

Programme Auditor Report:
MPhil GLODE, University of Bergen
19/9/19

Assessment of Masters Thesis in Global Development, Theory and Practice (GLODE 330) - Spring term 2019

Guidance for examiners:

The guidance for examiners is clearly presented and organized into different sections: questions and learning outcomes; literature and teaching/instructions; and other points of relevance, including scope of the thesis and criteria for the evaluation of the thesis. The criteria for the evaluation of the thesis clearly present the main aspects of the thesis to be evaluated and lists a series of questions that are helpful and support the examiners' assessment. However, the Faculty of Psychology's grade scale with course-specific assessment criteria would benefit from including more specific details, for example by reflecting some of the criteria that are included in the evaluation of the thesis. This would help with the students' understanding and interpretation of their assessment. I think it is important to refer to specific components in the grade scale (e.g. organisation, clear writing skills etc.). I have attached the MA marking criteria for The School of Global Studies, University of Sussex), parts of which may be of use in adding to the grade scale chart.

When I visited the University of Bergen in May 2017, I had the opportunity to get feedback from the students. Overall, the students were very satisfied with the programme. They felt the academic staff were excellent and very supportive. However, one of the main points raised was that they wanted to receive feedback with their mark for submitted work, rather than having to request feedback. They were unclear as to the rationale for having to request feedback. (I included this in my 2017 Programme Auditor report). I think it is important that students are given written feedback that develops on the general feedback in the marking criteria. In the School of Global Studies, University of Sussex, we provide a summary of what the student has done well (strengths), followed by details of what they need to address in order to improve their mark (weaknesses). We make

it clear that individual written feedback should help the student to understand why their work was given the mark that it was and how they can improve their work in future. This would cover details on how they can analyse, write, present, etc. more effectively.

Assessment:

The overall results for the Master's theses (GLODE 330) were good and reflected an ideal variation in terms of results. (Of the 13 theses that had been submitted, there were 2 A grades, 6 B grades, 3 C grades and 3 D grades. I looked at the following dissertations:

Mathilde Orlie - A

Lucy Davy - A

Maria Addo - B

Caroline Slettdal - C

Admassie - C

Helene Carlsen - D

I confirm the awarded marks as each of the dissertations fulfills the grade scale details and assessment criteria for the particular grade. With respect to Admassie's dissertation, the C grade initially awarded is accurate and fair. There is a thorough, detailed and clear explanation for the grade. It is unclear on what grounds the new committee marked the thesis as a 'D' since there is no written feedback. However, Admassie's thesis is much stronger than Carlsen's, which was awarded a D. Despite its flaws, it shows a great deal of originality and ambition, which further substantiates the C grade. To my mind, it fulfills the assessment criteria (and grade scale details) for a C grade. It would be helpful to have written details of the grade appeal process for students. (In the School of Global Studies, we do not allow students to appeal grades since their theses are marked by a first marker, second marker and moderated by a third person). I would advise that students be made aware of the risks of appealing since their marks can be increased as well as lowered.

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