

GENERAL ASSESSMENT CRITERIA for academic writing assignments in International Master's Programmes

CRITERION GRADE	RELEVANCE OF CONTENT	USE OF SOURCE MATERIAL	ORGANI- SATION	COHESION & COHERENCE	LANGUAGE ACCURACY	PRESENTATION & MECHANICAL ACCURACY
EXCELLENT (5) C2 level: Masters the discourse conventions and style of research writing and can evaluate and use sources appropriately and write with a good flow and accuracy.	Appears well-focussed and relevant to topic and task; thorough coverage; well supported arguments; wide scope.	Sources thoroughly incorporated; seamless integration of sources; citation appropriate; complete absence of plagiarism; bibliography adequate and follows appropriate standards.	Outline of main ideas easily recognisable to readers; sections and paragraphs clearly marked, thorough introduction and conclusion; follows conventions of the field.	Cohesive and discourse markers appropriately used; forms a coherent whole; close, intelligible relationship between sentences; smooth flow of text.	Very few language errors; vocabulary, style and register appropriate to the topic and intended audience; closely follows the main discourse conventions of the field.	Clear presentation of both text and any tables and figures; proper format; correct spacing and indentation of paragraphs etc. Virtually no errors of punctuation, spelling or capitalisation.
VERY GOOD (4) C1 level: Can follow the basic conventions and formality degrees with fluency, use varied vocabulary and cite without plagiarism.	Appears focussed and relevant to topic and task; thorough coverage with only minor aspects missing.	Relatively good incorporation of references with only minor inconsistencies in citation and bibliographical information; total lack of plagiarism.	Minor incompleteness or lack of clarity; sections and paragraphs generally divided well; introduction and conclusion well connected to body; good adherence to conventions of the field.	Only minor inconsistencies in the use of cohesive and discourse markers, not affecting overall coherence; smooth flow of text, but possible overuse of certain discourse markers.	No major difficulties in appropriate language use; follows the main discourse conventions of the field.	Relatively clear presentation and format, but some unsystematic errors in mechanical accuracy.
GOOD (3) B2 level: Can produce various kinds of texts in own field with relative fluency and substantiation, using quite versatile vocabulary and appropriate citation.	Appears relevant to topic and task; possibly little limited in scope, too detailed in places or too long; some problems with substantiating arguments.	Adequate reference to source material, although some minor errors in evidence; absence of plagiarism though possible overuse of direct quotations and citation; bibliography may be incomplete or inadequate in minor ways.	Some incompleteness or lack of clarity in the whole; sections and paragraphs not divided perfectly; introduction and conclusion not well connected to the main body; minor problems in following the conventions of the field.	Relationship between sentences may occasionally lack smoothness; some misuse of cohesive and discourse markers somewhat affecting flow of text.	Some problems e.g. in the level of formality and register; consistent errors in certain areas of grammar, but rarely impeding comprehension.	Quite clear presentation, but with occasional inconsistencies in format and other mechanics of writing, but rarely impeding comprehension.
SATIS-FACTORY (2) B1 level: Can produce basically understandable and coherent texts with appropriate content and basic vocabulary.	Many aspects irrelevant in terms of topic and task; quite unfocussed and quite limited in scope, substantiation patchy.	Reference to source material not consistent; quotations incorporated clumsily; limited bibliography with several types of error.	Sections and paragraphs do not form a clear whole; introduction and conclusion separate from the main body; apparent difficulty in following the conventions of the field.	Lack of sentence transitions interferes at times with comprehension making relationship between sentences unclear; flow of text abrupt.	Several problems with using appropriate style and register; grammatical errors affect comprehension.	Very inconsistent in presentation and format; frequent errors in punctuation and spelling; difficult to understand.
POOR (1) (A2 level: Can write very basic and short general texts according to a good example.)	Clear difficulty in focussing and dealing with the topic; narrow scope; needs elaboration, no clear evidence of substantiation.	Clear difficulty in using and incorporating source material; problems with paraphrasing; inadequate bibliography; possible plagiarism	Poor organisation and division between sections makes comprehension of the whole very difficult.	Unsatisfactory cohesion makes comprehension very difficult; appears incoherent and lacking in logical flow.	Inappropriate style and register and frequent grammatical errors make comprehension very difficult.	Errors in presentation, format, spelling, and punctuation make the text almost incomprehensible.
INADEQUATE (0)	Clearly unable to deal with topic competently; too short and unfocussed, completely lacking any form of clear argument.	Very inadequate citation/lacking citation entirely; mostly plagiarised; does not fulfil academic requirements; no bibliography.	No apparent organisation, making reading difficult; no apparent divisions between sections or paragraphs; lack of proper introduction and conclusion.	Cohesive markers almost totally absent, making writing fragmentary and practically incomprehensible...	Number and type of errors make comprehension extremely difficult.	Partly or wholly illegible; errors in almost every sentence.

(Mainly based on Trzeciak, John & S.E. Mackay 1995: Study Skills for Academic Writing. Hemel Hempstead: Phoenix Study Series. NY: Prentice Hall and Council of Europe 2003: Common European Framework of Reference for languages; levels B1-C2).