

Faculty of Arts  
& Social Sciences

Lancaster  
University



## FASS Research Training Programme

### **General Handbook for Staff and Students 2019-20**

*This RTP General Handbook for Staff and Students should be read in conjunction with the RTP Modules Handbook.*

# Contents

Who's Who .....	2
Faculty.....	2
Module Convenors.....	2
The Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences Research Training Programme .....	6
Who teaches on the RTP? .....	6
Who are the RTP modules for?.....	6
Do I pay to attend these modules?.....	6
Deciding which modules to take.....	7
How do I go about assessing my training needs?.....	8
How do I register?.....	8
Notes on completing the registration form .....	9
How will you contact me?.....	9
When do modules take place?.....	9
Assessed modules .....	10
Quality of RTP modules.....	11
Postgraduate Research Training outside FASS .....	11
Teaching in higher education.....	11
Statistics .....	12
Careers advice.....	12
The Library .....	12
What happens if I have a complaint or concern about any aspect of the RTP?.....	12
Ensuring that your study complies with Lancaster's standards for ethical research .....	12
Research Training Funding.....	13
Appendix 1 .....	14
Referencing: guidelines for students .....	14
Appendix 2 .....	15
Faculty Marking/Grade Criteria for Masters Level Assignments.....	15
General.....	15
Criteria for the award of marks.....	15
Individual modules.....	20
Appendix 3 .....	22
Plagiarism Framework .....	22

## Who's Who

### Faculty

#### **Director of Postgraduate Research**

Christopher Partridge  
Politics, Philosophy and Religion  
[c.partridge@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:c.partridge@lancaster.ac.uk)

#### **RTP Director**

Basil Germond  
Politics, Philosophy and Religion  
[b.germond@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:b.germond@lancaster.ac.uk)

#### **RTP Administrator**

Michaela Scott  
Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences  
[fass-rtp@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:fass-rtp@lancaster.ac.uk)  
Michaela is usually available to talk to students at: 10.00-12.00, Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays

### Module Convenors

#### **FASS502: Introduction to the Library and Literature Searching**

Paul Newnham  
Library  
[p.newnham@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:p.newnham@lancaster.ac.uk)

#### **FASS506: Designing, Undertaking and Surviving Doctoral Research**

#### **FASS510: Qualitative Research Methods**

#### **FASS611d: Ethnography (a self-learning resource)**

#### **FASS651: Course Design and Quality Assurance in Higher Education**

Basil Germond  
Politics, Philosophy and Religion  
[b.germond@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:b.germond@lancaster.ac.uk)

#### **FASS507: Introduction to the Philosophy of the Social Sciences**

#### **FASS507d: Introduction to the Philosophy of the Social Sciences (distance learning)**

Ted Schatzki  
Sociology  
[t.schatzki2@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:t.schatzki2@lancaster.ac.uk)

#### **FASS508: Quantitative Research Methods Introduction**

#### **FASS508d: Quantitative Research Methods 1 (distance learning)**

#### **FASS512: Quantitative Research Methods 2**

#### **FASS512d: Quantitative Research Methods 2 (distance learning)**

Andrew Wilson  
Linguistics and English Language  
[a.wilson@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:a.wilson@lancaster.ac.uk)

**FASS513:        *Approaches to Qualitative Analysis: A Workshop for Second and Third Year PGRs only***

Lucy Suchman  
Sociology

[l.suchman@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:l.suchman@lancaster.ac.uk)

**FASS516:        *Thesis Writing (First-Year Students only)***

**FASS516d:      *Thesis Writing (First-Year Students only) (distance learning)***

**FASS519:        *Presenting Conference Papers***

**FASS519d:      *Presenting Conference Papers (distance learning)***

**FASS521:        *Writing for Publication (Second/Third/Final Year Students only)***

**FASS521d:      *Writing for Publication (Second/Third/Final Year Students only) (distance learning)***

**FASS619:        *Advanced Thesis Writing (Second Year Students only): Refocusing the Thesis***

**FASS619d:      *Advanced Thesis Writing (Second Year Students only): Refocusing the Thesis (distance learning)***

**FASS620:        *Advanced Thesis Writing (Final Year Students only): Towards Completion***

**FASS620d:      *Advanced Thesis Writing (Final Year Students only): Towards Completion (distance learning)***

**FASS626:        *Feminist Literary and Cultural Theory***

Lynne Pearce  
English Literature and Creative Writing

[l.pearce@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:l.pearce@lancaster.ac.uk)

**FASS517:        *Discourse Analysis***

Veronika Koller  
Linguistics and English Language

[v.koller@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:v.koller@lancaster.ac.uk)

**FASS522:        *Ethics Approval: How to Write a Successful Application to the Research Ethics Committee***

**FASS625:        *Ethics in Arts and Social Research – a self-learning resource***

Karolina Follis  
Politics, Philosophy and Religion

[k.follis@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:k.follis@lancaster.ac.uk)

**FASS604:        *The Analysis of Culture***

Cornelia Graebner  
Languages and Cultures

[c.grabner@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:c.grabner@lancaster.ac.uk)

**FASS618:        *The PhD Viva: Tragedy or Triumph? (Final Year Students only)***

Allyson Fiddler  
Languages and Cultures

[a.fiddler@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:a.fiddler@lancaster.ac.uk)

**FASS627:        *Spatial Theory***

**FASS628:        *Interdisciplinarity***

**FASS629:        *Textual Practice***

Jo Carruthers  
English Literature and Creative Writing

[j.carruthers@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:j.carruthers@lancaster.ac.uk)

**FASS634: Introduction to Engaging with Government and Politics (Second/Third/Final Year Students only)**

Rebecca Willis

Sociology

[r.willis@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:r.willis@lancaster.ac.uk)

**FASS637: Qualitative Research Interviews – Methods and Practice**

Hazel Morbey

Division of Health Research

[h.morbey@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:h.morbey@lancaster.ac.uk)

**FASS638d: Qualitative Data Analysis with ATLAS.ti (distance learning)**

**FASS639d: Qualitative Data Analysis with NVivo 11 (distance learning)**

Steve Wright

Faculty of Health & Medicine

[s.t.wright@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:s.t.wright@lancaster.ac.uk)

**FASS641: Career Planning for FASS PGR Students**

Elaine Davies

Careers Consultant

[elaine.davies@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:elaine.davies@lancaster.ac.uk)

**FASS642A-F: PhD Writing Groups (Second and Third Year Students only)**

Joanne Wood

Learning Development

[joanne.wood@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:joanne.wood@lancaster.ac.uk)

**FASS644: Participatory Research – Achieving Impact**

**FASS644d: Participatory Research – Achieving Impact (distance learning)**

Matthew Johnson

Politics, Philosophy and Religion

[m.johnson@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:m.johnson@lancaster.ac.uk)

**FASS645: Making Research Count: Engaging with Quantitative Data**

Jasmine Fledderjohann

Sociology

[j.fledderjohann@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:j.fledderjohann@lancaster.ac.uk)

**FASS646: Critical Theory for Postgraduate Research**

Arthur Bradley

English Literature and Creative Writing

[a.h.bradley@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:a.h.bradley@lancaster.ac.uk)

**FASS647: Risky Research: Ethics, Reflexivity and Risk**

Sarah Marsden

Politics, Philosophy and Religion

[s.marsden@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:s.marsden@lancaster.ac.uk)

**FASS649: Postcolonial Studies Across the Arts and Social Sciences**

John Strachan

History

[j.strachan@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:j.strachan@lancaster.ac.uk)

Full information about the Programme, including module outlines and timetables, is available on the RTP [website](#).

## **The Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences Research Training Programme**

The RTP consists of modules and short courses on research methods, theories and philosophies of the social sciences and humanities, thesis writing and other generic skills relevant to PhD study. The RTP is designed to complement more specialised subject or discipline-based training modules offered by departments.

The RTP offers:

- On-site modules and short courses
- Distance learning modules (please note that these are provided for part-time and away students in the first instance, and they will be given precedence on these modules)

The RTP includes:

- Modules for PhD students in the early stages of their studies, for example on research design and research methods
- More advanced modules and short courses that are intended for more experienced research students already well into their research project

All our teaching is designed to help you considerably with aspects of your research, from design, to data collection and analysis, to writing up and successfully defending your thesis.

### **Who teaches on the RTP?**

To ensure that all aspects of research training that you may need are covered, academic colleagues and suitably qualified researchers from across the Faculty offer modules in specific areas, including quantitative methods, data analysis, textual analysis and others.

### **Who are the RTP modules for?**

All our modules are designed for research students. Some modules may also be attended by Masters students (who intend to study for a PhD the year after) or research staff (colleagues who are employed as researchers on projects). Students from other faculties can also attend our modules.

### **Do I pay to attend these modules?**

No, the modules are free to both FASS and non-FASS students (but FASS students will be given precedence if modules are oversubscribed).

## Deciding which modules to take

The Economic & Social Research Council (the main funder of UK social science research students) recommends that all social science research students become familiar with both quantitative and qualitative approaches to research and with the philosophy of the social sciences as well as with more specialised subject-specific requirements. Even though you may not plan to use both quantitative and qualitative data in your research, you are likely to find that future employers will expect you to have at least a basic understanding of both approaches and forms of data. Your own reading will often require you to be able to understand and interpret both quantitative and qualitative data.

The Arts & Humanities Research Council (the main funder of UK arts and humanities research students) recommends that students in the arts and humanities should develop generic skills such as written and oral presentation skills (including giving research papers), designing and managing a project, ICT skills, bibliographic skills and contextualising practice-based research, identifying and using web-based resources, record-keeping and record management, and personal and career development.

The Faculty recommends that all first year full time and all first/second year part-time students who have not either already done a specialised research methods Master's degree or had considerable relevant experience as a research assistant on a funded project should aim to take the following generic modules:

- i. Introduction to the Philosophy of the Social Sciences (FASS507) – also available as online distance learning.
- ii. Qualitative Methods in the Social Sciences (FASS510).
- iii. Quantitative Research Methods Introduction (FASS508) or Quantitative Research Methods 1 (FASS508d) – online distance learning.
- iv. Quantitative Research Methods 2 (FASS512) (also available as online distance learning).
- v. The three thesis writing modules, for students at different stages of their degree, (all of which are also available as online distance learning):
  - a. Thesis Writing (First Year Students only) (FASS516).
  - b. Advanced Thesis Writing (Second Year Students only): Refocusing the Thesis (FASS619).
  - c. Advanced Thesis Writing (Final Year Students only): Towards Completion (FASS620).

Full details of the modules (together with timetables) appear in the companion *RTP Modules Handbook* and on the RTP website.

## How do I go about assessing my training needs?

If you are funded by an Economic & Social Research Council (ESRC) studentship or an Arts & Humanities Research Council (AHRC) studentship, your training requirements will have been discussed at the time of your application. You and your supervisor or Masters Course Director should remind yourselves of these when you actually register. For other students, you should discuss your training needs with your supervisor(s), bearing in mind your own previous postgraduate education and relevant research work experience, the research you are planning to undertake and the comments made in the previous section concerning the importance of gaining a range of skills and knowledge about different kinds of research. Your Department and supervisor will require you to carry out a development needs analysis and this will also help you identify any training needs you might have in the area of research methods and thesis writing.

The ESRC's [Postgraduate Training Guidelines](#) should also be consulted.

For information about the AHRC's policy of training for postgraduate researchers, consult their [research training framework](#).

The [Vitae Research Development Framework](#) and its associated resources provide very helpful and informative guidance in respect of assessing and identifying training needs.

The RTP Director, Basil Germond, will also be happy to provide you with advice on your choice of modules and workshops.

## How do I register?

Registration will be done a term at a time, on the appropriate form for the term in question. Registration for Michaelmas Term will open towards the end of the Summer Vacation, for Lent Term towards the end of Michaelmas Term, and for Summer Term towards the end of Lent Term. It is a quick and straightforward process with just two simple steps to be taken.

- i. First discuss the modules in the Modules Handbook with your supervisor(s), who will help you to assess your training needs.
- ii. Second, simply complete the relevant registration form (available from the [RTP website](#)), save it as a Word document, and email it to [fass-rtp@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:fass-rtp@lancaster.ac.uk). Please make sure to register for any modules you wish to take, whether or not you intend to undertake assessment for them (if there is one – most modules do not have assessments).

**Important note – it is essential to register for those modules you wish to take and to deregister from any you decide you no longer wish to take.** This helps us to prepare for modules (eg booking a suitably sized room) and ensures that students who wish to take a module on which a quota is applied don't miss out because other people accepted on to the module don't turn up. It also means that students have access to online module materials for the appropriate modules, and that, if we need to contact students about a module, we are contacting all the correct people. In addition, students' attendance at previous RTP modules will be taken into consideration when we are applying quotas to modules that are oversubscribed.

The majority of modules do not have a maximum quota, so we will register all students who apply for the module; those who fail to attend the first two sessions will subsequently be deregistered, as will those who fail to attend the majority of the module as a whole. The Modules Handbook includes information about the maximum quotas that will apply.

## Notes on completing the registration form

- If a module is only available to students in specific years of study, you should only register for it if you are in the correct year.
- If a module is offered both by attendance and by distance learning, you should register *either* to attend it *or* to take it by distance learning, not both. Please note that the distance learning modules are provided for part-time and away students in the first instance, and they will be given precedence on these modules. This applies to:
  - FASS507 / FASS507d
  - FASS508 / FASS508d
  - FASS512 / FASS512d
  - FASS516d / FASS516M / FASS516L
  - FASS517 / FASS517d
  - FASS519 / FASS519d
  - FASS521 / FASS521d
  - FASS522M / FASS522L / FASS625
  - FASS619 / FASS619d
  - FASS620 / FASS620d
  - FASS644 / FASS644d
- If a module has two or more cohorts, you should only register for one of these. This applies to:
  - FASS506M / FASS506L
  - FASS516M / FASS516L
  - FASS522M / FASS522L
  - FASS637 / the Interviewing sessions of FASS510
  - FASS642A / FASS642B / FASS642C / FASS642D / FASS642E / FASS642F
- If you have taken a module once, you will not be able to repeat it in a later year.

**If you wish to withdraw from a particular module, or if you are unable to attend one or more individual sessions of a module on which you have registered, please email [fass-rtp@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:fass-rtp@lancaster.ac.uk) to let us know.**

## How will you contact me?

- i. In most cases, we will contact you by **email**. We will always use your Lancaster email address ([\\*\\*\\*@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:***@lancaster.ac.uk)), so you need to ensure that you check this account regularly. If you want to use another address to read your email, you will need to ensure that you set up your Lancaster account to forward messages to your preferred address.
- ii. If we need to contact you **in writing**, we will use your departmental address. You will need to find out where your departmental pigeonhole is and check it regularly.

## When do modules take place?

Timetables for all three terms appear in the Modules Handbook and on the [timetable page](#) of the RTP website. In some cases the information about timing and rooms may be incomplete, but it will be updated as soon as the modules concerned have been timetabled and suitable rooms allocated.

## Assessed modules

For the majority of PhD students, the RTP is valuable as a non-assessed component of their studies. Therefore, most of the RTP modules do not include an assessment option. If they do, the assessment is voluntary for PhD students and most of you will choose not to take part in the assessment. If you are studying for an MA or are enrolled in a Thesis and Coursework programme, you may take FASS507, FASS507d, FASS510, FASS512 and FASS512d as credit-bearing modules contributing to the coursework element of your PhD.

If you are taking part in the assessment, you are required to submit the coursework electronically, through the module's Moodle site. The coursework cover sheet is available online from the [RTP website](#) and needs to be attached as the first page of the coursework. Feedback will be provided electronically by the module convenor.

**Pass levels:** Following University regulations, the overall pass mark for Master's schemes is 50%. For the award of a Master's degree the final mark for a module or unit of assessment should not normally be below 50%. The Board of Examiners of the programme you are registered with has specific rules for action to be undertaken in case you have failed an assignment. Usually this includes resubmission. In exceptional circumstances, failed assignments can be condoned. Only assignments receiving a mark between 40-49% can be condoned. One course work assessment awarded a mark in the 40% - 49% range may be condoned.

Students undertaking MRes or research pathway schemes should note that acquiring a pass mark of 50% is no guarantee in itself of securing a place on an MPhil/PhD programme at Lancaster University. Normally, students will be considered for a place on an MPhil/PhD if they achieve a minimum average mark of 60% overall and a mark of at least 60% on their dissertation.

**Failed work:** If on completion of the assessed work the module is referred as a fail at the level required, students are allowed one re-submission only per module. On successful resubmission the student will only be awarded a pass mark which represents an appropriate pass at the required level (ie 50% for Masters level).

The University may impose a resubmission fee for the resubmission of a failed assignment or dissertation.

**Deadlines and Extensions:** Please note that all students undertaking Faculty modules as part of a Taught Masters scheme (whether ESRC or other) will be subject to the Faculty regulations on deadlines and penalties. That is, that prior to the maximum data, there are published deadlines for the submission of coursework; there are published procedures for the granting of extensions; work submitted after a deadline but without an approved extension shall normally be penalised, as follows:

*Work submitted up to three days late without an agreed extension will receive a penalty of 10 percentage points (for example a mark of 62% would become 52%) and zero (non-submission) thereafter. Saturdays and Sundays are included as days in this regulation; however, where the third day falls on a Saturday or Sunday, students will have until 10.00 a.m. on Monday to hand in without receiving further penalty. Where the application of a late submission penalty results in a Fail mark, the assessment will be treated according to the standard procedures for failed work.*

Students who need an extension are required to contact their module tutor in writing **prior to the deadline** and giving the tutor sufficient time to consider the reasons for requesting an extension. Please bear in mind that sending an email at 8.00 pm in the evening if an assignment is due the next morning at 9.00 am is not acceptable. We are not able to give students extensions once the deadline has passed, unless exceptional circumstances apply.

We recognise that sometimes, for good reasons, you may be unable to submit your work on time. Reasonable causes for extensions include illness and serious personal problems. If you require an extension, you need to explain in what ways your work has been affected by the circumstances leading to your request (eg if you have fallen ill, please explain since when you were ill and how many days you were unable to work).

Please note that the Turnitin plagiarism-detection service may be used to check coursework.

**Referencing Guidelines, Information on Faculty Marking/Grade Criteria, and a link to the University Plagiarism Framework can be found in appendices at the back of this handbook.**

### **Quality of RTP modules**

The Faculty Research Training Programme has run successfully for many years, and is widely recognised, in conjunction with relevant more specialised modules, as being of suitable quality for the receipt of students with research studentships from a range of funding sources. The RTP is revised on a regular basis to ensure that it meets the needs and interests of students across the Faculty

Each module is subject to a student evaluation/feedback exercise. At the end of each academic year, as part of the Research Training Programme Annual Review, staff teaching on the RTP discuss and review the year's programme and the modules and courses that were taught. Suggestions are made about improvements and changes for the following year. The RTP Director maintains regular contact with students and with colleagues who teach on the programme to ensure that all modules and short courses that are part of the RTP meet students' needs and offer teaching of a high quality.

### **Postgraduate Research Training outside FASS**

The University's [Postgraduate Research Training webpage](#) provides links to training opportunities across the University, including the research training programme of the [Faculty of Science & Technology](#).

### **Teaching in higher education**

Support for associate teachers, in particular Postgraduates and researchers who teach, is provided through the Higher Education Academy accredited [Associate Teacher Programme \(ATP\)](#) and the one-day [Introduction to Teaching at Lancaster](#) workshops.

The Associate Teacher Programme is designed to provide a framework for the academic and professional development of those who hold posts which involve some duties and responsibilities for supporting the development and/or delivery of learning opportunities. There is a requirement that participants have at least 10 hours of teaching contact time, or where contact hours are lower, that they have a significant level of responsibility for that teaching.

The one-day Introduction to Teaching at Lancaster course is designed to help postgraduates, researchers and others involved in modest amounts of demonstrating or seminar teaching to

address some of the basic skills and understanding they will need for their work. It assumes that participants have little or no previous teaching experience.

### **Statistics**

The RTP offers several modules on statistics. In addition to these, the Postgraduate Statistics Centre within the Department of Mathematics and Statistics (in the Faculty of Science and Technology) is the only UK HEFCE-funded Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning that specialises in postgraduate statistics. The Centre offers several [short courses](#). For further information please contact the Centre at [psc@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:psc@lancaster.ac.uk).

The [Statistical Advisory Service](#) run by the Department of Mathematics and Statistics offers free statistical advice to PhD students and members of staff, from any department, who have queries about aspects of experimental design or statistical analysis relating to their research. To make an appointment or for further information please email [advice@stats.lanc.uk](mailto:advice@stats.lanc.uk). *Please note that emails to this address from non-Lancaster email accounts will be rejected for security reasons.*

### **Careers advice**

The Careers Service has files on hundreds of career occupations and work sectors, with booklets and vacancy directories freely available to take away. See their [website](#) for further information.

### **The Library**

The [Library](#) provides access to print and electronic collections for all members of the University.

The Library co-ordinates a series of short lunchtime sessions called [Research Bites](#) for postgraduate students, supervisors and researchers, with the aim of delivering useful information, starting discussions and answering questions for the benefit of anyone conducting research at Lancaster University. There is also a [blog](#) at with details of past sessions, including slides and recordings. If you have any questions or ideas, please contact [researchbites@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:researchbites@lancaster.ac.uk).

The [Library Training Sessions](#) are longer talks and workshops on everything from research data management to literature searching. For more information about these sessions, please contact the Academic Services Team in the Library ([academicliaison@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:academicliaison@lancaster.ac.uk)).

### **What happens if I have a complaint or concern about any aspect of the RTP?**

If it is something that you cannot resolve with the appropriate module tutor or convenor, you should approach the RTP Director explaining your concern or complaint. If after discussion, you are still dissatisfied, you may approach the Faculty's Director of Postgraduate Research, Professor Christopher Partridge ([c.partridge@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:c.partridge@lancaster.ac.uk)).

### **Ensuring that your study complies with Lancaster's standards for ethical research**

Whatever your research topic - actual or proposed - you should give early consideration to ensuring that your research practice is ethical. No field of arts & social science research is exempt from ethical concerns, no matter how ethically unproblematic it may at first appear. To find out more about ethics you can:

Have a look at the web-based resource [Ethics guidance and ethics review process](#).

Discuss the ethical dimensions of your research with your supervisor(s)

Consider taking FASS522: The Ethics Approval Process at Lancaster University: How to Write an Application to the University's Ethics Committee, FASS625: Ethics in Arts and Social Research – a self-learning resource or FASS647: Risky Research: Ethics, Reflexivity, and Risk. NB you must have taken FASS522 or FASS625 before you take FASS647.

## Research Training Funding

The Faculty offers two sources of funding to support FASS research students' training:

The [Postgraduate Conference Presentation Grant](#) provides financial support for PhD students who are giving presentations at conferences in the UK and overseas. There is a limit of £250 per award for UK conferences, £400 for conferences in Europe, and £500 for conferences in the rest of the world. **Needs rewording?**

The [Postgraduate Research Skills Training Fund](#) provides PhD student with grants of up to £500 to cover costs (eg accommodation, registration and travel) directly incurred by participation in a training event. The training undertaken must provide skills that are necessary to the successful completion of your doctoral project and that are not delivered through the FASS Research Training Programme. **Needs rewording?**

**Third fund?**

## Appendix 1

### Referencing: guidelines for students

We place emphasis on proper documentation and presentation of essays, dissertations and theses. All sources must be fully acknowledged in the text of short or long essays as well as dissertations and theses. This includes the use of ideas and information as well as direct quotations. Failure to acknowledge the source of your material is plagiarism, a very serious offence that is commonly penalised by a fail mark. Thus essays etc. should include a full 'Reference List' or Bibliography.

Various reference systems are used in the social sciences and humanities and you may want to consult with your supervisor when deciding which system to follow. In principle, you can use any system that is commonly used in your discipline and which your supervisor and Department deem to be appropriate. The most important issue is that you are consistent and stick to the rules of the system you have chosen. If you want to have a look at a specific system, the Harvard Referencing System is widely used, and you can find information about it on the Library's Referencing webpage.

## Appendix 2

### Faculty Marking/Grade Criteria for Masters Level Assignments

#### General

These guidelines are intended to spell out the criteria that are used to assess written work. The criteria show the features we expect to see in work of a given mark or grade. To achieve a given grade, students do not have to have met all the criteria listed; however, they must have demonstrated a preponderance of those qualities in their work. Although modes of assessment vary (essays, dissertations, other forms of written output) the principles by which markers arrive at their judgements remain the same. Below is a list of aspects of students' work that may be taken into account during assessment, as appropriate.

- Relevance of material in the essay to the title of the assignment.
- Relevance to the content of the course.
- Understanding of issues or problems under discussion.
- Knowledge and understanding of relevant readings.
- Critical discussion of relevant readings.
- Use of suitable data.
- Clarity and depth in the analysis of theory, data and issues under discussion.
- Coherence of argument.
- Clarity and relevance of introduction and conclusion.
- Clarity and precision of expression.
- Use of appropriate and consistent conventions for referring to other people's work.
- Clarity of presentation (layout, including use of paragraphs and tables, for example).
- Clarity of writing including grammar, punctuation, spelling and sentence construction.
- Compliance with published regulations on the completion of assessed work by the coursework deadline

#### Criteria for the award of marks

##### 70 + (distinction)

A piece of written work in the 70+ range is one of exceptional quality, requiring a high level of conceptual ability and an extremely thorough and conscientious approach to study. Work in this range will clearly demonstrate the capacity to proceed to a higher research degree. It is distinguished by:

### ***Argument***

- A clearly expressed and convincing argument which is used to develop a coherent and logical framework within which to answer the question or address the topic, and which is well grounded in existing theory and research, leading to a reasoned conclusion fully supported by the foregoing material.
- A capacity to relate consistently the theoretical and empirical material to the conceptual framework.
- Substantial evidence of independent research.
- The absence of irrelevant or extraneous material.

### ***Understanding***

- A thorough understanding of the topic and its implications.
- A clear and consistent focus on the issues raised by the question/topic.
- An insightful argument showing signs of originality.

### ***Style***

- Good grammar, punctuation, spelling and sentence construction.
- Thorough use of conventions of referring to other people's work

### ***Marks within this classification may vary due to–***

- An original capacity to develop arguments beyond those available in the literature.
- The depth and sophistication of the conceptual argument.
- The level of familiarity with the theoretical and research literature.

### **60-69 (Merit)**

A piece of written work of a good to very good standard requiring clarity of thought and expression. It will display an ability to handle the relevant literature in an analytical manner. It will be more than a good description of the various theories and/or studies relevant to the question – it will demonstrate a marshalling of relevant information by means of analysis and interpretation. It will not necessarily have a water-tight argument, but it will be clearly structured and its conclusions will not take the reader by surprise. Such a piece of work will generally show less independence of thought and mastery of detail that is required for a mark of 70 or over. There may be some errors or misjudgements with regard to issues which are not central to the argument. Work in this range will normally demonstrate the capacity to proceed to a higher research degree. It is distinguished by:

### ***Argument***

- A logical, coherent framework within which to answer the question or address the topic.
- An ability to organise the data in a way that provides a clear and logical answer to, or discussion of, the question/topic.
- A clearly expressed theme or argument developed from a critical consideration of relevant literature.

### ***Understanding***

- A good understanding of the topic and its implications.
- Familiarity with the relevant literature and empirical data.
- The avoidance of irrelevant or extraneous material.
- Evaluation of competing arguments.
- Conclusion supported by the body of the argument and evidence.
- Some evidence of independent research.
- Avoidance of unsubstantiated assertions.

### ***Style***

- Good grammar, punctuation, spelling and sentence construction.
- Good use of conventions of referring to other people's work

### ***Marks within this category may vary due to–***

- The clarity and cogency of the overall argument.
- The level of familiarity with the relevant literature and data.
- The depth and coherence of the answer.

### **50-59 (Pass)**

A piece of written work of a moderate to good standard. It will be descriptively strong. It is distinguished from the 60-69 piece by the level of analysis displayed and by the coherence with which the material is organised. There may be some significant errors, misjudgements or omissions of important details. A mark in this range would not normally demonstrate the capacity to proceed to a higher research degree. It is characterised by:

### ***Argument***

- An attempt to answer the question or address the topic,
- A conclusion not entirely supported by or relevant to the body of the essay.
- A failure to adequately organise an answer into a coherent whole.

### ***Understanding***

- A reasonable understanding of the topic and its implications.
- A level of empirical knowledge and relevant reading which demonstrates a conscientious attempt to tackle the question/topic.
- The intrusion of some extraneous material.
- A failure to grasp at least some relevant points or address some relevant literature.

### ***Style***

- Adequate grammar, punctuation, spelling and sentence construction.
- Referencing that is incomplete or fails to observe some conventions for referring to other people's work.

### ***Marks within this category may vary due to–***

- The level of empirical and theoretical knowledge displayed.

- The seriousness with which an attempt has been made to answer the question or address the topic.
- The number of major points that have been covered.
- The coherence of the essay.
- The degree of unsubstantiated assertion.
- Written style (grammar, spelling, punctuation and sentence construction).

**40- 49 (Fail - with the possibility of condonation in accordance with the Faculty regulations.)**

A piece of written work in this category shows signs of engagement with the question or topic, but has inadequacies at Master's level. It signals a failure to give sufficient thought to the work in hand, displaying inconsistent argument, unsubstantiated assertions, and a patchy acquaintance with the relevant literature. It may lack a convincing conclusion and it is likely to include significant errors, omissions and misunderstandings. It is characterised by:

***Argument***

- A failure to order this material so as to provide an adequate answer to the question.
- An ability to pick out some of the points required for a satisfactory answer.
- Inadequate conclusion.

***Understanding***

- Some knowledge of appropriate empirical material.
- The intrusion of irrelevant material.
- An inadequate familiarity with relevant literature.

***Marks within this category may vary due to–***

- The level of empirical knowledge displayed.
- The extent to which an effort has been made to answer the question or address the topic.
- Evidence of conscientious effort.
- The degree of unsubstantiated assertion.
- Written style (grammar, punctuation, spelling and sentence construction).

***Style***

- Sub-standard grammar, punctuation, spelling and sentence construction.
- Inadequate use of conventions of referring to other people's work

### **Marks below 40 (Fail - without possibility of condonation)**

- Marks in the 30 - 39 range indicate that the piece of written work is inadequate in every respect with pronounced errors and misunderstandings. It is characterised by:
- Some empirical knowledge.
- Some evidence of study in the area concerned.
- An inability to develop any but the flimsiest answer to the question.
- Problematic conclusion.

### **Using the full range of marks**

Departments are encouraged to make use of the full range of marks available, including using marks of below 30% and of above 80% where this is appropriate.

### **High marks**

#### **Marks above 80 (High distinction)**

Marks above 80% will given to work that demonstrates the strengths listed for marks above 70%. In addition, it will show original thinking going beyond that in the existing literature and backed up by appropriate evidence and reasoning. Marks above 90% will be given to work that is of a quality suitable for publication in an international refereed journal.

### **Low marks**

#### **Marks below 30 (A poor Fail)**

A mark below 30 means that the student has not given sufficient attention to study, has a lack of basic knowledge, and an inability to tackle the question or topic. It is characterised by:

- Inadequate knowledge of relevant literature.
- Inadequate understanding of relevant literature.
- No or totally flawed attempt to examine the issue(s) posed in the question.
- No or totally confused attempt to answer the question.
- Little or no structure in the presentation of argument.
- No, or irrelevant conclusion.

Marks of below 20% will be given to work demonstrating almost no knowledge or understanding of the literature and of the subject area. Any knowledge displayed will be completely misinterpreted.

Marks of below 10% will be given to work demonstrating almost complete incoherence and irrelevance.

## **Individual modules**

**FASS507: Introduction to the Philosophy of the Social Sciences**

**FASS507: Introduction to the Philosophy of the Social Sciences (distance learning)**

Marks will be reached in accordance with the FASS marking scheme.

**FASS510: Qualitative Methods in the Social Sciences**

Marks will be reached in accordance with the FASS marking scheme.

The Faculty's marking scheme is supplemented by consideration of the particular learning outcomes of FASS510:

On successful completion of this module students will be able to:

- demonstrate familiarity with key methodological issues and challenges concerning qualitative research in the arts, humanities and social sciences
- critically appreciate the strengths and limitations of a range of different qualitative research methods in the arts, humanities and social sciences
- understand how broader research questions, theories and debates relate to qualitative research methods in the arts, humanities and social sciences
- articulate in writing and orally the character, implications and rationale of the methods they use in their own research

**FASS512: Quantitative Research Methods 2**

**FASS512d: Quantitative Research Methods 2 (distance learning)**

Three short assignments (2 x 1,500 words; 1 x 2,000 words) based on analysing and interpreting real data relating to research or policy issues in the social sciences and humanities. The assignments will assess students' ability to input and analyse a data set in "R", choose appropriate methods for the given data set, and interpret the output from "R", having applied the chosen methods correctly and with relevance to the specific questions of interest.

**Assessment one (20% of total mark):**

Descriptive data analysis, numerical summaries, tables, graphics, etc.

**Assessment two (40% of total mark):**

Confidence intervals and significance testing.

**Assessment three (40% of total mark):**

Regression analysis and correlation.

**Mark categories and associated classifications of ability:**

**70% and over**

- High competence in the use of “R”.
- Ability to make a basic level interpretation of output in nearly all situations.
- Ability to make an in-depth interpretation of output in most situations.

**60 to 69%**

- High competence in the use of “R”.
- Ability to make a basic level interpretation of output in most situations.
- Ability to make an in-depth interpretation of output in a substantial number of situations.

**50 to 59% (Pass)**

- Moderate competence in the use of “R”.
- Ability to make a basic level interpretation of output in most situations.

**40 to 49%**

- Moderate competence in the use of “R”.
- Ability to make a basic level interpretation of output in a substantial number of situations but not most situations.

**Below 40%**

- Ability to make a basic level interpretation of output in less than a substantial number of situations or very low competence in the use of “R”..

## **Appendix 3**

### **Plagiarism Framework**

The [University's Plagiarism Framework](#) is available online.

This Framework (and the sanctions within it) applies to all coursework submitted by students for examination by the University in all academic programmes other than research degrees.

This webpage also provides links to further information on plagiarism procedures and guidelines on how to avoid plagiarism.