



**MLA  
COLLEGE**

# MSc Sustainability in Practice Handbook

## 1. Introduction

Welcome to your MSc Top Up Programme, Sustainability in Practice

This handbook is your guide to successfully completing the single module on the Programme, along with all the other support materials within the TLP. **It is very important that you read this handbook in full before beginning your studies.** The following pages contain critical information on what is expected from you, the student, over the course of the next 12 months. Vital detail on the various assessment components, how you submit your work and in what format, important academic writing principles and how to remain in contact with your supervisory team can all be found within this handbook.

The TLP video lectures introduce you to what you can expect from this experience, as well as what will be required of you. Work methodically through the videos, within the first few weeks of the module, and start to identify an area in which you can work to lead and support changes to the sustainable practices of your organisation. You are encouraged to explore ideas with your supervisory team and plan your work programme as early as possible. Successful completion of your final report is a key requirement of the award of your degree, as well as a chance to defend your ideas through a short *viva voce*.

An important point to note from the outset is that whatever your entry route onto the programme, upon successful completion you will be awarded a Masters degree that comprises of 120 general credits and 60 credits for this module. **This means that the mark that you are awarded for this module will determine the final mark given for your Masters degree and any applicable classification (e.g. Pass, Merit or Distinction).**

## 2. Aims and Learning Outcomes

The aims of this module are to develop skills of reflection and critique through the lens of work experience and participatory action research within the sustainable development field. Students will agree a scheme of work which focuses on, at least, one UN SDG,

establishing an action research approach designed to progress meaningful change. Reflecting upon their experience, both through a critical incident log and final reflective report, they will summarise whether their work has enabled progress on their chosen SDG, enabling them to delve into aspects of leadership and strategy for creating sustainable solutions to real world problems.

**The Learning Outcomes are to:**

1. Critique the fundamental concepts underpinning a specific issue within sustainable development
2. Evaluate methodologies that can be used effectively to monitor project progress and outcomes
3. Relate theoretical concepts regarding sustainability to practical experience
4. Analyse the success of personal and collective action on a chosen SDG
5. Evaluate the role of leadership, organisations, and/or communities to the successful achievement of at least one SDG
6. Communicate findings in a professional manner, written, and through verbal presentation.
7. Critically evaluate personal performance and the work of others
8. Choose appropriate methodologies for the completion of tasks and evaluation of project progress

**3. Selecting an Area of Work**

Students must identify their scope of work, and you are encouraged to start this process as early as possible. The organisational unit you work with is largely defined by your individual context; it might be the team you manage, the office or group you represent, or the whole organisations in which you take a leading role.

Whatever the subject, it should involve both action that you drive and participate and scholarly reflection on the work itself, your role in that work, the social system you work within, and how what you have done links to the wider academic world associated with your area of interest. Scholarship is advanced by critically evaluating and building

upon the work of others, and you should show an appreciation of this when you consider background material relevant to your topic.

Although your topic should be clear and specific, it is often best to start with your broad area of interest and then focus down to a precise research question, or questions, that will form the core of your work. The videos and tutorial activities provided should help you in that regard. The question or problem you decide on must also be practicable and owned by you. Make sure that you have agreement (if that is needed) to drive change and ensure that the data you require to address your chosen topic are available. You should not be developing ideas that are dependant upon those senior to you; the responsibility for running the project should rest with you alone. The videos make the point that the aim of this project is not necessarily measured success in the work, it is about understanding the complex reasons why such projects succeed or fail. However, placing the initial responsibility for success on those you have no influence over is a flawed starting position

Choosing where to work and what to do is also important. Please consider aspects of Health and Safety issues relating to your work, and your tutor can advise if they have concerns. Whatever the context you are working in, an Ethical Approval Form, agreed by the tutor and MLA is absolutely necessary. The videos explain the process for completing this.

While some students will want to devise their own project, many others will undertake a project defined by someone else, possibly in association with an employer or an external agency. Working on a project relevant to a company or agency can be very rewarding. You may be able to gain access to data or to sites that would otherwise be inaccessible and someone (other than your examiners) will be interested in your results. Should you decide to undertake such a project, especially one with an outside agency, it is important to remember that:

- The project must be appropriate to your Masters degree
- The project should be your own work, not that of someone else

- You may be required to write a report for the project sponsor, and provide them with a copy of your final outcomes

Again, talking this through with your project tutor beforehand, is important.

#### **4. The Academic Literature**

Although the problem that you have decided upon may be clear and precise, your work must not exist in isolation. Your work is likely to benefit greatly by being related to broader issues. **It is therefore essential that you are aware of, and that you show that you are aware of, the wider literature.** The best way you can do this is to demonstrate that you understand the links between your study and the wider context in which it sits. Reading widely on a general question is also a good way of stimulating your ideas about a more specific research question. **It is expected that at the end of the dissertation you will need to evaluate your conclusions in the light of existing literature.** However, do not review literature that is irrelevant to your topic and avoid reviewing 'obvious' material that can be found in any undergraduate textbook.

#### ***Referencing***

Please read thoroughly the guides 'Why' and 'How to' reference, which are found in the study help section of the TLP. This will give you all the information you need about appropriately referencing the literature in accordance with the Harvard System, which is the required format for your dissertation; however, a few short examples are reproduced here for convenience and clarity:

The preferred method of referring to other papers is by surname and date, e.g.

'Osborne and Greenwood (1992) show that...' or

'... when the beach has a bar (Osborne and Greenwood, 1992).'

The first surname and 'et al' are usual when there are more than two authors.

**To avoid any suggestions of plagiarism, make sure that citations from the works of others are clearly differentiated from your own text, by citing the**

**source.** Cited items must appear in the reference list. Statements derived from the work of others must be clearly identified and distinguished from your own ideas, either by reference to a published paper or, in some cases, by adding to the text a statement like 'J.Bloggs - personal communication'.

Your references must be listed in full and in alphabetical order at the end of your dissertation. All journal and book references should include the names and initials of all authors and the year of publication or production. Journal articles must include the full title of the article, and the full name of the journal together with the volume and page numbers. Book references must include the full title of the book, the publisher, the place of publication, and – where appropriate – the number of the edition.

Figures and tables should generally appear in the text close to the location where they are first cited. Graph axes must be carefully labelled, and each figure should have a clear caption explaining any symbols used. Maps and diagrams should normally be drawn using graphic packages such as Corel Draw. Photographic reproductions or extracts of published maps may be included, but remember to acknowledge the source of the map in a caption or footnote. Wherever possible, drawings should fit on A4 size pages, although fold-out maps or diagrams may be used if necessary. Computer-produced graphics should be printed or mounted on paper suitable for binding.

### ***List of References***

This must be a complete list of all published material cited. The following are examples of the preferred format:

#### **Papers**

Osborne, P. D. and Greenwood, B. 1992. Frequency dependent cross-shore suspended sediment transport. *Marine Geology*, 106, 1-24.

#### **Books**

Watts, S. (ed.) 1996. *Essential Environmental Science methods and techniques*. Routledge, London

#### **Chapters in books**

Dearing, J. 1994. Reconstructing the history of soil erosion. In Roberts, N. (ed.) The changing global environment. Blackwell, Oxford, pp.242-261.

### **Conference Proceedings**

Noda, H. 1968. A study of mass transport in boundary layers in standing waves. Proceedings of the 11th International Conference on Coastal Engineering, ASCE, New York, 485-504.

### **Reports, etc.**

Ebersole, B. A. and Hughes, S. 1987. Duck85 photopole experiment. US Army Waterways Experimental Station, miscellaneous paper CERC-87-18, Vicksburg, MS, USA

### **Electronic sources**

NOAA National Climatic Data Center, 2009. NOAA Paleoclimatology. Available from <http://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/paleo/paleo.html> [accessed 15 October 2011]

## **5. Data Collection**

A section of the module videos talks about evaluation. Usually, evaluation requires the collection of some form of data. One outcome of your completed project proposal should be a research methodology appropriate for evaluation of the work you undertook previously. The techniques you employ will determine the sort of data that you collect, and the answers you find will depend on the research philosophy you adopt. It is wise not to be over-ambitious in the number of different analytical tools you use; learning how to use them usually takes longer than you think. Preferably the techniques you use should be ones of which you already have some knowledge or background, through any taught element of your Masters programme, or prior education or experience. You should not expect academic or other staff to spend time laying on special one-to-one practical tutorials with you, but tutors will have experience of using a range of techniques and can advise accordingly. Many techniques are also included in support materials within the TLP itself.

When planning your data collection, it is essential that you give prior consideration to:

- Resource implications
- Safety considerations
- Any ethical issues (e.g. this is important when collecting information from or interacting with human participants. See section on this below)

For each of these you are required to complete and have approved the necessary forms (e.g. risk assessment for safety). All of the necessary forms are located on the TLP. **Completion of these is a required component of your project proposal, and you will not be permitted to proceed with data collection unless these have been approved and deemed valid by your supervisory team.**

You should note that funds to support field and laboratory work are **not available from MLA College or Plymouth University**, and you will therefore need to scale your plans for collecting data appropriately.

A pilot study, whether in the laboratory or in the field, can be invaluable in assessing the feasibility of your planned data collection, and help in identifying and ironing out practical problems. How many field measurements can, or should, be collected? How many questionnaires can be completed in the time available, and how many/what questions can reasonably be asked? Including results of a pilot study in your dissertation write-up is often a good way of demonstrating that you have thought carefully about your research process. A pilot study is often best carried out in advance of the main period of data collection, although there may be exceptions (e.g. environmental conditions may not be appropriate). In the light of your pilot study, you may need to modify your original planned research design and methodology. You should consult with your supervisory team after a pilot study is complete, and before you embark on the main phase of data collection.

If your study involves fieldwork (i.e. it is not a desk-study), then careful prior planning is essential. You may want to make a preliminary reconnaissance visit in order to get a “feel” for your study area. It is also likely that you will need to organise permission to obtain access to sites (e.g. from landowners or local authorities) or to carry out work, and this should be sought well in advance. Success of fieldwork often depends on you adopting a professional, helpful and patient approach to those people with whom you will have contact. Your main phase of data collection (laboratory and field work) should be completed by the end of week 39, and in most cases well before this.

### ***Research Ethics***

It is the duty of all researchers to consider the ethical implications of their work. Often, there are none, but it is still important that you engage with your supervisor to talk through your methodology, and attempt to discover whether further scrutiny is required, through a process called Ethical Approval.

As a rule of thumb, any research that involves testing, observing, asking questions of, and collecting personal information about human participants (that might be you, work colleagues, individuals within your and other sectors) will require ethical approval. Approval is often granted; however, common examples of projects that may not receive approval include those that intend to work with vulnerable adults or minors, or projects where the student cannot clearly demonstrate that no harm will occur to participants of the study, or their wider protection cannot be guaranteed. As an example, the act of asking people about their mental health status may seem an innocent enough question, but by doing so you may find yourself compromised and the participant significantly upset by the line of questioning. To be clear, this does not mean such tasks cannot be achieved, just that full ethical approval will be required (which will include you outlining your safeguarding measures), and the MLA College Ethics Committee reserve the right to refuse your idea on these grounds.

Please be aware that the involvement of human participants is not the only way that ethical issues can arise. The use of classified or commercially sensitive information pushes the bounds between unethical and illegal behaviour. Work

that might have unconsidered environmental impact is unethical. Work that might have an unconsidered impact upon cultural heritage is viewed as unethical. Thus, it is not as simple as negating the participation of people in your work.

Undertaking your project without considering the ethical implications of your work, not seeking ethical approval where it is required, or continuing to work without or beyond the conditions of approval is in itself unethical. **We cannot accept such work for assessment and ignorance is no defence.** Therefore, it is crucial that you engage with this issue BEFORE you start any research work and await any decisions that may be forthcoming before continuing with your Project/Thesis. Postdating ethical approval or arranging ethics agreements after the work has been completed is unacceptable. In other words, not producing evidence that you have thought about ethics, and agreed your conclusions with a supervisor, is an automatic failure of the module.

Ethical approval forms can be found on the TLP. The form contains a declaration asking you to confirm you have read the University of Plymouth Ethics Policy and requires you to state whether your research project will include aspects likely to require ethical approval. Please review this form carefully and complete it as instructed. Your supervisor will be able to guide you as necessary. Completed forms must be submitted to the MLA College Ethics Committee as soon as possible (via [info@mla.ac.uk](mailto:info@mla.ac.uk)).

## **6. Project Assessment**

The module contains two formal, or summative, pieces of assessment.

The first is a Portfolio, which contains a final report that summarises your research and work context, details your main successes and failures, and attempts to reflect upon your findings at a range of scales, as well as a body of cross-referenced evidence you use to substantiate your claims. The second is

a *viva voce*, and academic interview, where you will be asked to quickly outline your findings and defend your approach and reflections

This Masters project module has three summative assessed components, each due at separate intervals. The table below summarises the summative requirement and identifies the relevant marks awarded for each component.

<b>MSc Sustainability in Practice Assessed Components</b>				
	<b>Component</b>	<b>Suggested word count</b>	<b>Allocated marks (%)</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
<b>1</b>	Portfolio	c. 8000	75	Week 50
<b>3</b>	Viva Voce (online)	-	25	During weeks 51&52**
<b>Totals</b>		<b>c.12,000</b>	<b>100</b>	

*\*\* scheduling of the presentation will require coordination between the student and supervisory team. It may be necessary to deliver the presentation outside of this window. The presentation will be delivered in most cases via video conferencing. Detailed instructions and guidance will follow closer to the presentation deadline.*

### **6.1 Formative assessment tasks**

There are several additional formative tasks that are required during the first stage of the module, which we recommend should take about 10 weeks. These should be included by adding to a Reflective Journal. The videos give you clear instruction as to how to approach reflective writing, and share a cloud-based document which allows tutors the ability to review and comment in a more continuous fashion.

As these are formative tasks, they are not graded. However, they provide you with an opportunity to develop ideas and practice writing, as well as collect regular useful reflection on the process, which will serve as 'data' to think about

come the writing of the final report. **Please do not be tempted to miss these tasks out – particularly the development of the reflective journal. They are not tasks to just make you work, they are developmental, and, in the case of the journal, crucial to the successful completion of the module.** You should also make sure that you watch the lectures on research skills which offer invaluable advice to students returning to Higher Education following a prolonged period in industry.

### ***Schedule of key tasks for the module***

<b>Module week</b>	<b>Task</b>	<b>Activity (Support material within the TLP)</b>
1	Watch the lectures 'Introduction to Action Research' and 'Writing During Your Project'	Start your Reflective Journal. Introduce yourself on the Student Forum
2	Watch the lecture 'A Beginners Guide to Sustainability'	Complete a SWOT and TOWS analysis for sustainability within your organisational unit
3	Watch the lecture 'Starting off in PAR'	Reflective Writing
4	Watch the lecture 'Setting a Research Question'	Identify your Core Value set through story telling. Use the Johnson Model to identify a potential Research Idea. Define your working Research Question (How to...)
5	Watch the lecture 'Planning Your PAR'	Write your work context. . Start your Annotated Bibliography
6		Analyse your Activity System. Complete your Logic Model, Complete your Force Field Analysis
7	Watch the lecture 'Data Collection for Evaluation'	Define your first 'If..' question. Develop an evaluation strategy. Complete and submit your Ethical Approval Form
8	Watch the lecture 'Defining Your First Cycle of PAR'	Finalise your plans for the first cycle of activity. Finish off your literature review.
9	Watch the lecture 'Defining Subsequent Cycles of PAR'	Review and Reflect
10-45	Start PAR Cycles	Critical to remain in close contact with supervisory team throughout. Keep writing reflectively.
46-50	Watch the lecture 'Preparing for Assessment – Portfolio'	Start completing the Final Report and selecting and cross-referencing evidence
50	Submission of Portfolio	
51-52	Watch the lecture 'Preparing for Assessment – Viva'	Delivered to supervisory team via video conferencing

This is a suggested schedule. We recommend that you complete the tasks in Weeks 1-9 at a pace you can accommodate. However, we recommend that you start the work with your organisation by Week 10.

### ***The Student Forum***

Many students struggle working in isolation. We encourage you to regularly share your findings; with your tutor, with the colleagues with whom you work, and with each other. One of the ways in which you can do this is by taking part in discussions on our online Student Forum. You will be automatically enrolled into this and will be able to access discussions related to this module. Your tutors may moderate this area, but we hope that these discussions become self-driven within the peer network.

You might be wondering how everyone else is getting on. You might have a thorny problem you need advice on. You might just fancy a chat with a fellow student. Whatever the reason, we know that students who engage with each other (rather than just their tutor) learn more and become more independent as learners – and that is a great goal to achieve! In the end, we want you to be able to make judgements about the quality of your own work, and not seek continuous approval from us. We will, of course, be part of the final assessment, but students who gain the confidence of understanding expectations will be able to branch out and continue this work, mentoring colleagues, without needing to refer back to someone else.

You should submit a new post on the forum (<https://www.mla.ac.uk/forum/>) **by the end of the first week**. However, please come back to the Forum when you can or need to. You can set the system up to notify you when new comments have been posted, as well as come back regularly during your study time. As ever, please be courteous to your peers, tolerate no discriminatory behaviour (nor shall we!), but do not be afraid to be constructively critical when asked. Giving and receiving feedback well are really important skills to develop.

### ***The Reflective Journal.***

The Reflective Journal is your go to document. It is the repository of all your findings and observations, and, most importantly, your ideas as to what these findings mean. It is the place where you connect your experience to the wider context. Finally, it is the key document that you can consult when writing your final reflective report which forms the lion's share of your assessed Portfolio.

The TLP contains advice as to who to start this document off, and how to share it with tutors and fellow students. It also gives advice as to how to write reflectively – a skill you need to develop in this module. We encourage you to write regularly, at least once a week, as well as keep you reading up to date – and do the work (we told you it was a challenge!)

### ***Health and Safety documentation and Ethical Approval***

You must include a risk assessment of your intended field work, along with ethical approval and control of substances hazardous to health (COSHH) forms where necessary. It is expected that you will discuss the need for each of these forms with your supervisory team; **however, the completion of the risk assessment form is mandatory, and you will not be permitted to proceed with your fieldwork and/or data collection if you fail to submit it.** A blank copy of each form is available on the TLP.

An Ethical Approval form is required of ANYONE doing research, regardless as to whether further ethical concerns are likely to arise as a consequence of your work i.e. you are required to declare that there are NO ethical issues with your work.

## **6.2 Summative Assessment**

### ***The Portfolio***

The suggested word count for the final report is not supposed to be a target! Ultimately, you can expect to be guided on this by your supervisory team, who will be content to point out the areas that require further explanation, and the areas where you are not being sufficiently concise. However, you should not exceed this limit significantly, for the sake of both your and our workloads!

The Portfolio is made up of two parts. The first part is the Final Report, and we suggest that you follow the Template we provide – although this is not necessary, and you should discuss with your tutor a format that works best for you.

The Final Report itself must be word processed, written with 1.5 line spacing (i.e. as the text appears in this document). The normal typeface for the body of the report is Arial 12 points and headings should be 14 point bold. Page numbering should be located bottom centre, and include pages of figures, tables, etc. It is conventional to number the 'prelims' or 'preamble' (i.e. everything from the title page through to the acknowledgements) with lower case Roman numerals. All subsequent pages are then numbered with Arabic numerals, starting with 1.

The second part is a body of evidence, which you select from all the evidence you gather, and should include your full Reflective Journal. To help the reader, you should use a cross referencing system that allows the reader to move from the text of the report to the evidence you have (much like you would use a citation or reference a Figure or Table).

Guidance about finalising this Portfolio is given within the TLP

Your work will be assessed by your supervisory team and a moderator. The Final Report should be loaded up to TurnItIn, and details will be sent to you nearer the date. It is permissible to send the digital copy of your evidence via WeTransfer in a zipped file, though note that the contents may exceed the permissible free limit. The second page of your report (following the cover page) must contain the following licence statement:

### ***Masters Dissertation licence***

*This material has been deposited in the Plymouth University Learning & Teaching repository under the terms of the student contract between the students and the Faculty of Science & Technology. The material may be used for internal use only to support learning and teaching. Materials will not be published outside of the University and any breaches of this licence will be dealt with following the appropriate University policies*

### ***The Viva Voce***

The *viva* is an opportunity for you to verbally defend your findings to a tutor. You might be asked to present a very short resume of your project, in particular the findings. However, you should be in a position to answer questions explaining your choices and reflecting upon the wider implications of your work. This should take no longer than 1 hour, and will, normally, be carried out via online video call. The TLP give some guidance about preparing for *viva*.

## **7. Supervision**

Each student will be guided by a project advisor or tutor. **Students should meet or have email contact with their tutors approximately once a fortnight. Note that the responsibility for regular contact lies with you, the student.** Any communications problems should be notified to the Module Leader or Student Support Officer ([student.support@m1a.ac.uk](mailto:student.support@m1a.ac.uk)). You should also give your tutor access to your Reflective Journal, so that they can assess progress and comment upon your writing. The aim is to address concerns early, rather than learn painful lessons at the end.

## **8. Time management throughout the project**

Time management is crucial to the successful completion of this module. The process starts almost immediately when you begin to identify broad project areas in which you may be interested. Whilst you have a period of 12 months to complete the project

module, you need to balance your professional and personal schedules across that time in order to stay focused on what is a demanding piece of work.

**Regular contact with your supervisory team is essential\***. Their advice will help you to modify your planned activities where necessary, to keep you on track and be confident that you will succeed. Making use of tools such as Gantt charts are advised, where you can more easily spot times where personal and professional needs will conflict with the needs of the project. You are also encouraged to discuss with your supervisory team their vacation arrangements, and the impact this might have on your meeting and communicating with them.

***\*note: in the event of repeated lack of engagement and/or contact with your supervisor at any point during the module, you are at risk of having your studies suspended and/or being withdrawn from the programme***

## **9. Submission of coursework, Turnitin and plagiarism**

Submission of your written report will be via the online software Turnitin. Read the following steps and take action as appropriate:

1. You will receive an emailed invite to the module or class area from Turnitin. For new or first-time users, you may have to create an account but don't worry - full instructions will be provided on the emailed invitation. **Note: The invitation will be issued to your Plymouth University email account – Check this at regular intervals not only for the purpose of setting up access to Turnitin but throughout the project!**
2. The invite from Turnitin contains a link to the assessment submission section for this module. You will need to upload your documents following the instructions contained in this guide: [Turnitin quick start guide](#)
3. Should you have any difficulty in accessing Turnitin, please speak to your supervisory team without delay
4. Please read Plymouth University's plagiarism policy (<https://bit.ly/2CMKh1F>). If you are in any doubt as to what plagiarism means or consists of, contact your tutor immediately.
5. Please also watch the following videos (also available on the TLP) that have been produced specifically to help you understand plagiarism, and importantly, how to use Turnitin to submit your coursework (see below): [Plagiarism video tutorials](#)

**Please note that your assessment may be marked and/or moderated by a member of the academic teaching team other than your first supervisor/tutor.**

**The marks awarded during your study of this module are provisional and will be confirmed at the next MLA College/Plymouth University Subject Assessment Panel and Award Assessment Board.**

***What happens if students are unable to meet the submission deadline?***

Many students discover that circumstances beyond their control prevent them from successfully studying. If you find yourself in this position, please get in touch with your supervisory team immediately. Alternatively, please contact the Student Support Officer ([student.support@mla.ac.uk](mailto:student.support@mla.ac.uk)) for advice and guidance.

Students who are unable to submit coursework on time are able to apply for an extension to the submission deadline of 10 working days through the Extenuating Circumstances (ECs) process. The ECs form, along with further guidance, can be found on the TLP. Students still unable to submit following the extended deadline, may then make a second application (as long as the circumstances that led to the successful application for ECs persist). If successful, this application will not lead to a further immediate extension, but will likely allow you to continue working on your thesis in what is called a referral period, following confirmation of your circumstances at the next meeting of the University Subject Assessment Panel and Award Assessment Board. If you find that you in this position, please get in touch with your supervisory team at the earliest opportunity.

Students on postgraduate modules are permitted to have two attempts at passing the module. Marks are capped at 50% for all students passing at the second attempt. Students unable to submit as a consequence of valid ECs, as described in the paragraph above, will likely have their first attempt preserved when attempting to complete their work in the referral period. Referral periods are normally fixed at 12 weeks, which means that students will be given a revised submission date of 12 weeks from the commencement of the referral period.

## **Appendix 1 - Guidelines for Assessment of Masters Dissertations\***

### **Distinction (≥ 70%)**

The dissertation should display a complete and thorough understanding of the conceptual and practical issues surrounding the chosen topic. The objectives and methodology should be clearly stated and the experimental strategy well-conceived. There should be evidence of independent work and thought in the form of some degree of originality in the presentation and discussion of the results. The report should be well structured and presented, with a clear line of argument and the quality of the analysis should be excellent and the material may be potentially publishable. The study should demonstrate a clear, succinct and accurate communication of ideas, arguments and information, and achieve a high standard of English and presentation.

For marks of 80% or above, in addition to these criteria, the dissertation should demonstrate a greater depth of argument and interpretation, and the literature review should show critical skills as well as breadth of knowledge. There should be evidence of a significant amount of independent work, critical thought and a degree of originality and initiative.

### **Pass (50-69%)**

The dissertation should show a satisfactory or better understanding of the conceptual issues underlying the research topic, as evidenced by an up-to-date literature review. The candidate will have identified appropriate research techniques and will have shown an aptitude for experimental design. The data gathering should be comprehensive, and the quality of the data synthesis should be sound. The arguments and critical analysis concerning the outcomes of the research should be structured in a logical way and there should be evidence of some original work. The aims and scope of the study should be clearly defined. Both the writing and presentation of the dissertation should be at least adequate.

### **Fail (below 50%)**

The dissertation will display an inadequate understanding of the chosen subject area and/or the text will have no clear structure. The data gathering may be weak and its analysis poor or incomplete. There may be no clear definition of aims and scope, and

a lack of clear focus. The study may fail to demonstrate an awareness of the relevant literature which sets the wider context for the study. The standard of presentation and written English may be inadequate.

\* See also the marking criteria contained within the Assessment Brief