative and Qualitative Research: A Question of Method or Epistemology?' *British Journal of Sociology* 35 p75-92
- Bulmer, M (2001) Social measurement: What stands in its way? *Social Research* 68 (2)
- De Vaus, D. A. (2013) *Surveys in Social Research*, [6th edition] Abingdon: Routledge [Chapter 4](#)
- Gilbert, N. and Stonehouse, P. (2015) *Researching Social Life* [4th edition] London: Sage
- Fielding, J and Gilbert, N (2008) *Understanding Social Statistics* London: Sage [Chapter 1](#)

Week 2 (w/c 2nd October): Samples and Surveys

Social survey research is nowadays one of the most common means of gathering data and rests on the assumption that a carefully chosen sample can be used to produce reliable information about a much larger population. The advantages and disadvantages of this method will be covered in this session as well as the types of samples commonly used and the potential problems in their use, including the limitations and inadequacies of sampling frames such as the Electoral Roll and other centrally held lists, such as the UK Post Office Address File. The second part of this session covers the organisation and design of questionnaires which are central to surveys and structured interviews. Common difficulties are discussed, including the failure to measure effectively key concepts and the need for clear and unambiguous wording.

Topics to be covered

- ❖ Probability and purposive samples
- ❖ Sampling frames
- ❖ Types of questions and variables
- ❖ Questionnaire design

Practical Work

- ❖ Using the Question Bank
- ❖ Designing a simple survey

Further Readings

Atkinson, R. and Flint, J. (2001) 'Accessing hidden and hard-to-reach populations: snowball research strategies' *Social Research Update* 33.

Bryman, A. (2015) *Social Research Methods* [5th edition] Oxford: Oxford University Press [Chapter 8](#)

De Vaus, D. A. (2013) *Surveys in Social Research*, [6th edition] Abingdon: Routledge [Chapter 6](#)

Procter, M 'Measuring Attitudes' in Gilbert, N. (ed.) (2009) *Researching Social Life* [3rd edition] London: Sage

Simmons, R 'Questionnaires' in Gilbert, N. (ed.) (2009) *Researching Social Life* [3rd edition] London: Sage

Sturgis, P 'Designing Samples' in Gilbert, N. (ed.) (2009) *Researching Social Life* [3rd edition] London: Sage

Week 3 (w/c 9th October): Secondary Analysis

The use of secondary analysis of large scale survey data, using statistical analysis techniques, has become very common. And has led to much talk about the promise of 'big data'. This session will explore the advantages and disadvantages of secondary analysis of data sets. The session will also introduce the SPSS software that will be used throughout the remainder of the unit.

Topics to be covered

- ❖ The strengths and weaknesses of using secondary data
- ❖ Accessing and finding data sources
- ❖ Overview of key secondary data sources for social scientists

Practical work

- ❖ Introduction to SPSS
- ❖ Navigating data in SPSS
- ❖ Overview of Menus and SPSS syntax
- ❖ Inputting Data

Further Readings

Allum, N. 'Secondary Analysis' in Gilbert, N. (ed.) (2009) *Researching Social Life* [3rd edition] London: Sage
Bryman, A. (2015) *Social Research Methods* [5th edition] Oxford: Oxford University Press Chapter 14 and 16
Bulmer, M. (1980) 'Why don't sociologists make more use of Official Statistics' *Sociology* 14 (4): 505- 23
Field, A (2013) *Discovering Statistics using SPSS* [4th edition], London:Sage Chapter 3
Mayer-Schonberger, V and Cukier, K (2013) *Big Data: A revolution that will transform how we live work and think*. London: John Murray

Week 4 (w/c 16th October): Managing and Summarising Data

A first stage in understanding data is to summarise and consider single variables. In conducting more advanced analyses these descriptive statistics allow the researcher to understand the shape of their data and the types of responses made to individual items.

However, when using secondary data we are often faced with imperfect measures of the concepts we are interested in. This session will also introduce essential ways of manipulating data in SPSS in order to fit variables more closely to theoretical concepts.

Topics to be covered

- ❖ Derived variables
- ❖ Distributions
- ❖ Levels of Measurement
- ❖ Attitude scales

Practical work

- ❖ Familiarisation with BSA data set
- ❖ Frequency listings
- ❖ Summary statistics
- ❖ Recode and compute commands

Further Readings

De Vaus, D. A. (2013) *Surveys in Social Research*, [6th edition] Abingdon: Routledge [Chapters 9 - 13](#)

Fielding, J. and Gilbert, N. (2008) *Understanding Social Statistics*, London: Sage [Chapters 2 – 5](#)

Marsh, C and Elliott, J (2008) *Exploring Data* London: Polity [Chapter 2](#)

Week 5 (w/c 23rd October): Bi-variate Analysis using Cross tabulations and Chi-square test

This session introduces the basics of bi-variate analysis and the chi-square test for crosstabulations. This simple statistical test allows us to confirm the presence of a relationship between two variables. The session will look at how to read cross tabulations, how to draw out patterns in cross tabulations and how to apply a statistical test to a simple bi-variate table.

Topics to be covered

- ❖ The logic of hypothesis testing
- ❖ Interpreting crosstabulations
- ❖ The chi-square test and its assumptions

Practical work

- ❖ Generating crosstabulations and the chi-square test in SPSS
- ❖ Checking test assumptions
- ❖ Manipulating data to produce valid results
- ❖ Interpreting crosstabulations in social research

Further Readings

De Vaus, D. A. (2013) *Surveys in Social Research*, [6th edition] Abingdon: Routledge [Chapters 14](#)
Fielding, J. and Gilbert, N. (2008) *Understanding Social Statistics*, London: Sage [Chapters 9 and 11](#)
Marsh, C and Elliott, J (2008) *Exploring Data* London: Polity [Chapter 6 and 7](#)

Week 6 (w/c 30th October): Reading Week (No scheduled classes)

Week 7 (w/c 6th November): Control, cause and the chi-square test

This session introduces the idea of a control variable, and the need for multivariate analysis. It expands the framework of crosstabular analysis to three variables and looks at how the chi-square test can be used within this framework as well as the limitations of this method.

Topics to be covered

- ❖ Control variables
- ❖ Types of relationship
- ❖ The chi-square test for multi-way crosstabulations

Practical work

- ❖ Producing multi-way crosstabulations in SPSS
- ❖ Deciding when and how to add control variables
- ❖ Interpreting the Chi-square test in multi-way tables
- ❖ Presenting and interpreting multi-way crosstabs

Further Readings

De Vaus, D. A. (2013) *Surveys in Social Research*, [6th edition] Abingdon: Routledge Chapters 16
Fielding, J. and Gilbert, N. (2008) *Understanding Social Statistics*, London: Sage Chapters 9 and 11
Marsh, C and Elliott, J (2008) *Exploring Data* London: Polity Chapter 11 and 12

Weeks 8 and 9 (w/c 13th/20th November) : Data Analysis Task: Original Analysis

During weeks 8 and 9 students will undertake a group project to produce an original piece of secondary data on one of the following topics:

1. Attitudes to the monarchy
2. Attitudes to EU
3. Attitudes to crime and punishment
4. Attitudes to food safety

Students should first use the BSA15 questionnaire to look for topics of potential interest and then choose measures for the outcomes that are relevant to their topic. They should then relate these outcomes to socio-economic and demographic characteristics to understand variations in attitudes to their chosen topic.

The analysis should include an exploration of the data, two and three way crosstabulations and the relevant chi-square tests. A short (10 minute) presentation of the analysis should be prepared in powerpoint to be presented to the class in week 9.

Students who wish to get written feedback on their work should write up 1500 word individual report of the analysis (as outlined in the formative assessment section above) and submit this by e-mail to the tutor by 9:30am 30th November.

Week 10 (w/c 27th November): Hypothesis testing beyond the Chi-Square test

This session introduces hypothesis testing beyond the chi-square test, including measures of association for cross tabular data. These measures allow the researcher to consider the strength and direction of bivariate relationships.

Topics to be covered

- ❖ Symmetric and asymmetric measures of association
- ❖ Using measures of association to test the strength of relationships
- ❖ Measures of association for nominal and ordinal variables

Practical work

- ❖ Generating measures of association in SPSS
- ❖ Interpreting measures of association
- ❖ Adding measures of association to analysis

Further Readings

De Vaus, D. A. (2013) *Surveys in Social Research*, [6th edition] Abingdon: Routledge Chapters 18
Marsh, C and Elliott, J (2008) *Exploring Data* London: Polity Chapter 10

Week 11 (w/c 4th December): Reading (and writing) quantitative analyses and Project Work

In this session we will look at how to construct a piece of writing based around quantitative analyses and how to 'read' constructively material based on quantitative work. A significant part of the session will also be used for students to work on their assessed project with the guidance of the tutor.

Further Readings

Please see blackboard for examples of quantitative analysis for this session.

Appendix A

Instructions on how to submit essays electronically

1. Log in to Blackboard (<https://www.ole.bris.ac.uk/>) and select the Blackboard course for the unit you are submitting work for. If you cannot see it, please e-mail f.cooper@bristol.ac.uk with your username and ask to be added.
2. Click on the "Submit Work Here" option on the left hand menu and then find the correct assessment from the list.
3. Select 'view/complete' for the appropriate piece of work. It is your responsibility to ensure that you have selected both the correct unit and the correct piece of work.
4. The screen will display 'single file upload' and your name. Enter your candidate number as a submission title, and then select the file that you wish to upload by clicking the 'browse' button. Click on the 'upload' button at the bottom.
5. You will then be shown the essay to be submitted. Check that you have selected the correct essay and click the 'Submit' button. This step must be completed or the submission is not complete.
6. You will be informed of a successful submission. A digital receipt is displayed on screen and a copy sent to your email address for your records.

Important notes

- You are only allowed to submit one file to Blackboard (single file upload), so ensure that all parts of your work – references, bibliography etc. – are included in one single document and that you upload the correct version. You will not be able to change the file once you have uploaded.
- Blackboard will accept a variety of file formats, but the School can only accept work submitted in .rtf (Rich Text Format) or .doc/.docx (Word Document) format. If you use another word processing package, please ensure you save in a compatible format.
- By submitting your essay, you are confirming that you have read the regulations on plagiarism and confirm that the submission is not plagiarised. You also confirm that the word count stated on the essay is an accurate statement of essay length.
- If Blackboard is not working email your assessment to f.cooper@bristol.ac.uk with the unit code and title in the subject line.

How to confirm that your essay has been submitted

You will have received a digital receipt by email and if you click on the assessment again (steps 1-4), you will see the title and submission date of the essay you have submitted. If you click on submit, you will not be able to submit again. This table also displays the date of submission. If you click on the title of the essay, it will open in a new window and you can also see what time the essay was submitted.

Appendix B
Summary of Relevant School Regulations
(Further details are in the Postgraduate taught handbook, which takes precedence)

Attendance of Seminars

SPAIS takes attendance of and participation in seminars very seriously. Seminars form an essential part of your learning and you need to make sure you arrive on time, have done the required reading and participate fully. Attendance at all seminars is monitored, with absence only condoned in cases of illness or for other exceptional reasons.

If you are unable to attend a seminar you must inform your seminar tutor. You should also provide evidence to explain your absence, such as a self-certification and/or medical note, counselling letter or other official document. If you are ill or are experiencing some other kind of difficulty which is preventing you from attending seminars for a prolonged period, please contact the Postgraduate Office or the Graduate Administration Manager who can advise on how to proceed.

Requirements for credit points

To be awarded credit points for a taught unit, students must:

- Have a satisfactory attendance record.
- Pass the summative assessment

Where there are multiple summative assessments in a unit, students must achieve the pass mark for the weighted average of the assessments (i.e. in the mark for the unit overall). They do not need to pass each individual piece of assessment.

If any of these conditions are not met, then your ability to progress through your degree may be affected.

Presentation of written work

Coursework must be word-processed. As a guide, use a clear, easy-to-read font such as Arial or Times New Roman, in at least 11pt. You may double-space or single-space your essays as you prefer. Your tutor will let you know if they have a preference.

All pages should be numbered. Ensure that the essay question appears on the first page.

Students are required to complete and include a cover page for essay/summative submissions – the template cover page will be available via the online submission point for students to complete.

Candidate numbers are required on summative work in order to ensure that marking is anonymous. Note that your candidate number is not the same as your student number. This number can be viewed in StudentInfo (<https://www.bris.ac.uk/studentinfo>). You should regard this number as personal to you and not share it with anyone else. The number is used to ensure that the marking of a student's work is done anonymously. Please ensure that you memorise your candidate number as you will need to write it on every assessment.

Assessment Length

Each piece of coursework must not exceed the stipulated maximum length for the assignment (the 'word count') listed in the unit guide. Summative work that exceeds the maximum length will be subject to penalties. **The word count is absolute (there is no 10% leeway, as commonly rumoured).** Five marks will be deducted for every 100 words or part thereof over the word limit. Thus, an essay that is 1 word over the word limit will be penalised 5 marks; an essay that is 101 words over the word limit will be penalised 10 marks, and so on.

The word count includes all text, tables, numbers, footnotes/endnotes, Harvard referencing in the body of the text and direct quotes. It excludes the cover page, bibliography, headers and appendices. However, appendices should only be used for reproducing documents, not additional text written by you.

Students are advised that any attempt to circumvent word count limits by changing essay format, e.g. by removing spaces in references, will be investigated. In these cases, penalties will be applied if the actual word count is exceeded and further disciplinary action may be taken.

Students should be aware that word count penalties will incur a mark reduction that may in turn impact their progress and/or overall qualification.

Referencing and Plagiarism

Students are required to reference the source materials used to inform their submitted work. Students are expected to use the Harvard referencing system as set out in the relevant section of the SPAIS *Study Guide*. Unless otherwise stated, essays must contain a bibliography. Students should consult the SPAIS *Study Guide* for full details (students can access this via the SPAIS MSc-Dip Admin Blackboard site).

Inadequate referencing in submitted work can run the risk of plagiarism. Plagiarism is the unacknowledged inclusion in a student's work of material derived from the published or unpublished work of another. This constitutes plagiarism whether it is intentional or unintentional. "Work" includes internet sources as well as printed material.

Plagiarism is a serious academic offence and penalties will be applied in such cases, as is set out in the SPAIS *Postgraduate taught handbook*. See also the relevant section of the School *Study Skills Guide* for more information.

Please note that plagiarism may lead to penalties that may prevent students found guilty of such an offence from progressing in their programme of study.

Extensions

Extensions to coursework deadlines will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. If you want to request an extension, complete a Coursework Extension Request Form (available at Blackboard/SPAIS MSc/Dip Administration/forms) and submit the form with your evidence (e.g. medical certificate, death certificate, or hospital letter) to Faye Cooper in the Postgraduate Office, 11 Priory Road or f.cooper@bristol.ac.uk.

Extension requests will not be considered if there is no supporting evidence.

All extension requests should be submitted at least 72 hours prior to the assessment deadline. If the circumstance occurs after this point, then please either telephone or see the Graduate Administration Manager in person. In their absence you can contact Faye Cooper in the PG Office, again in person or by telephone.

Extensions can only be granted by the Graduate Administration Office. They cannot be granted by unit convenors or seminar tutors.

You will receive an email to confirm whether your extension request has been granted or not.

Submitting Essays/Work for assessment

Formative work: Where applicable, details on how to submit formative work for assessment will be contained in this unit guide.

Summative work: All summative submissions ***must be submitted electronically via Blackboard.***

Electronic copies enable an efficient system of receipting, providing the student and the School with a record of exactly when an essay was submitted. It also enables the School to systematically check the length of submitted essays and to safeguard against plagiarism.

Late Submissions

Penalties are imposed for work submitted late without an approved extension. Any kind of computer/electronic failure is **not** accepted as a valid reason for an extension, so make sure you back up your work on another computer, memory stick or in the cloud (e.g. One Drive, Dropbox or another equivalent system). Also ensure that the clock on your computer is correct. The following schema of marks deduction for late/non-submission is applied to both formative work and summative work:

- Up to 24 hours late, or part thereof *Penalty of 10 marks*
- For each additional 24 hours late, or part thereof *A further 5 marks deduction for each 24 hours, or part thereof*
- Assessment submitted over one week late *Treated as a non-submission: fail and mark of zero recorded. This will be noted on your transcript.*

- The 24 hour period runs from the deadline for submission, and includes Saturdays, Sundays, bank holidays and university closure days.
- If an essay submitted less than one week late fails solely due to the imposition of a late penalty, then the mark will be capped at 50 and recorded as a second attempt.

Students should be aware that late penalties will incur a mark reduction that may in turn impact their progress and/or overall qualification.

Marks and Feedback

In addition to an overall mark, students will receive written feedback on their assessed work.

In accordance with the Faculty's Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught programmes, marks and feedback are typically returned within fifteen working days of the relevant submission deadline, unless exceptional circumstances arise in which case students will be informed of the deadline for return. The process of marking and providing detailed feedback is a labour-intensive one, with most 4000 word essays taking at least 45 minutes to assess and comment upon. Summative work also needs to be checked for plagiarism and length and moderated by a second member of staff to ensure marking is fair and consistent.

If work is submitted late, then it may not be possible to return feedback within fifteen working days.

Fails and Resits

If you fail the unit overall, you will normally be required to resubmit or resit unless you do not meet the progression requirements for your programme. Your School Office will contact you if this is the case.

Appendix C

Level 7 Marking and Assessment Criteria (Postgraduate)

All MSc/Diploma marking in the School is out of 100 on the following scale and with the following classifications:

70 and above Distinction
60-69 Merit
50-59 Pass
Below 50 Fail

Work within each of the classifications is expected to demonstrate the following attributes. Please note that markers do not weight each of these attributes equally when finalising the mark. Markers may also take into account the extent to which achievement of unit-specific intended learning outcomes (see unit guide) has been demonstrated when assessing work and arriving at the mark.

70-100: DISTINCTION

Addresses the Question Set

The work is a highly appropriate response to the question or assignment task that has been set. Coverage and selection of content is exemplary. There is clear analysis of the question or topic. Clear ability to analyse and synthesize ideas is demonstrated. At the upper end of the distinction range (marks of 80+), work will be outstanding in (where appropriate) its incorporation and use of empirical evidence/theoretical frameworks/methodological approaches in addressing the question.

Contains coherent structure and argument

The assignment is internally consistent, extremely coherent, concise and well-structured. The introduction is well focused and provides a clear indication of the rationale, key literature base used and organisation of the work. The central argument/structure of the work has a clear and logical sequence of progression. The conclusion draws insights which are logically developed from the analysis. At the upper end of the distinction range (marks of 80+), work will be outstanding in the extent to which the structure facilitates the answer to the question.

Demonstrates understanding of key concepts and/or data

A detailed understanding of key concepts and/or data will be demonstrated. At the upper end of the distinction range (marks of 80+) sustained evidence of critical understanding of concepts and/or critical analysis of data will be demonstrated.

Supports argument with appropriate evidence

The assignment demonstrates that an excellent knowledge of the topic has been gained from careful research and wide ranging reading that goes well beyond the prescribed reading list. The selection, interpretation, comparison, evaluation, and integration of evidence and source material to support the argument is extremely effective. At the upper end of the distinction range (marks of 80+), work will indicate outstanding ability to deal with complexity, contradictions or gaps in the existing academic literature.

Demonstrates critical evaluation

Work at this level will indicate a detailed and critical understanding of central theoretical and/or methodological issues as appropriate. At the upper end of the distinction range (marks of 80+) work will show extensive evidence of coherence, creativity, originality and imagination in addressing the question or topic.

Writing, Background Reading, Referencing and Bibliographic format

The work is extremely well presented, with minimal grammatical or spelling errors. It is written in a fluent and engaging style that demonstrates sufficient background reading, with exemplary referencing and bibliographic formatting in accordance with the required conventions. At the upper end of the distinction range (marks of 80+), the work will be virtually error-free in these respects.

60-69: MERIT

Addresses the Question Set

The work is a very appropriate response to the set question or assignment task. The question is addressed comprehensively, and a convincing and coherent argument is maintained in doing so. There is very good coverage of content and some evidence of an ability to think critically in relation to the question or topic will be shown. Where appropriate, the work will illustrate good comprehension of the theoretical implications of the set question or assignment.

Contains coherent structure and argument

The structure of the assignment is sound. The introduction is relevant and provides the reader with a clear guide to the central argument and the overall structure of the work. The conclusion will highlight and reflect upon the key points of argument developed within the main body of the essay and relative to the set question or assignment.

Demonstrates understanding of key concepts and/or data

A sound understanding of relevant key concepts and/or data has been developed and demonstrated, with key related issues and debates identified and discussed.

Supports argument with appropriate evidence

Overall there is a very good selection and use of sources which are well integrated, interpreted and evaluated. The work will demonstrate the ability to be selective in the range of material used. Some independent reading and research that goes beyond the prescribed reading list will be demonstrated, although the range of evidence used will be more restricted in comparison with an assignment awarded a higher grade.

Demonstrates critical evaluation

The work will clearly demonstrate a capacity to synthesise and critically evaluate source materials and/or debates in relation to the set question or assignment rather than simply describe or summarise them.

Writing, Background Reading, Referencing and Bibliographic format

The work is clear and fluent and largely conforms to referencing and bibliographic conventions. It has been well edited and demonstrates sufficient background reading. Proof-reading has resulted in there being few grammatical or spelling errors.

50-59: PASS

Addresses the Question Set

The work is a reasonably appropriate response to the set question or assignment task. All aspects of the set question or topic have been addressed. The work will show some comprehension of the underlying theoretical/methodological implications of the question where appropriate, but there may be limitations in the understanding of how these issues relate to the question.

Contains coherent structure and argument

The assignment has been effectively structured, although more careful editing may have improved the overall coherence of argument. The introduction is well focused and provides a sense of the central argument and overall organisation. The conclusion provides a summary of the discussion, although may be primarily descriptive in nature and may fail to reflect upon or support the argument fully.

Demonstrates understanding of key concepts and/or data

A basic level of understanding of relevant key concepts and/or data has been demonstrated, though there may be some errors and/or gaps in the knowledge and understanding. Key related issues have been identified and discussed but without many significant insights being developed.

Supports argument with appropriate evidence

The argument will be supported by reference to and incorporation of some relevant evidence, but with scope for greater range and depth of evidence. The work will indicate a generally clear understanding of appropriate evidence, but this may be presented in an uncritical/descriptive manner and/or insufficiently incorporated into the overall argument in response to the set question or assignment task.

Demonstrates critical evaluation

A good range of relevant content has been covered, and there is some attempt at analysis but a tendency to be descriptive rather than critical. Work in this classification may also exhibit a tendency to assert/state points of argument rather than argue on the basis of reasoning and evidence.

Writing, Background Reading, Referencing and Bibliographic format

The style of writing is appropriate and presents few comprehension difficulties for the reader. The assignment is not as fluently written as it might have been, and there may be scope for improvement in spelling and grammar. There is evidence of sufficient background reading. Referencing and bibliographic formatting generally conform to the conventions, but there may be scope for further improvement in accuracy and consistency in accordance with the required conventions.

0-49 FAIL

Addresses the Question Set

Although some attempt will have been made, the work largely fails to address and/or significantly misunderstands the set question or assignment task. At the lower end of the fail range (marks of 0-40) there is little or no understanding of the set question or assignment task in evidence.

Contains coherent structure and argument

The work does not contain a sufficiently structured argument, and may be ineffectively organised. The introduction may lack a clear rationale or statement of argument, and/or may lack a clear outline of the overall structure of the assignment. The conclusion may lack any indication of insights in relation to the set question or assignment task. At the lower end of the fail range (marks of 0-40) the structure of the work may be incoherent or illogical, and/or the work may lack a clearly developed argument.

Demonstrates understanding of key concepts and/or data

There is limited knowledge and understanding of key concepts and/or data, with significant errors and/or omissions in this respect. At the lower end of the fail range (marks of 0-40) there may be significant lack of awareness or understanding of key concepts and/or data.

Supports argument with appropriate evidence

Few key points of appropriate evidence are identified and/or there may be very little attempt at analysis of evidence, with the work tending towards excessive description. At the lower end of the fail range (marks of 0-40) evidence referred to and included in the work may not be relevant to the addressing the set question or assignment task.

Demonstrates critical evaluation

The approach is typified by a general lack of critical evaluation in relation to relevant literature and issues. Work that simply asserts rather than argues a case may also fall into this classification. The use of sources may be excessively derivative of existing work, with little or no indication of an ability to independently analyse relevant material. At the lower end of the fail range (marks of 0-40) there is little or no evidence of critical evaluation.

Writing, Background Reading, Referencing and Bibliographic format

The standard of writing presents difficulties for the reader, with frequent grammatical and spelling errors to a degree that inhibits communication. The range and depth of background reading may be insufficient. The approach to referencing and bibliographic formatting does not follow the required conventions to a sufficiently consistent level. At the lower end of the fail range (marks of 0-40) the use of language may present considerable comprehension difficulties for the reader. The assignment may not meet stipulations in terms of layout and/or length, and the approach to referencing may not meet expected conventions