



Japan Studies MA Programme

MARKING CRITERIA MA THESES

Mark	Description
Distinction 8-10	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• the research question is clearly defined and contextualised;• a clearly identifiable argument is specified crisply; it is coherently presented and supported by evidence;• alternative arguments are analysed and assessed against each other;• the approach is critical, not descriptive, but description is used appropriately;• a relevant methodology is explicitly identified and employed;• an impressive range of relevant sources have been consulted (in Dutch/English and Japanese);• an impressive range of knowledge of relevant literature, issues and debates is demonstrated (in Dutch/English and Japanese); and• the style and presentation is clear, careful, and professional; appropriate academic conventions have been observed accurately.
Merit 7-7.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• the research question is reasonably defined, and contextualised;• an argument is specified, coherently presented and supported by evidence;• alternative arguments are referred to;• the approach is mostly critical, but with elements of description;• a relevant methodology is implied and employed;• most relevant sources have been consulted (in Dutch/English and some Japanese);• knowledge of relevant literature, issues and debates is demonstrated (in Dutch/English and some Japanese); and• the style and presentation is clear and careful, and appropriate academic conventions have largely been observed.
Pass 5.5-6.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• the research question is vaguely defined, and tentatively contextualised;• an argument is identifiable, but may not be coherently presented or fully supported by evidence;• alternative arguments are mentioned but not analysed;• the approach is largely descriptive, not analytical or critical;• there is little evidence of methodological awareness;• some relevant sources have been consulted (mostly in Dutch/English), but some sources have been ignored;• some knowledge of relevant literature (mostly in Dutch/English), issues and debates is demonstrated, but this knowledge is either flawed or incomplete; and• the style and presentation lacks clarity or professionalism. Appropriate academic conventions have been only partially observed.
Just Fail 5-5.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• the research question is poorly defined and contextualised;• an argument is implied, but it is incoherently presented and poorly supported by evidence;• alternative arguments are not acknowledged;• the approach is wholly descriptive;• no relevant methodology is acknowledged;• sources have been consulted, but their relevance is unclear – important sources have been ignored;• very little knowledge of relevant literature, issues and debates is demonstrated; and• the style and presentation is unclear and careless, and appropriate academic conventions have been ignored.
Fail 2-4.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• the research question is unclear;• the argument is incoherent and unsupported;• alternative arguments are ignored;• the approach entirely descriptive, and many descriptions are flawed;• no methodology is employed;• irrelevant or inadequate sources have been used;• extremely limited or confused knowledge of relevant literature, issues and debates is demonstrated; and• the style and presentation is unclear and careless, and appropriate academic conventions have been ignored.
Ungraded 0-1.9	There is no identifiable question or answer, or the material presented is almost completely irrelevant to the aims of the Final Essay. The work is fundamentally wrong or plagiarised.