Disclaimer

This document was published in September 2016 and was correct at that time. The Department*
reserves the right to modify any statement if necessary, make variations to the content or
methods of delivery of programmes of study, to discontinue programmes, or merge or combine
programmes if such actions are reasonably considered to be necessary by the College. Every
effort will be made to keep disruption to a minimum, and to give as much notice as possible.

* Please note, the term ‘Department’ is used to refer to both ‘Departments’ ‘Centres’ and
‘Schools’. Students on joint or combined degree programmes will need to use two departmental
handbooks.

An electronic copy of this handbook can be found on your Departmental website
(http://www.rhul.ac.uk/geography/currentstudents/home.aspx) where it will be possible
to follow the hyperlinks to relevant webpages.
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1.0 Introduction to Practising Sustainable Development
Interest in development, environment and issues of sustainable development has never been so intense. Current global debates include negotiations over Climate Change and on the development agenda from 2015 onwards, when there will be a move from Millennium Development Goals to Sustainable Development goals. Stakeholders ranging from governments, NGOs, international agencies to, increasingly, business, are incorporating sustainability into their thinking. All sustainable development issues are a complex and dynamic web of natural, social, political and economic processes, and it is this unique interdisciplinary approach which continues to drive the MSc in Practising Sustainable Development. First introduced in 1990 as a pioneering degree in this field, this popular course has evolved and expanded in scope and appeal, and continues to attract students from a diverse range of backgrounds who work or are interested in development issues and the environment.

1.1 Degree aims
The aims of the MSc/PG Diploma Practising Sustainable Development are:

- To examine the ways in which environmental, social, political and economic factors interrelate at a range of scales to produce particular understandings of ‘sustainable development’ and associated policies and practices.
- To provide training in skills needed to research and assess sustainable development, such as research design, project development, environmental monitoring, geographic information systems, participatory methods, project analysis and evaluation.
- To provide students with key competencies including holistic thinking, ability to manage complexity, change and unpredictability, critical awareness, group working, communication, reflectiveness and empathy. In addition, we aim to develop students’ personal qualities, encompassing self-awareness regarding the student’s learning i.e. ‘learning how to learn’, and the capacity to reflect on, in and for action.
- To provide a rigorous programme of research training, in both qualitative and quantitative methods for the analysis of physical and human aspects of sustainable development.
- To enable students to carry out independent primary fieldwork and research-based dissertations on environment and development related topics and in cross-cultural situations, equip students to undertake further postgraduate study for a PhD, and equip students to fulfil professional research and leadership roles in sustainable development-related fields, including both governmental and non-governmental development agencies.

1.2 Why is Practising Sustainable Development so distinctive?
The MSc and PG Diploma in Practising Sustainable Development are distinctive in three ways:

1. Being within a Geography department, we are in a unique position to present not only a focus on the interactions between natural and human environments, and the physical and social sciences, but have access to a range of facilities within the department to give students practical experience. There are few programmes in the field of development and environment
in the UK that allow students to develop hands-on practical skills in a range of techniques, from the social to the physical sciences

2. We provide practical focused research skills training and guidance in order to enable students to carry out and complete independent primary fieldwork and research-based dissertations on environment and development related topics and in cross-cultural situation

3. The MSc is taught by members of the Geopolitics, Development, Security and Justice Group (GDSJ), a leading interdisciplinary research centre in the field of development, environment and sustainable development, linking natural and social science theories, policies, tools and methodologies. We are in a unique position to convey research knowledge, experience and skills that will have direct relevance to employability as well as research training for further education, namely doctoral research.

Past students of the course are now employed by international development and environment agencies, national policy making and implementing agencies, higher education institutions, private sector companies and NGOs, as environmental and development workers, activists, teachers and researchers. Many of our alumni are also currently undertaking doctoral programmes in the UK and abroad.

Learning outcomes

Knowledge and Understanding

At the end of the programme, students should be able to:

- Understand at an advanced level, the relationships between, and complexities of, social, economic, political and environmental aspects of sustainable development.
- Understand at an advanced level, how the key issues in sustainable development theory influence policy and impact on practice.
- Critically analyse complex or contradictory areas of knowledge in aspects of sustainable development.
- Have gained a critical awareness of how technology can play a role in both positive and negative outcomes

Skills and other attributes

- Synthesise information with an innovative manner and with critical awareness.
- Evaluate research, advanced scholarship and methodologies, and argue alternative approaches.
- Demonstrate a high level of ability to exercise, adapt and develop ‘key competencies’, namely holistic thinking, ability to manage complexity, change and unpredictability, critical awareness, group working, communication, reflexivity and empathy.
- Demonstrate a high level of ability in subject specific skills including environmental monitoring, geographic information systems, participatory methods, research design, project development, and project analysis and evaluation.
- Critically evaluate and apply a range of qualitative and quantitative methods for
sustainable development research.

- Select appropriate field research methods, plan and embark upon a research project in the global North or South, critically aware of the problems likely to be encountered during the research process.
- Independently plan and execute a research project to time
- Develop oral communication skills, through presentations, public speaking and communication with a non-academic audience
- Develop written communication skills, including the ability to author briefings, reports and produce research papers with a logical structure and in comprehensible and clear English
- Acquire, analyse and interpret data
- Present data in a clear and appropriate format
- Manage their time
- Further develop attributes such as self-motivation, ability to work in teams, flexibility, adaptability

2.0 Key staff
Staff details can be found in the Departmental handbook but here are some key contacts for your programme;

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prof. Katie Willis</td>
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<tr>
<td>(<a href="mailto:katie.willis@rhul.ac.uk">katie.willis@rhul.ac.uk</a>)</td>
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<td>01784 443653</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Innes keighren</td>
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<td>(<a href="mailto:innes.keighren@rhul.ac.uk">innes.keighren@rhul.ac.uk</a>)</td>
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3.0 Programme Specification

Full details about your programme of study, including, amongst others, the aims, learning outcomes to be achieved on completion, courses which make up the programme and any programme-specific regulations are set out in the programme specification available through http://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/coursecatalogue/home.aspx or http://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/studyhere/progspecs/home.aspx

Attendance at all elements/modules is compulsory.
4.0 MSc Practising Sustainable Development degree programme structure. 2017-18

Core Courses 80 units
- GG5307 Sustainability, Development and Governance (20 units)
- GG5308 Sustainability, Development and Society (20 units)
- GG5404 Technology, Innovation and Development (20 units)
- GG5406 Participatory Methods (20 units)

Core Research Courses 80 units
- GG5304 Volunteer project (10 units)
- GG5402 Research Methods (10 units)
- GG5403 Dissertation (including dissertation training) (60 units)

Elective Courses 20 units
(Students must choose 1 from the list or another 20 unit course)
- GG5407 Climate Change, Governance and the Seas (20 units)
- MN5337 Project Work for Managers (I): Sustainability and Societies (20 units)
5.0 Course outlines.
Core courses;

GG5304 Community Volunteer Project (Terms One and Two)
You will undertake an independent volunteer project which will give you practical experience in gaining sustainability related work experience. The project will enhance your employability and provide an opportunity to gain practical experience of organisational objectives, cultures and practices.

GG5307 Sustainability, Development and Governance (Term One)
This course will equip students with a detailed understanding of the development of sustainable development as a discourse. Students will explore key sustainability issues such as climate change, globalisation, and human responses with an emphasis on the emergence of environmental governance as a means to pursue sustainability.

GG5308 Sustainability, Development and Society (Term Two)
You will develop a detailed understanding of key social / environmental relationships incorporating contemporary issues in the geographies of sustainability. These will include 'risk society', sustainable cities, and the impacts of corporate sector activities on the environment. You will also understand the challenges to sustainable development at household and community levels, with a focus on community-based approaches to sustainable development.

GG5402 Dissertation Preparation and Research Methods (Terms One to Three)
The Research methods unit will help prepare you for your dissertation. You will recognise and critically evaluate approaches to management research and the assumptions upon which they are based. This will equip you to make justified choices as to appropriate quantitative/qualitative research methods for data collection and subsequent analysis. You will then be able to conduct research, and evaluate primary and secondary data sources in a systematic and critically reflective manner.

You will also evaluate potential limitations to research investigation and applications and develop a coherent and appropriate research proposal, recognising the ethical implications of research investigations and their impact upon findings.

GG5403 Dissertation
You will analyse a sustainability or CSR issue in depth. By the end of the dissertation, you will be able to plan and manage a project, define aims and objectives, identify appropriate data sources and collection methods, be aware of and deal with potential pitfalls, execute a dissertation plan, and construct an effective argument.

GG5404 Technology and Development (Term One)
This course provides you with an introduction to the role of technology in development,
focusing particularly on mobile phone and computer technologies. The course combines an understanding of key theoretical debates and how technologies have been applied in diverse sectors such as health and education. The course also includes training in the use of GIS (geographical information systems) within a development context.

GG5406 Participatory Methods (Term Two)
This course combines detailed understanding of the theoretical underpinnings of participatory research and methods with practical experience of using different participatory research techniques. These include participatory diagramming, participatory video and participatory environmental monitoring.

Elective Courses;
GG5407 Climate Change, Governance and the Seas (Term Two)
Climate change and the governance of the seas are two defining and intersecting issues of our time. Together they raise governance questions, challenges, and opportunities to understandings of development, geopolitics and security. This course is designed to engage with these complexities through a number of key themes and perspectives over the course of 10 weeks. From the rationale and evolution of scholarship on both subject areas, to key spaces, such as small island states, where these issues intersect, through to climate change and sea futures, the course is designed to provide a novel and practical insight into both climate change and geographical engagements with the sea and the associated governance challenges that ensue.

MNS337 Project Work for Managers – Sustainability and Societies (Term Three)
In this module you will develop an understanding of how ethics and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) inform sustainability management issues in large, transnational organisations. You will look at issues such as consumption and sustainability, assessing the dichotomy of economic and environmental interests. You will also examine a range of ethical beliefs and expectations that underpin environmental and social sustainability.

6.0 Timetable
Please see the separate Timetable document.
7.0 Forms of assessment

7.1 Coursework details.
Please note that all assessments must be submitted.

Marks for assignments, tests, presentations, examinations, and the dissertation are weighted in each course as follows:

**GG5304 Volunteer Project**
Coursework 1 x 250 word project summary and risk assessment; 1 x Volunteer Project poster (25%); 1 x 2000 Volunteer Project report (75%)

**GG5307 Sustainability, Development and Governance**
1 x 1500 formative essay
1 x 3500 word essay (100%)

**GG5308 Sustainability, Development and Society**
One 2500 word essay (67%) & one 1000 word policy briefing (33%)

**GG5402 Research Methods**
1 x 2500 word extended dissertation research proposal (50%), an oral presentation (50%)
Formative statistical exercises.

**GG5403 Dissertation**
1 x 1000 word formative dissertation proposal, 1 x 2500 word extended dissertation research proposal (5%), an oral presentation (5%) and dissertation (1090%)

**GG5404 Technology, Innovation and Development**
1 x 3000 essay (75%) and 1 x 1000 word GIS map & commentary (25%)

**GG5406 Participatory Methods**
1 x 3500 word report (100%)

**Electives**

**GG5407 Climate Change, Governance and the Seas**
1 X 3000 word slide pack (100%)

**MN5337 Project Work for Managers (I): Sustainability and Societies**
1 x 3000 word Group Project (30%) and one 2hr exam (70%)

Note that marks communicated to students during the academic year are subject to change and will have no formal status until they have been considered and decided upon by the Board of Examiners. The final meeting of the Board of Examiners takes place in late September or early October. Further regulations for the award of Masters degree can be found at:
7.2 Formative assessment
The formal assessed work will be in different forms, including written essays, reports and oral presentations. In order to get some feedback and enable you to improve your skills, students are also expected to take part in formative assessment. This will be in various forms. For example, you will be expected to lead discussions during formal sessions, or work on a topic as a group to be presented at the next session.
8.0 The Dissertation

Students are required to prepare a dissertation of between 12,000 and 15,000 words on a topic approved by their Supervisor. The dissertation must be based on primary research; an extended literature review is inadequate. More detailed advice and instructions will be provided during the autumn and spring terms, while the Research Training component (GG5402) is designed to equip students with appropriate methods and techniques for undertaking this work. In the first term students should consider topics for possible dissertations and discuss these with appropriate members of staff. If you plan to work with a specific organisation, it is essential that you contact the appropriate organisation as early as possible so that dissertation research can agreed with them and potentially be developed in collaboration and for the needs of those organisations. Some students may already have contacts with particular organisations; however staff will be able to advise and give guidance to students needing help with this.

At the end of the first term, by Wednesday 6th December 2017, the dissertation proposal form (given in Appendix 9) and a 1000-word dissertation research proposal, which should include a brief literature review, must be submitted to the director of the programme. Following this, each student will be allocated a supervisor for their dissertation who will advise students on the topic, research methodology and objectives of the dissertation.

An extended research proposal (2500 words) is to be submitted to the Departmental Office by Wednesday 25th April 2018 which will then be given to the to the designated supervisor. The extended research proposal should include the following:

- the specific title;
- academic context/literature review;
- aims/objectives of the research;
- research methodology;
- ethical issues relating to the research;
- proposed timetable for the research;
- full budget for the research;
- risk assessment for the research.

Each student will be expected to make an oral presentation outlining their research ideas and fieldwork plan in Monday 7th May 2018 (students cannot proceed with fieldwork until after this date). Please note that you should use your extended research proposal as the basis for the presentation and you should use the criteria set out in Appendix 3 for putting together the presentation. The marking criteria for the research presentation is given in Appendix 6. Students will be expected to talk for 10 minutes with another 10 minutes for questions and discussion.

Students who have not submitted their research proposal, risk assessment and ethics form will not be allowed to proceed to do their fieldwork and dissertation. Two examiners will mark the extended research proposal, followed by a formal meeting with the supervisor. Together, the extended research proposal and the oral presentation will be used as evidence of satisfactory preparation for fieldwork and data collection. Formal approval of the extended research proposal is required before candidates are permitted to proceed to do their
fieldwork for the main research. The supervisor will then, together with the student, finalise the Departmental risk assessment forms and the ethical form (available from the Programme Director) with the student as an approval to proceed for fieldwork during the summer term. **Students will not be able to proceed with fieldwork unless they have satisfactorily completed risk assessment and ethical forms.**

During the summer term, and the summer break, students should be aware that supervisors may sometimes be away for research or annual leave, and should arrange meetings well in advance. It is expected that students will consult supervisors as appropriate to discuss progress of their research and writing. If your supervisor is away for a part of this time, you should communicate with your advisor. During the writing stage, supervisors may be asked to comment on research quality, general structure, layout and style of presentation. Supervisors may be asked to comment on draft chapters, the exact date of submission to be negotiated with the supervisor, but at **least one week** prior to the submission deadline.

Two hard copies and one ecopy of the dissertation must be submitted for examination. Residential students must have both bound using the machine available in Q137, for which a nominal charge will be made. The dissertation must comply with conventional formatting requirements, including full contents pages, a clear chapter structure, an alphabetical bibliography and where appropriate, appendices. See below for further guidance on preparation. In addition, an electronic copy of the dissertation (figures and diagrams removed) should be submitted to the College plagiarism system, Turnitin. A receipt of submission of work to the Turnitin system should be handed into the Departmental office. Full guidance will be given by the programme Director for the latter. You must also complete a word count and plagiarism declaration form (Appendix 8) and hand it in to the Department. The completed dissertation should be submitted to the Departmental Secretaries on or before **4:00pm on Thursday 30th August 2018.** You should obtain a receipt confirming submission. The dissertation marking criteria are given in Appendix 6.

On completion of the examination and the posting of the provisional results in late September or early October, one copy of the dissertation is returnable to candidates if it not required for the Departmental Library. **Please note that dissertations may be archived for reference for future students unless you specifically ask for your dissertation to not be archived.** Students should make their own arrangements to collect these, or should leave a stamped addressed envelope with the Departmental Secretary so that they can be posted to them.

**8.1 The dissertation supervisor**

Your department will assign you a dissertation supervisor who will oversee your work. In most cases students are happy with the supervisory relationship. However, there are occasions where for some reason the supervisory relationship does not work and breaks down. If this happens, you should speak as soon as possible with the Programme Director or your Personal Advisor to see whether the problem can be resolved informally, e.g. through mediation, changing supervisor. You should not wait until after you have received your final degree results to raise the matter as it is very difficult for the College to resolve such matters or take remedial action at that point.
8.2 Guidelines for dissertation writing

The dissertation should be between 12,000 and 15,000 words (excluding bibliography, illustrative material (tables and diagrams) and appendices). The dissertation must be typed or word-processed in double spacing on A4-sized paper with at least 2.0 cm margins. Be sure that the printer is producing a dark, easily readable text. Examiners will give specific attention in deciding a recommended mark to the following points:

The Structure of the Dissertation: The dissertation must deal with, and set out clearly, the aims, methods and findings of the work. Page numbers, a list of contents (including tables, figures, photos and appendices), and text headings are essential. It is vital that you relate your work to a relevant body of existing literature and research. Use appropriate chapter titles and number them. The following structure is only a guideline. You may want to change chapter headings and include certain elements in different sections:

- Title of study
- Acknowledgements
- Table of contents
- List of figures
- List of tables
- List of plates (photographs)
- Glossary (if applicable)

[Word count begins here]

- Chapter 1 - Introduction – this should outline the aims and objectives of the research, and how the research came about and why it is relevant, giving some brief background information
- Chapter 2 - Academic context – this should include a review of relevant published academic and policy literature on the topic, making clear the relevance of this background material to the study
- Chapter 3 - Methods – this should include the research design and methods. Justification of the methods used should be given. You may also want to include the ethical considerations, timetable, budget and risks involved in the fieldwork in this section. However, the latter information could also be included in an appendix. This chapter should be written in the past tense. Remember that you should include reference to appropriate methodology literature, and don’t forget to include a discussion of how you analysed the data. You also need to reflect on problems/limitations and how this may have affected your results.
- Chapters 4 (+5 & 6) – Results and Analysis – These may be written in separate sections, but often, particularly when using qualitative material, you should bring the two together. You may find it useful to write shorter themed chapters instead of one long one. This is the section which most students find difficult. You are analysing NOT describing. You also need to make sure that you only deal with material which is relevant to the research questions. Leaving out great material is part of the pain of doing research! When reporting findings, you should present numbers and quotes as appropriate, do not include raw data, such as interview transcripts or survey data, in the text. If they are relevant put them in an appendix. The analysis should be a critical
discussion of the research findings in light of relevant published literature. You should also consider the limitations of the study here.

- Chapter 6 - Conclusions – this should summarise the findings of the research and look to the future indicating further research opportunities on the problem investigated.

[Bibliography]

- Bibliography
- Appendix

**Composition/Style:** Dissertations should be modelled on the style of articles in the academic journal literature and should aim at appropriate objectivity, clarity and lack of ambiguity. Spelling and grammar should be correct.

**Referencing:** Sources of information must be clearly identified within the text. Unsupported assertions must be avoided. Full references must be listed in proper form in the bibliography at the end. See Departmental Postgraduate Taught handbook for more guidance on referencing.

**Illustrations:** Figures and tables should be used to support the text. Maps and diagrams may be of any size, but preferably within A4 and should be produced using a computer graphics application. Photographic materials should not exceed A4 size. Be sure that illustrations are adequately explained, e.g. include such essentials as scales, orientation, etc., as well as captions. You must not download figures from the Internet and use them where copyright is held on them. Similar constraints apply to figures and tables in academic journals, books or reports. To use them you must obtain permission from the authors and/or publishers. If you re-draw the figure or adapt a table, thus significantly altering them, you can use the caption ‘based on/modified from’ giving the author and reference.

**Appendices:** Appendices should only contain supporting material; all substantive material germane to the core discussion should be included in the main body of text. Where appropriate the following may be included within the appendices: illustrations of the tools used in the data collection process, correspondence items including letters, a sample of (blank) questionnaires, data collection proformas, summary data, information pamphlets. All other items to be considered for inclusion in the appendices should have the prior approval of the supervisor.

**Neatness:** This includes the layout of the text on the page, i.e. format; font; quality of captions, etc; lettering and the linework in figures; excessive or unsightly corrections. Pages must also be numbered.

The report must be spiral bound with a clear plastic front cover and a white card back cover. Binding is available in QB137. A declaration (See Appendix 8) that the dissertation has been prepared on the basis of the candidate's own work and that where other source materials have been used this has been acknowledged, should be completed and handed into the Departmental Office.
### 9.0 Sustainability Masters Coursework Deadlines 2017-18

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<th>Date &amp; Time</th>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>Coursework</th>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday 26th October–</td>
<td>PSD / Sus &amp; Man</td>
<td>GG5307 Formative Essay</td>
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<td>Tuesday 31st October –</td>
<td>PSD / Sus &amp; Man</td>
<td>GG5304 Risk Assess &amp; Volunteer Project proposal*</td>
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<td>Wednesday 6th Dec</td>
<td>PSD / Sus &amp; Man</td>
<td>GG5402 Dissertation Proposal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday 8th Jan – 4pm</td>
<td>PSD</td>
<td>GG5404 GIS commentary &amp; map</td>
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<td>Monday 8th Jan – 4pm</td>
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<td>GG5307 essay</td>
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<td>Monday 19th Feb – 4pm</td>
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<td>GG5304 Volunteer Project Posters</td>
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<td>GG5308 essay</td>
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<td>GG5407 slide pack</td>
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<td>PSD / Sus &amp; Man</td>
<td>GG5308 policy briefing</td>
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<td>Monday 23rd April – 4pm</td>
<td>PSD / Sus &amp; Man</td>
<td>GG5406 report</td>
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<td>Wednesday 25th April –</td>
<td>PSD / Sus &amp; Man</td>
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<td>Thursday 26th April –</td>
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<td>GG5304 Volunteer Project Report</td>
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<td>Monday 7th May</td>
<td>PSD / Sus &amp; Man</td>
<td>GG5402 Dissertation Proposal Presentation*</td>
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<td>Thursday 30th August –</td>
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* Indicates that Turnitin submission is not required.

**NB. School of Management Deadlines will be given by relevant course leaders.**
APPENDIX 1 GENERAL READING LIST

General Textbooks relevant to the course


Conway, G. and Waage, J. (2010) Science and Innovation for Development. London: UKCDs. [Focuses on innovation, the relevant MDGs, and climate change]


APPENDIX 2 GG5304: INDIVIDUAL COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER PROJECT DETAILS

Individual Community Volunteer Project Assessment:
Each student should identify an individual community volunteer project of personal interest with a non-governmental organisation (NGO). The organisation can be a third sector / charitable organisation or a For Profit organisation in a ‘sustainability’ related field. The aim of this assignment is to allow students to actively engage with an issue of sustainability in practice and to reflect on that involvement. Sustainability is broadly defined so the project can include social as well as environmentally themed projects – there are many organisations out there so select one that is of particular interest to you.
Each student needs to volunteer for a minimum of 24 hours on a project with an organisation of their individual choice. Please note that you may exceed this minimum requirement. Past years have shown that the more time you put into the volunteer project the more that you are likely to get out of it, improving the quality of your final report.
Students should keep a reflective journal (see also p.57 below) covering why you chose the organisation and including a brief recounting of what you did and your thoughts about your experiences. This will aid you when producing the final report and must be submitted with the final report (see details below).

Why is a community volunteer project a mandatory part of the course?
NGOs are a key stakeholder group that seeks to action positive change for issues of sustainability. Throughout this course we are exploring theory and practice of sustainability and this experience gives you the opportunity to be directly involved with an NGO of your choice and better understand operation, logistical and strategic challenges.
Beyond the learning benefits the project offers additional practical benefits to you. Many businesses (and also governments) are increasingly partnering with NGOs to further their CSR profile; if you have an understanding of how an NGO works you will be better positioned to establish such relationships in your future careers. The volunteering experience is a work related experience that can be added to your CV and help you stand out amongst other candidates for jobs. The volunteering experience also allows you to establish networks within an NGO community of interest to you, potentially opening up opportunities in the future.

Practicalities of the Assignment
Before volunteering you are required to complete a risk assessment, which is due 31st October with a 250 word summary of your project. You may complete and submit these earlier if you wish to begin your volunteering before October 31st.

Activities throughout the year are designed to support your work with the volunteer project:
- Thursday 19th October: In-class tutorial on how to properly complete risk assessment
- Tuesday 31st October: Risk assessment and 250 word summary that details project due. Formative comments on 250 word summaries returned by November 20th
- For guidance and forms see: [http://www.rhul.ac.uk/geography/currentstudents/departmentalhsforstudents/departmentalhsforstudents.aspx](http://www.rhul.ac.uk/geography/currentstudents/departmentalhsforstudents/departmentalhsforstudents.aspx)
- Thursday 8th February from 12:00-1:00 p.m. – Poster session. Jenny Kynaston will go through how to construct a poster. This is an extremely useful session so make sure that you attend. Location to be confirmed.
Monday 19th February: – Posters due (A4 size poster print-out, turnitin text and pdf on USB of full size poster).

Thursday March 8th: – Poster presentation + celebration of sustainability volunteering event. Please note that full size posters will be produced by the Dept. from your USB submitted on Feb 20th.

Thursday 26th April: – 2000 word volunteer project report due (75% of the assignment mark).

You may ask the lecturers questions about your project during office hours. You should also use the Moodle Social Forum to share your questions, experiences etc.

Your poster (25% of assignment mark) will be graded based on how well you convey information about your project in a manner that is visually appealing to poster viewers. Your poster should contain information on your organisation, what you did, what you learned and how it relates to key themes from class and should include references.

Your individual project report of 2000 words (75% of assignment mark) will be graded based on:

1) Quality of your project report, which should:
   a. Provide a brief account of your work,
   b. Spend more space reflecting on your experiences, what you learned and how this volunteer work relates to wider debates such as governance for sustainability, social and environmental justice. Hence, you should engage with relevant literature to frame the relevance of your project;

2) Letter of reference from an individual at the organisation where you volunteered that confirms you volunteered for the minimum requirement;

3) Blue sheet that records dates and hours that you volunteered, signed by you and your supervisor;

4) You must also submit your volunteer journal (e.g. this should be reflexive and include details about what you did and your thoughts on your experiences). The journal will not be formally assessed but it is required for the assignment to be considered complete and for your project report to be graded.
“Never doubt that a small group of committed individuals can change the world; in fact they are the only ones that ever have”. – Margaret Mead

**WHAT IS COMMUNITY SERVICE-LEARNING?**

Service-learning is a method by which students learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized community involvement opportunities that are conducted in and meet the needs of communities and are coordinated with local community-based organizations. Service-learning helps foster civic responsibility, enhances the academic curriculum by connecting academic theory with social experience; and includes structured academic time in which students reflect on the service experience. Your individual volunteer project is a great way to enhance your study of sustainability combining “real world” involvement and interaction with reflective learning. It is also a great way for you to couple your larger personal and career goals with a classroom experience.

You are receiving credit for the learning connected to your experience in the community. Hence, you are graded on your project report and volunteer log. Think of your experience as a type of text that you are learning from – instead of reading it you are living it. You need to articulate and connect your experiences from theories you have learned from your readings and classes to the individual project report, so be certain to select a project where you can articulate its relevance to issues of sustainability.

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1Handout adapted from University of Minnesota’s Community Involvement and Service Learning Website. See: [http://www.servicelearning.umn.edu/info/](http://www.servicelearning.umn.edu/info/) [16 August 2016].
Getting Started
Your first task will be to think about the kind of organisation that you would like to work for. There are many sustainability-related third sector organisations with a wide range of missions, aims and practices. An obvious starting point is an internet search for charities / NGOs in your area if you wish to carry out your volunteering near where you live. Global and national charities such as Greenpeace, Oxfam, British Trust for Conservation Volunteers and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, may have a branch near you. You can pick any organisation provided that they are a non-profit making organisation and are involved in some form of sustainability such as social, environmental or economic sustainability. Previous students have chosen a wide range of organisations including; Afrika Tikkun
Age UK
British Heart Foundation
British Trust for Conservation Volunteers
Business in the Community
Cancer Research
Environmental Justice Foundation
FareShare
Friends of the Earth
Greenpeace Campaigns
Greenpeace local groups
Groundwork
Lattitude
MaidEnergy Cooperative
National Trust
Oxfam
Oxfam shops
People’s Supermarket
Prince’s Countryside Fund
Sue Ryder Foundation
Thames 21
The Conservation Volunteers
This is just a small selection and there are many organisations out there! For community near campus you can also contact the RHUL Community Action team who have a list of contacts for local community partners at http://www.rhul.ac.uk/volunteering/home.aspx. Once you have identified an organisation, you should contact them via phone or email. In your communication, let them know why you are interested in volunteering there. When you call them, be certain to have your diary ready so you can arrange an initial meeting to get oriented to the organisation. Make sure you know where it is located and how to get there (nearest bus stop or tube station). On your first visit to the organisation you should arrange a regular volunteer schedule and complete any paperwork required by the organisation. Let your supervisor know when you have course work essays due or when you will be away on holiday.

*Remember to complete your risk assessment and submit it before beginning to volunteer!* Please remember that you will be expected to act in a professional manner while working with community leaders and fellow citizens. Based upon past service-learning experiences,
students have found the following tips worth re-stating:

- Be on time to your schedules volunteer commitments. People are counting on you and it is disrespectful to be late.

- Be respectful of the people you are working with, regardless of differences in language, custom, religion, socioeconomic status, ability, etc. For many people, working in communities that they are unfamiliar with results in conscious or unconscious levels of anxiety or fear. Please do not ignore these feelings. Whether you realize it or not, this often surfaces in body language and actions you may not be conscious of doing, such as standing back and not jumping into the work being done. If you know yourself well enough to think this may be the case for you, find out if another person in the class is going to the site you want to work with and arrange to go together.

- Be courteous and treat your work at the organization as if it were a job. If you are sick, please call the organization to let them know that you will not be able to make your schedules meeting time.

- Be up-front about your concerns or problems you may be having with an organization. While it may be difficult to discuss these types of things with people you do not know well, confronting problems head on is often more beneficial than letting a situation get out of hand or impossible to live with. If you are uncomfortable addressing something alone, please speak to me.

- Please let organizations know when you have coursework assignments due, especially if these things infringe on your ability to make your prior commitments.

- Please do not just stop showing up at the project when your 24 hour minimum commitment is reached. You must arrange an end of your commitment and give them reasonable notice of your last day. Be mindful of the commitment you made to an organization and the person or people you are doing work with. Many hope you will continue working with them past the duration of the class – the 24 hours is a minimum. If you enjoy it you could volunteer more.

Questions to Ask Yourself Before Starting Community Work

Note, please take the time to complete these responses as this can be included in your notebook log and will be useful to get the most out of your volunteer experience. Looking back at these responses will also be useful towards your project write-up.

- What expectations do you have for your volunteer role? Are these reasonable?

- What are you looking to learn about at your organization or from the people you’ll be working with? Share this with your volunteer supervisor at the NGO so he or she can help you fulfil your learning goals.

- What do you think you will be doing and what impact do you think will you have? How likely do you think this will be given the amount of time you will be spending at the organization?
• What preconceptions do you have about the population or neighbourhood in which you will be working and the other volunteers that you will be working with? How have these preconceptions been formed? Note, when you are complete with your project, consider how these ideas have changed.

• What preconceptions do you have about the NGO you selected? How have you formed these preconceptions? Note, when you are complete with your project, consider how these ideas have changed.

Suggestions for Integrating Yourself into the Organisation
Open yourself to learning from the organisation in which you are working. Orient yourself to the physical and social environments of the organization. It helps to know how the overall organization operates so you are able to understand how your role in the organization is contributing to larger organizational goals. Get acquainted with as many people as possible, doing so will help you gain a broader perspective on how your organization operates. Keep your ears and mind open. Be conscious of how you contribute. Listen and be sensitive to the reactions your ideas receive. Be positive; people want solution-givers, not problem-starters. Observe others at work and offer to help out when you are able.

Be Your Own Advocate – Ways to Solve and Overcome Frustrations
Ask Questions! Talk to your site coordinator, and other students; ask them for suggestions on how to get to know the people at your organization better.
Say hello first! You may not realize it but people who are at the site may be just as hesitant to greet you not because they do not want to get to know you but rather because you are a new face.
Learn people’s names! Knowing a name can go a long way so make an effort to remember people’s names. It is the first step in getting to know people and make any environment more comfortable (for you and others).
Show Interest! Many people at various sites see people come and go regularly so truthfully if you are expecting to form a meaningful relationship with someone you need to prove that you care about who they are.
Be Patient! Remember that friendships or any relationship do not happen overnight, they take time. It is through constant effort and time that relationships are developed. Also do not expect that it is the organization’s responsibility to make you comfortable (they already are). It is also your responsibility to get to know the people you will be working with at your organization.

Knowledge of [another] culture should sharpen our ability to scrutinize more steadily, to appreciate more lovingly our own. – Margaret Mead

Authentically Addressing Diversity and Multiculturalism in Service-Learning
Multiculturalism in service-learning requires that we each look at our own privileged and marginalized identities and the ways in which these identities impact our participation in communities and in service-learning. According to Sweitzer and King (2009; 75), “everyone carries some stereotypes and prejudices, ... If you work at it, you can learn to see your
prejudices and make progress in overcoming them. However, at the same time, you will surely discover other, more subtle ones. The first step, though, toward being a non-prejudiced person is to confront and accept the prejudices you have”. Understanding your culture is an intrinsic part of deciphering your identity and how you perceive the world and the people around you. Culture refers to the shared values, norms, traditions, customs, art, history, folklore and institution of a group or people”. Each individual’s cultural self is a complex interplay among multiple identities constructed by sexual orientation, nationality, race, class, gender, religion, age, etc.

Wilson, Hants & Hanna (1998) identify several potential cross-cultural communication difficulties that may arise during your service-learning experience. Understanding these can help you avoid negative experiences and avoid offending other people while you are in the community:

- Ethnocentrism is the tendency to view people of other cultures through one’s own cultural perspective. We tend to view and judge people from our own view of how the world should operate.
- When another’s behaviour is not consistent with our expectations, we assume there is something wrong with that person. This perspective may be particularly true of individuals who have had limited exposure to people different from themselves.
- Rules and norms are different for different groups. Difficulties arise when people violate the expected cultural rules and customs. These rules or customs can include verbal and nonverbal communication differences.

**Learning From Cross-Cultural Communication Differences**

- Learn rules of culture or group.
- Show respect for traditions, avoid imposing your culture and value system on others.
- Observe carefully. There is no substitute for observing the culture you are attempting to understand.
- Tolerate differences. Each of us carries an image of the world in our heads, and an image of how we believe the world is supposed to be. Accept others and allow them to have their own views without judging those views as unacceptable.
- Develop flexibility. Don’t feel threatened by others and become defensive.
- Convey a genuine interest in understanding the other culture.

**Developing Your Observation Skills**

Learning how to “read” your community organization placement and the experiences you have while doing your community work is extremely important to the effectiveness academic community-based learning. “Reading” your community site means uncovering details about the organization you are working at to help make sense of that organization. By developing observations skills you will be able to make more sense of the theories learned from class. Often students try to take the theories learned from class and try to directly apply them to the organization, however, it is best to take your observations from the organization and see what you are able to apply to your class. The best service-learning experiences come when you work, critically and objectively observe and then reflect on your experiences. Using all of these stages throughout your service-learning experience will increase the amount of information you learn and improve your class and community experience.

- Increase your patience in order to slow down and watch;
- Pay close attention to your physical surroundings: who, what, when, where & how;
• Be aware of people’s reactions, emotions & motivations;
• Ask questions that can be answered through observing;
• Be yourself;
• Observe with an optimistic curiosity; and
• Be ethical.

Sample Observation Questions:
What is the mission of the organization (e.g. the agency’s purpose)?
How does the organization fulfil its mission? Does it do what it attests to do?
Who make up the population the organization works with?
What are the characteristics of the client population?
Where is the organization located?
What does the neighbourhood look like? Smell like? Sound like?
How does the organization interact with the surrounding community?
What resources are in the community?
What is the proportion of paid staff to volunteers in the organization?
What is the structure of the organization?
How is the organization funded?
How dynamic and innovative is the organization? What evidence do you have to justify this statement?

You are asked to reflect in your project report: What is reflection?
When getting involved with a service-learning course, it is helpful to keep in mind one of the most important aspects of the learning process: analytic reflection. This reflection process can take many forms, including class presentations, volunteer log notebook, reflective project reports, and class discussions. The reflective process has the key guideline that you should link your experience to theories and issues of sustainability. Although the volunteer project is a valuable experience in itself, reflecting upon and analysing your experiences can take your understanding to the next level, and can often provide unexpected realizations.

Use your volunteer journal.
Some students, for example, have discovered that the preconceptions they held about certain issues at their site changed drastically between the beginning of their volunteer project and the end. One student recognized a change in his beliefs in the thirteenth week of class, and then described his observation in a log entry:
“Before taking this class I had previous ideas on the reasons behind homelessness, poverty and illiteracy, which I will not mention here. Many of these ideas came from sources such as the news or television, and I have come to see that they are generally wrong”.
Looking back on what you have accomplished at your learning site and reflecting upon these service-learning experiences can give tremendous insight into any changes that may have occurred over time. And although such changes are not always immediately obvious, they can often be seen much more clearly by reviewing your past writings, and then making comparisons between specific issues. Maintaining a good volunteer journal will allow you to track your learning and change through the experience over time. It will help you to write a better report – indeed, you can quote yourself from your log notebook in your write-up to help illustrate your points.
Part of reflection is identifying challenges that you may encounter during your volunteering.
It is important that you record these in your volunteer log as you can track your experiences and reflective learning over time. Another important component of your reflection is to record things that you found surprising as it is through the unexpected that you can examine your preconceptions and demonstrate your learning process.

**Yours responsibilities**
Take your volunteer project seriously. Approach your position as you would any job – arrive on time and prepared to work. Never report to your organisation under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
Expect uncertainty at first. Your level of comfort with the task and the organisation will increase over time. Maintain a positive attitude and keep things in perspective. Deal with concerns as they arise – seek guidance from the supervisor of your organisation.

**Take care of your personal safety and health at all times.** Do not allow yourself to be in compromising situations (e.g. avoid lifting something too heavy; working alone in a building or a task where you may require assistance; being asked to work in an unsafe location or late at night). If you have any concerns you should avoid the compromising situation – it is OK to say ‘no’ to something which you feel may compromise your health or safety. For example, you could say, “I’m sorry, I think that is too heavy for me to lift”, or “I’m sorry, I’m not comfortable to go canvassing on my own”. Explain to your supervisor your concerns. You can also contact your lecturer to discuss concerns if you feel you need outside intervention.
You will have completed a risk assessment before you begin volunteering so you shall have the opportunity to formally reflect on, be aware of and prepared for risks.

**Urban Street Smarts**
Stay alert at all times. Be aware of your surroundings and trust your instincts.
Appear confident and comfortable. Do not bring valuables or other items which make you appear like an outsider in the community. Give your schedule to a roommate or a friend and include the phone number of the organisation so that someone knows your location. Develop a community safety net – identify people, places and things that can be of assistance in a time of need (e.g. police station, phones, etc.).

**Traveling to your organisation**
Research your route ahead of time and get clear directions on how to find the organisation. Be sure to ask where to park or where to get off the bus/tube if you are taking public transport. Watch who gets on/off the bus with you – if you feel uneasy then walk directly to a place where there are other people. If you feel that someone is following you, do not go home. Go to the nearest police station or open business and ask for help. If you are uncomfortable going to your organisation alone, see if others in the class are also volunteering at the organisation and try to travel together.

**Take precautions to avoid risks and uncomfortable situations**
Avoid one-on-one situations – try to be part of a group. Respect people’s boundaries, including your own. For example, you do not need to tell the organisation if you live alone. Report any incidents, real or perceived, that make you feel uncomfortable. You can either report them to your supervisor at the organisation or your lecturer.

Mike Dolton September 2017
APPENDIX 3 GUIDELINES FOR WRITTEN COURSEWORK

All coursework must be typed or word-processed in double spacing. Be sure that the printer is producing a dark, easily readable text. Examiners will give specific attention to the following points:

**Structure:** Written work should have a clear structure, with an introduction, key elements of the work and a conclusion.

**Argument and evidence:** many written assignments are expected to develop a line of reasoning that is supported by appropriate evidence. You will be assessed on the extent to which you have used various sources of evidence to contribute to the overall argument and analysis. You are encouraged to include professional and personal experiences in your written work, but they must be reported as such and clearly be related to the arguments being made.

**Analysis, synthesis and evaluation:** You will be expected to be critical within the arguments you make, and be able to evaluate evidence and argue alternative approaches. Examiners are looking for signs of original thinking. This might entail the reappraisal of existing or presentation of new data to provide new insights into current ideas, understandings and debates.

**Referencing:** Sources of information must be clearly identified within the text. Unsupported assertions must be avoided. Full references must be listed in proper form in the bibliography at the end. See Section 8.4 for more guidance on referencing.

**Illustrations:** Figures and tables can be used to support the text. These may be original or may be taken or copied from existing sources, with due acknowledgement. Be sure that illustrations are adequately explained, e.g. include such essentials as scales, orientation, etc., as well as captions.

**Presentation:** This includes the general layout and style, as well as spelling and grammar.
APPENDIX 4 GUIDELINES FOR ORAL PRESENTATIONS

Oral presentations will play an important part of your assessed work. Examiners will give specific attention to the following points:

**Content:** The content should be relevant and focused. Sufficient and appropriate material should be used to illustrate arguments and concepts. Use of experience and critical reflection on material is encouraged. Sources should be acknowledged in the presentation and/or handout.

**Argument:** The presentation should have a coherent argument, and material should be organised and structured to aid in the comprehension of the argument. Examiners will be looking for evidence of analysis and interpretation, not just description. The presentation should have a clear structure, with an introduction and conclusion.

**Presentation:** Examiners will be looking for clarity and audibility in the presentation. Pace should be appropriate for the allocated time, and there should be sufficient time for questions and interaction with the audience at the end. You are encouraged to use audio-visual aids but they need to be appropriate and well handled. You are also encouraged to extemporise rather than read direct from your notes.
APPENDIX 5 GUIDELINES FOR POSTERS

General points
Ensure clarity of purpose
Appropriate use of figures and legends
Small amount of legible text

Make sure it is:
Readable – use clear language, good grammar in all poster text
Legible – all poster text should be readable from 5 feet away
Well-organized – group items logically, visually for maximum impact
Succinct – you have 10 seconds to grab your audience’s attention

Layout
Be consistent with your layout. You can use numbers and arrow to direct the reader but make sure the start point is obvious.

Use of colour, diagrams and fonts
Use colour, photos, diagrams, graphs to support your poster but try not to make it too fussy looking. Stick to two or at most, three colours for text and graphical elements. Some people are colour blind (red/green or totally) - e.g. for multiline graphs use different colours and different line styles.

Be careful on which colours use side by side as they can make information difficult to read - general text and background colours should contrast. Dark backgrounds require good production, so be careful.
Blocks of text with all caps are hard to read, so avoid. Try and use an easy to read font style and don’t mix fonts without good reason.

Criteria used for marking posters
1) focus - the topic is very clear when you first look at it; clarity of title
2) content - the main ideas are appropriate to the topic and presented correctly
3) supporting details - appropriate and accurate details support each main idea
4) effectiveness of text- clear; appropriate font size, terse but readable
5) drawings and illustrations - all illustrations, photographs and drawings add to the purpose and interest of the poster
6) standard of written English - spelling and grammar
7) layout and design - the overall organisation, design, use of colour and use of space help to make the poster interesting and to communicate the message
8) general presentation - the poster is well presented and clear
9) further information - appropriate references for further information are included.
## APPENDIX 6 Assessment Scheme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree Class</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>%age</th>
<th>Grade Description for Written Papers</th>
<th>Grade Description for Oral Presentations</th>
<th>Grade Description for Dissertation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High Distinction</td>
<td>A+</td>
<td>85+</td>
<td>Exceptional degree of understanding of the issues, concepts and underlying principles; exceptional degree of creativity, originality and independence of thought; penetrating analysis and synthesis is demonstrated in the selection, interpretation and evaluation of source material; excellently presented; referencing and bibliography of exemplary standard; incisive and fluent style, with no or very minor errors of spelling, punctuation or grammar, and within word limit. Publishable quality.</td>
<td>Original and thought-provoking presentation, identifying subtleties in details of the assignment; clear and original structure of content and conclusions; ideas linked coherently and conducted with confidence; evidence of comprehensive research and original thought in analysis, synthesis and evaluation; pitch of voice, pace and audio-visual aids used to professional standard in presentational quality and mode of use; encouraged appropriate involvement and questioning, answering with authority and/or originality.</td>
<td>Exceptional degree of understanding of the subject area; exceptional degree of creativity, originality and independence of thought in the construction of research aims and questions, and in the analysis or interpretation; ability to plan, organise and execute research independently to the highest professional standards; ability to evaluate critically research design, methodology and published work; penetrating analysis of primary sources of literature and information; professionally presented, with referencing and bibliography of exemplary standard; incisive and fluent style; no errors of spelling, punctuation or grammar and within word limit. Publishable quality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distinction</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>75-84</td>
<td>Deep understanding of the issues, concepts and underlying principles; evidence of originality or imaginative insights; substantial evidence of ability to analyse and synthesise is demonstrated in the selection, interpretation and evaluation of source material; excellently presented; referencing and bibliography of near-exemplary standard; incisive and fluent style, with no significant errors of spelling, punctuation or grammar, and within word limit.</td>
<td>Presentation addressed explicitly the topic, identifying subtleties in assignment details; evidence of original thought with respect to structure of content and conclusions; clear and appropriate structure of presentation ideas linked coherently; explicit and relevant synthesis, analysis and evaluation of a broad range of sources; clearly audible, appropriate pace and audio-visual aids used to a very high standard in presentational quality and mode of use; encouraged involvement and questioning, answering with knowledge and understanding.</td>
<td>Deep understanding of the subject area; significant evidence of originality in the construction of the research aims and questions; analysis or interpretation shows sustained evidence of originality or imaginative insights; substantial independent research conducted at a very high level of professional competence; critical understanding of research design and methodology; in-depth reading; excellently presented, with referencing and bibliography of exemplary standard; incisive and fluent style; no significant errors of spelling, punctuation or grammar, and within word limit. A dissertation graded at distinction should contain work of publishable quality.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A−</td>
<td>70-74</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pass (Good)</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>67-69</td>
<td>Clear understanding of the main issues, concepts and underlying principles; source material is carefully selected, interpreted and evaluated; some evidence of ability to analyse and synthesise is demonstrated in the selection, interpretation and evaluation of source material; well-presented; detailed referencing; properly formatted bibliography; fluent style; few errors of spelling, punctuation or grammar, and within word limit.</td>
<td>Explicitly addressed set topic; structure evident, but could be more focused; evidence of coherent links between ideas, commenced and concluded appropriately; included relevant synthesis and analysis, and evidence of some evaluation; clearly audible, good pace and audio-visual aids used to increase effectiveness; encouraged appropriate involvement and questioning, answering with knowledge and understanding.</td>
<td>Good understanding of the subject area; some originality in the construction of its main research aims, questions and interpretations; substantial independent research conducted at a good level of professional competence; critical understanding of research design and methodology; coherent structure, in-depth reading; well-presented, with referencing in acceptable style and properly formatted bibliography;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>63-66</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grade</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Mark Range</td>
<td>Assessment Criteria</td>
<td>Example Response</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>Errors of spelling, punctuation or grammar, and within word limit.</td>
<td>60-62</td>
<td>Involved and questioning, demonstrating knowledge and understanding in answers.</td>
<td>Fluent style; few errors of spelling, punctuation or grammar, and within word limit.</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>The main issues and concepts are described coherently; limited synthesis and analysis of underlying principles; interpretation and evaluation of source material is attempted, though not pursued in depth; adequately presented; some referencing; short bibliography; straightforward style; some errors of spelling, punctuation or grammar, and within word limit.</td>
<td>57-59</td>
<td>Addressed the set topic; structure evident, but could be improved; evidence of coherent links between most ideas; included some synthesis and analysis, but could have been evaluated more effectively; audible for all the presentation, and audio-visual aids were used; pace not always appropriate and ran over/under time; audience needs not well gauged, and limited encouragement to participate/question, answering with basic understanding.</td>
<td>Clear understanding of the subject area; clear formulation of its main research aims and questions; coherent but limited interpretation / analysis; significant independent research conducted at an adequate level of professional competence; a considered research design and methodology; evidence of satisfactory reading; adequately presented, some referencing and short bibliography; straightforward style; some errors of spelling, punctuation or grammar, and within word limit.</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Insufficient understanding of the main issues and concepts; serious weakness in coverage, content, internal consistency and organization; inadequate or uncritical use of source materials; little synthesis and analysis of underlying principles; limited interpretation and evaluation of source material, significant weaknesses in presentation; little or no referencing; inadequate or absent bibliography; simple style; significant errors of spelling, punctuation or grammar. Not within word limit.</td>
<td>53-56</td>
<td>Partially addressed the set topic; some evidence of structure, but presentation partially rambling or unfocused; ideas could have been linked more coherently; included little or no analysis or evaluation; presentation slightly inaudible, and audio-visual aids not very effective; presentation ran over/under time; audience needs not taken into account in design of the presentation; no attempt made to encourage appropriate audience involvement and questioning, and some weaknesses in basic understanding indicated in answers.</td>
<td>Insufficient understanding of the subject area; confused or vague research aims and questions; interpretation of source material weak or uncritical; poor quality of independent research; serious weaknesses in coverage and organization; poor use of literature and inadequate wider reading; significant weaknesses in presentation; little or no referencing and an inadequate or absent bibliography; simple style; significant errors of spelling, punctuation or grammar. Not within word limit.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>Insufficient understanding of the main issues and concepts; serious weakness in coverage, content, internal consistency and organization; inadequate or uncritical use of source materials; little synthesis and analysis of underlying principles; limited interpretation and evaluation of source material, significant weaknesses in presentation; little or no referencing; inadequate or absent bibliography; simple style; significant errors of spelling, punctuation or grammar. Not within word limit.</td>
<td>50-52</td>
<td>Partially addressed the set topic; some evidence of structure, but presentation partially rambling or unfocused; ideas could have been linked more coherently; included little or no analysis or evaluation; presentation slightly inaudible, and audio-visual aids not very effective; presentation ran over/under time; audience needs not taken into account in design of the presentation; no attempt made to encourage appropriate audience involvement and questioning, and some weaknesses in basic understanding indicated in answers.</td>
<td>Insufficient understanding of the subject area; confused or vague research aims and questions; interpretation of source material weak or uncritical; poor quality of independent research; serious weaknesses in coverage and organization; poor use of literature and inadequate wider reading; significant weaknesses in presentation; little or no referencing and an inadequate or absent bibliography; simple style; significant errors of spelling, punctuation or grammar. Not within word limit.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F+</td>
<td>Very limited understanding of the main issues and concepts; profound weakness in coverage, content, internal consistency, and organization; almost no evidence of independent or original thought; little evidence of engaging with source materials; poorly presented; little or no referencing; inadequate or absent bibliography; sketchy style; significant errors of spelling, punctuation or grammar. Not within word limit.</td>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>Largely failed to address the set topic; rambling or unfocused, no real structure; included little or no analysis or evaluation; partially inaudible and audio-visual aids not used, or used ineffectively; presentation ran severely over/under time; no attempt to gauge audience needs in design of the presentation; no attempt to encourage audience participation and questioning, and answers largely erroneous or had little or not relevance to the topic.</td>
<td>Very limited understanding of the subject area; no evident research aims or questions; very limited interpretation of source material; insufficient independent research; profound weaknesses in coverage and organization; poorly presented; little or no referencing and an inadequate or absent bibliography; sketchy style; significant errors of spelling, punctuation or grammar. Not within word limit.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Very limited understanding of the main issues and concepts; profound weakness in coverage, content, internal consistency, and organization; almost no evidence of independent or original thought; little evidence of engaging with source materials; poorly presented; little or no referencing; inadequate or absent bibliography; sketchy style; significant errors of spelling, punctuation or grammar. Not within word limit.</td>
<td>20-39</td>
<td>Largely failed to address the set topic; rambling or unfocused, no real structure; included little or no analysis or evaluation; partially inaudible and audio-visual aids not used, or used ineffectively; presentation ran severely over/under time; no attempt to gauge audience needs in design of the presentation; no attempt to encourage audience participation and questioning, and answers largely erroneous or had little or not relevance to the topic.</td>
<td>Very limited understanding of the subject area; no evident research aims or questions; very limited interpretation of source material; insufficient independent research; profound weaknesses in coverage and organization; poorly presented; little or no referencing and an inadequate or absent bibliography; sketchy style; significant errors of spelling, punctuation or grammar. Not within word limit.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F-</td>
<td>Almost no understanding of the main issues and concept; confused and incoherent in coverage,</td>
<td>0-19</td>
<td>Presentation failed to address topic; very rambling and unfocused, no structure; included no analysis or</td>
<td>Almost no understanding of the subject area; confused and incoherent in coverage,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Almost no understanding of the main issues and concept; confused and incoherent in coverage,</td>
<td>0-19</td>
<td>Presentation failed to address topic; very rambling and unfocused, no structure; included no analysis or</td>
<td>Almost no understanding of the subject area; confused and incoherent in coverage,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F-</td>
<td>Almost no understanding of the main issues and concept; confused and incoherent in coverage,</td>
<td>0-19</td>
<td>Presentation failed to address topic; very rambling and unfocused, no structure; included no analysis or</td>
<td>Almost no understanding of the subject area; confused and incoherent in coverage,</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>content, consistency, and organization; totally devoid of independent or original thought; no evidence of engaging with source materials; poorly presented; no referencing; inadequate or absent bibliography; inadequate style; significant errors</td>
<td>evaluation; presentation was fully or partially inaudible; equipment and/or audio-visual aids were not used, or used ineffectively; presentation ran severely over/under time; audience needs not taken into account in designing presentation; no attempt made to encourage appropriate audience involvement and questioning, and unable or unwilling to answer questions.</td>
<td>consistency and organization; totally devoid of independent or original thought. Insufficient independent research; no evidence of engaging with source materials; poorly presented, with no referencing of sources and an inadequate or absent bibliography; inadequate style; significant errors of spelling, punctuation or grammar. Not within word limit.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Class</td>
<td>Grade</td>
<td>%age</td>
<td>Grade Descriptors for Poster presentations</td>
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<tr>
<td>High distinction</td>
<td>A+</td>
<td>85-100</td>
<td>Approaching professional standards for a poster presentation. Aim of poster very apparent from immediate impressions. Exceptional degree of creativity, originality and independence of thought; excellent summary of main ideas; significant evidence of further reading, with excellent synthesis of supporting information; text excellently presented, quantity and font size extremely effective; clear, relevant illustrations that enhance purpose and interest of poster; no grammatical or spelling errors; innovative poster design, allows rapid communication of message; very neat and presentable; good source of further information and excellently presented bibliography</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Distinction</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>76-84</td>
<td>Aim of poster very apparent from immediate impressions; excellent summary of main ideas; significant evidence of further reading, with well synthesised supporting information; text excellently presented, quantity and font size extremely effective; clear, relevant illustrations that enhance purpose and interest of poster; no grammatical or spelling errors; innovative poster design, allows rapid communication of message; very neat and presentable; good source of further information and excellently presented bibliography</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>70-75</td>
<td>Aim of poster very clear; good summary of main ideas; evidence of further reading, with good supporting information given; text well presented, quantity and font size effective; clear, relevant illustrations that add to purpose and interest of poster; few grammatical or spelling errors; very good poster design, allows communication of message; neat and presentable; some further information and bibliography well presented</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pass (Merit)</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>67-69</td>
<td>Aim of poster clear, main ideas appropriate to topic, and presented correctly; some evidence of further reading, with general supporting information given; text adequately presented, quantity and font size appropriate; some illustrations that add to purpose of poster; some grammatical or spelling errors; good poster design, allows communication of message; neat and presentable; some further information and adequate bibliography</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>63-66</td>
<td>Aim of poster clear, main ideas appropriate to topic, and presented correctly; some evidence of further reading, with general supporting information given; text adequately presented, quantity and font size appropriate; some illustrations that add to purpose of poster; some grammatical or spelling errors; good poster design, allows communication of message; neat and presentable; some further information and adequate bibliography</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>60-62</td>
<td>Aim of poster clear, main ideas appropriate to topic, and presented correctly; some evidence of further reading, with general supporting information given; text adequately presented, quantity and font size appropriate; some illustrations that add to purpose of poster; some grammatical or spelling errors; good poster design, allows communication of message; neat and presentable; some further information and adequate bibliography</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pass (satisfactory)</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>57-59</td>
<td>Aim of poster clear, main ideas appropriate to topic, and presented correctly; some evidence of further reading, with general supporting information given; text adequately presented, quantity and font size appropriate; some illustrations that add to purpose of poster; some grammatical or spelling errors; good poster design, allows communication of message; neat and presentable; some further information and adequate bibliography</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>53-56</td>
<td>Aim of poster clear, main ideas appropriate to topic, and presented correctly; some evidence of further reading, with general supporting information given; text adequately presented, quantity and font size appropriate; some illustrations that add to purpose of poster; some grammatical or spelling errors; good poster design, allows communication of message; neat and presentable; some further information and adequate bibliography</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>50-52</td>
<td>Aim of poster clear, main ideas appropriate to topic, and presented correctly; some evidence of further reading, with general supporting information given; text adequately presented, quantity and font size appropriate; some illustrations that add to purpose of poster; some grammatical or spelling errors; good poster design, allows communication of message; neat and presentable; some further information and adequate bibliography</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pass mark 50</td>
<td>F+</td>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>Title given, but unclear what the poster is about; main ideas appropriate to topic; little evidence of further reading, little supporting information given; text reasonably presented, quantity and font size adequate; few illustrations, some appropriate; many grammatical and/or spelling errors; reasonable poster design, allows communication of message; basically presentable; little further information and inadequate bibliography</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fail</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>20-39</td>
<td>Main ideas inappropriate to topic with evidence of error and confusion; no evidence of further reading, little supporting information given; text may be ineffective, too small, unclear; few or no illustrations, uninformative or irrelevant; significant errors of spelling, punctuation and/or grammar; poor poster design, hinders communication of message; untidy, messy; no bibliography or further information included</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fail (poor)</td>
<td>F-</td>
<td>0-20</td>
<td>May lack title; main ideas inappropriate to topic; error and confusion throughout; no supporting information given; text ineffective, too small, unclear; few or no illustrations, uninformative or irrelevant; significant errors of spelling, punctuation and/or grammar; poor poster design, hinders communication of message; untidy, messy; no bibliography or further information included</td>
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<tr>
<td>Degree Class</td>
<td>Grade</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>Grade description for Volunteer Project Report</td>
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<tr>
<td>High Distinction</td>
<td>A+</td>
<td>85+</td>
<td>Clear, well-structured reports; evidence of exceptional awareness of research agenda in the given area; clear project context; comprehensive literature base and contextualisation of the study within the wider themes and debates identified in literature; detailed description; excellent structure, logical arguments presented; excellent reflexive discussion of the volunteer experience. Communication of results; excellent spelling, grammar and written style; clear, informative graphics / illustration which clearly enhance the project aims.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Distinction</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>75-84</td>
<td>Clear, well-structured report; excellent summary of relevant literature; evidence of wider awareness of research agenda in the given area; clear project context, wide literature base and contextualisation of the study within the wider themes and debates identified in literature; detailed description; excellent structure, logical arguments presented; excellent reflexive discussion of the volunteer experience. Communication of results; excellent spelling, grammar and written style; clear, informative graphics / illustration which clearly enhance the project aims.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Merit (Good)</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>67-69</td>
<td>Clear, well-structured report; good summary of relevant literature; shows awareness of relevant debates in the literature; clear description; clear conclusions with links made to wider debates; clear structure and progression of arguments; good reflexive discussion of the volunteer experience; well organised; good spelling, grammar and written style; illustrations, maps and diagrams (where appropriate) are clear, relevant, well-produced and a clear aid to understanding results.</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>64-66</td>
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<td></td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>60-63</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pass (Satisfactory)</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>57-59</td>
<td>Clearly written report with reasonable scope, but could be better structured; reasonable awareness of literature on the topic; data/materials have reasonable descriptive and interpretative value; some reflexivity; reasonable progression of ideas and logical organisation; appropriate conclusions but may not sufficiently link to wider debates some errors in spelling, grammar or written style; relevant illustrations, maps and diagrams (where appropriate) cover essentials but could be clearer.</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>54-56</td>
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<td></td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>50-53</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pass mark 50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fail (Poor)</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>20-39</td>
<td>Very poor standard of writing which lacks scope; very little coverage of the topic; lacks clarity on relevant debates in the literature; data/materials have weak descriptive and interpretative value; lacks reflexivity; very weak progression of ideas and logical organisation; poor conclusions; numerous errors in spelling, grammar or written style; lacks illustrations, maps and diagrams (where appropriate). A basic report.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fail (Very Poor)</td>
<td>F-</td>
<td>0-19</td>
<td>Very poor standard of writing; confused and incoherent with little structure; no awareness of literature on the topic; data/materials lack descriptive and interpretative value; no reflexivity; lacks any progression of ideas and logical organisation; numerous errors in spelling, grammar or written style; lacks illustrations, maps and diagrams (where appropriate) inadequate or absent bibliography; significant errors.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grade</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Marking Criteria</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>A</strong></td>
<td>Outstanding performance in most criteria 1-7</td>
<td>An exemplary piece of work</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>B+</strong></td>
<td>Evidence of excellence in most criteria 1-7</td>
<td>Good performance in most criteria 1-7</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>B-</strong></td>
<td>Evidence of excellence in some criteria, particularly 1-5</td>
<td>Good performance in some criteria, particularly 1-4</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>C+</strong></td>
<td>A good attempt but insufficient performance in criteria 2-5 for a 2.1</td>
<td>A good performance in some criteria, particularly 1-4</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>C</strong></td>
<td>Likely to be a lack of focus on the question (criterion 1) with insufficient evidence in criteria 2-5 to merit a 2.2</td>
<td>Weak performance in some criteria, in particular 1-4</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>C-</strong></td>
<td>Likely to be weak in all criteria but there is sufficient material for the work to merit a pass.</td>
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</table>

**Criteria**

- **1st Class**
  - Deep understanding; near-comprehensive knowledge; significant originality in interpretation or analysis. Intensive, detailed and critical use of literature and data with independent reading beyond reading lists. Deep awareness of all key debates in the literature and policy context. High levels of ability in effective communication with excellent use of language, structure and design; incisive and fluent style. Excellent presented (may show significant innovation in presentation); excellent choice of figures/tables that clearly strengthen the communication of the briefing; excellent spelling and grammar. Referencing and bibliography usually of exemplary standard.
  - Grade: A
  - %: 90+%

- **Merit (Good)**
  - Deep understanding; detailed knowledge; may show some originality in interpretation or analysis. In-depth reading (with either independent reading beyond reading lists or intensive, detailed and critical reading of suggested material). Clear awareness of most key debates in the literature and policy context. High levels of ability in effective communication with good use of language, structure and design; incisive and fluent style. Excellent presented (may show some innovation in presentation); good choice of figures/tables that strengthen the communication of the briefing; excellent spelling and grammar. Referencing and bibliography of near-exemplary standard.
  - Grade: A- |
  - %: 70-74%

- **Pass (Satisfactory)**
  - Demonstrates a general understanding and knowledge, with a focus on the assignment, but is mainly descriptive with insufficient critical insight or depth for a 2:1. May be some further reading and referencing but likely to draw heavily on lectures or other direct teaching. Limited awareness of wider debates and policy context. Familiarity with correct strategies for effective communication but possibly with errors in the use of language, structure and design; straightforward style. Adequate presentation; figures/tables are relevant to the topic and strengthen the communication of the briefing; good spelling and grammar. Detailed referencing; properly formatted bibliography.
  - Grade: C+ |
  - %: 57-59%

- **Pass mark 50**
  - V limited understanding of the topic; limited or no focus on the assignment (there may be sections with no relevance to the topic). There may be brief signs of understanding and some basic knowledge but likely to contain serious errors and lack of awareness of wider policy context. There could be referencing and evidence of further reading but the student has not really understood the assignment. Ineffective communication, inappropriate use of language, structure or design of briefing. Poorly presented; significant errors in spelling or grammar. Likely to be no referencing.
  - Grade: F+ |
  - %: 40-49%

- **Fail**
  - Poor performance in most criteria. Likely to be no referencing.
  - Grade: F |
  - %: 30-39%
Marking criteria

1. Focus on the assignment
2. Level of critical understanding of the topic
3. Effective communication including clarity, succinctness and appropriateness of language
4. Extent to which information is supported by understanding of the literature and data
5. Awareness of wider debates and the policy context
6. Effective presentation and design of briefing
7. Appropriate referencing and bibliography style
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Grade Descriptors Slide Packs</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Marking criteria</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>Some understanding and knowledge of the topic but likely to lack detail and clear focus on the assignment; may show misunderstanding of lecture material. No or very limited further reading, usually drawing exclusively on lectures or other direct teaching. Limited awareness of wider debates and policy context. Familiarity with correct strategies for effective communication but poorly executed with significant errors in the use of language, structure and design of the slides; simple style. Significant weaknesses in presentation; irrelevant figures/tables used; numerous errors in spelling or grammar. Confusing design and/or not appropriate for the topic. Little or no referencing; inadequate or absent bibliography.</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>54-56</td>
<td>Likely to be a lack of focus on the assignment (criterion 4) with insufficient evidence in criteria 2-5 to merit a 2.2. Weak performance in some criteria, in particular 1-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>Weak understanding; lack of focus on the assignment; sketchy coverage, with some significant errors in factual details. No further reading, drawing exclusively on lectures or other direct teaching, but with significant weaknesses. Lack of awareness of wider debates and policy context. Bare familiarity with correct strategies for effective communication, with substantial errors in use of language, structure and design of the slides; sketchy style. Poorly presented; numerous errors in spelling or grammar. Confusing design and/or not appropriate for the topic. Little or no referencing; inadequate or absent bibliography.</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>50-53</td>
<td>Likely to be weak in all criteria but there is sufficient material for the work to merit a pass.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fail</td>
<td>VI limited understanding of the topic; limited or no focus on the assignment (there may be sections with no relevance to the topic). There may be brief signs of understanding and some basic knowledge but likely to contain serious errors.</td>
<td>F+</td>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>Criteria 1-4 not addressed to a satisfactory level. Some elements of criteria 5-7 may be ok.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Grade Descriptors Slide Packs**

**Pass mark 50**
errors and lack of awareness of wider policy context. There could be referencing and evidence of further reading but the student has completely misunderstood the assignment. Ineffective communication, inappropriate use of language, structure or design of the slides. Poorly presented; with errors in design and layout directly affecting clarify. Significant errors in spelling or grammar. Likely to be no referencing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>F</th>
<th>30-39</th>
<th>Poor performance in most criteria.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work is unacceptable for the level. May be some vague knowledge of subject and policy context but likely to be irrelevant or confused. The examiner will have to search for material that is relevant to the assignment. Work may be unacceptably short. Usually poorly written and badly presented; with considerable errors in design and layout directly affecting clarity.</td>
<td>F-</td>
<td>20-29</td>
<td>V poor performance in most criteria. May have inadequate structure; or work is too short</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F-</td>
<td>1-19</td>
<td>May be largely irrelevant to the question, show minimal effort or be an incomplete piece of work</td>
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<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>No work submitted within 24 hours of the deadline</td>
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</table>

**Marking criteria**

1. Focus on the assignment
2. Level of critical understanding of the topic
3. Effective communication including clarity, succinctness and appropriateness of language
4. Extent to which information is supported by understanding of the literature and data
5. Awareness of wider debates and the policy context
6. Effective presentation and design of the slides
7. Appropriate referencing and bibliography style
### APPENDIX 7: EXAMPLE OF A COURSEWORK FEEDBACK FORM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate no.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essay title</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**First examiner’s comments:**

**Part A: Marking Criteria (see MSc Handbook)**

**Feedback:**

**1st Examiner’s mark:**

**2nd Examiner’s mark:**

**Agreed mark:**

**1st Examiner’s signature:**

**Examiner’s signature:**
ROYAL HOLLOWAY, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

Department of Geography

MSC Sustainability and Management - Dissertation

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this independent dissertation entitled:

...........................................................................................................................
...........................................................................................................................
...........................................................................................................................
...........................................................................................................................

has been composed by myself from my own work and that where other source material has been used, this has been acknowledged.

This Dissertation comprises between 12,000 and 15,000 words (including text boxes and footnotes, but excluding appendices and illustrative material), and complies with the relevant regulations in respect of length.

Signed ...............................................................................

Name (block capitals) ..............................................................

Date ...................................................................................

On completion of this declaration, it must be handed in separately to the Departmental Office.
APPENDIX 9 MSc DISSERTATION PROPOSAL FORM

(1) Name ..............................................................................................................................

(2) Provisional Title of Dissertation ..............................................................................

........................................................................................................................................

(3) Aims of the investigation, with particular reference to hypotheses to be tested or issues to be examined.
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(4) Data Sources to be employed (e.g. census data, published statistics, field surveys, laboratory data, questionnaires, etc)
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(5) Methods to be used, including analysis and presentation of data
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(6) Equipment required (give full details)
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Date equipment required

Date equipment to be returned

Approved ........................................ Date............................
(Supervisor)
APPENDIX 10 DISSERTATION MARKING PROFORMA

Candidate no:
.............................................................................................................................................

Title:
.............................................................................................................................................

If you supervised this dissertation, please give an indication of the approximate wordage of draft material read:

Please comment under the following headings:

Research aims and scope

Context of research and literature review

Methodology and data collection

Analysis and interpretation

Presentation and use of visual material/illustrations/maps/other

OVERALL IMPRESSION:

Mark/Grade Awarded:
Please note: this grade is indicative of the assessment of the first examiner. The final mark awarded is subject to revision by either the second internal examiner or the external examiners.