



PRIFYSGOL CYMRU
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
UNIVERSITY OF WALES
Trinity Saint David
SWANSEA - ABERTAWE

DBA

Module Handbook: BMDB7004

Leadership and Decision-Making in
Complex Environments

Summer 2021

Module Lead: Julie Hayward

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MODULE AIMS

- To enable candidates to understand the need to differentiate organisational and societal actions according to simple, complicated, complex and chaotic domains.
- To equip candidates with the knowledge, skills and applied understanding of sensemaking and change within complex adaptive systems.
- To critically appraise the role of leadership in the context of complex adaptive systems.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon the successful completion of this module, the student should be able to:

- design a leadership framework that aligns with the needs of complex adaptive systems;
- devise plans that anticipate and allow for rapid adaption to unintended consequences that emerge as a result of actions taken in complex environments;
- demonstrate enhanced critical awareness of leadership and management influence in complex adaptive systems through an applied understanding of Actor-Network Theory.

INDICATIVE CONTENT

- Complexity theory, applied concepts and frameworks in the context of Complex Adaptive Systems.
- Methods for Sensemaking in complex adaptive systems (e.g. concepts such as Checkland's Soft Systems Methodology and applied techniques such as SenseMaker by Cognitive Edge).
- Low probability, high impact events and links to unintended consequences in complex adaptive systems.
- Ashby's Law of Requisite Variety.
- Alignment of leadership and management actions with the governing principles of simple, complicated, complex and chaotic domains.
- International Risk Governance Council risk and uncertainty framework.

- Applied Actor network Theory in the context of Complex Adaptive Systems.

LEARNING AND TEACHING STRATEGY

Learning will be delivered on campus. Learning design will incorporate practices suggested in the Larnaca Declaration on Learning Design to meet the characteristics of doctoral graduates set out in the QAA Characteristics Statement (2015, p. 4). learning will take place over a period of 10 weeks and the learning strategy will look to design and delivery activities that encourage self-directed and self-management of learning, where candidates can expect to:

- search for, discover, access, retrieve, sift, interpret, analyse, evaluate, manage, conserve and communicate an ever-increasing volume of knowledge from a range of sources,
- think critically about problems to produce innovative solutions and create new knowledge
- plan, manage and deliver projects [learning], selecting and justifying appropriate methodological processes while recognising, evaluating and minimising the risks involved and impact on the environment,
- exercise professional standards in research and research integrity, and engage in professional practice, including ethical, legal, and health and safety aspects, bringing enthusiasm, perseverance and integrity to bear on their work activities,
- support, collaborate with and lead colleagues, using a range of teaching, communication and networking skills to influence practice and policy in diverse environments
- appreciate the need to engage in research with impact and to be able to communicate it to diverse audiences, including the public.
- build relationships with peers, senior colleagues, students and stakeholders with sensitivity to equality, diversity and cultural issues.

The study time for the module is divided as follows:

Activity type	Hours	Percentage
Scheduled learning	80	27
Independent learning	220	73
Placement learning	0	0
TOTAL	300	100%

ASSESSMENT

Assessment Component 1

☐ Written exam ☐ Coursework ☒ Practical

Mode of assessment	Volume	Weighting
Academic interview	45 minutes	50%

Assessment Component 2

☐ Written exam ☒ Coursework ☐ Practical

Mode of assessment	Volume	Weighting
Portfolio	7 components	50%

Assessment Summary

Activity type	Percentage
Written exam	
Coursework	50
Practical	50
TOTAL	100%

READING LIST

Module Code	BMDB7004	
Module Title	Leadership and Decision-Making in Complex Environments	
Classification	Reading List entry	Electronic *
Essential	Allen, P., Maguire, S. and McKelvey, B., (2011). <i>The sage handbook of complexity and management</i> . London: Sage Publications.	NO
Essential	Snowden, D.J. and Boone, M.E. (2007) A leaders framework for decision making, <i>Harvard Business Review</i> , 85(11) 68-76	X
Essential	Weick, K.E. (1995). <i>Sensemaking in organizations</i> (Vol. 3). Sage.	NO
Further	Ashby, W.R. (1956) <i>An introduction to cybernetics</i> , London: Chapman and Hall	NO
Further	Beer, S. (1995) <i>The Brain of the Firm</i> . Chichester: Wiley	NO
Further	Ashby, W.R., (1991). Requisite variety and its implications for the control of complex systems. In <i>Facets of systems science</i> (pp. 405-417). Springer US	NO
Further	Bennet, A. and Bennet, D., (2004). <i>Organizational survival in the new world</i> . Routledge.	NO
Further	Carlisle, Y.M. and McMillan, E., (2017) Complex Adaptive Systems and Strategy as Learning. In <i>Global Innovation and Entrepreneurship</i> (pp. 43-60). Springer International Publishing.	NO
Further	Kraaijenbrink, J. and Spender, J.C. (2010) The Resource-Based view: A review and assessment of critiques, <i>Journal of Management</i> , 36(1), 349-372	X
Further	McDaniel, R.R., (2007) Management strategies for complex adaptive systems sensemaking, learning, and improvisation. <i>Performance Improvement Quarterly</i> , 20(2), pp.21-41.	X
Further	McMillan, S. S., Kelly, F., Sav, A., Kendall, E., King, M. A., Whitty, J. A., & Wheeler, A. J. (2014). Using the Nominal Group Technique: how to analyse across multiple groups. <i>Health Services and Outcomes Research Methodology</i> , 14(3), 92-108.	X
Further	Michael, M. (2017). <i>Actor-Network Theory: Trials, trials and translations</i> . London: Sage	NO
Further	Miller, J.H., & Page, S.E. (2007). <i>Complex Adaptive Systems: An introduction to computational models of social life</i> . Oxford: Princeton Press	NO

Further	Morgan J (2014) <i>The future of work</i> , Wiley, New Jersey	NO
Further	Nason, R., (2017). <i>It's Not Complicated: The Art and Science of Complexity in Business</i> . Toronto: University of Toronto Press.	NO
Further	Taleb, N.N. (2007). <i>Black Swan</i> . 2nd ed. London: Penguin	NO
Further	Taleb, N.N. (2012). <i>Antifragile: things that gain from disorder</i> . New York: Random House.	NO

ASSIGNMENT 1

Student name:		Student ID number:	
Programme:	Doctor of Business Administration		
Module:	Leadership and Decision Making in Complex Environments		
Module code:	BMDB7004	Contribution to Overall Module Assessment (%):	50%
Lecturer:	Julie Hayward	Internal Verifier:	Gareth Hughes
Assignment Title:	Leadership Dilemmas	Word count (or equivalent):	4000
Submission deadline:	Friday 2 nd of July	The return date of provisional marks & written feedback:	Monday 2 nd August
Submission method:	All written assessments, where practical and possible, must be submitted via Turnitin unless otherwise instructed by the Lecturer. (Please DO NOT put this assessment specification into Turnitin or it will match many similarities with other students' submissions.) Alternative submission method (if applicable): Late submission of the assessment will result in a late penalty mark. Penalties for late submission: Up to one week late, maximum mark of 50%. Over one week late, 0%. Only the Extenuating Circumstances Panel may approve a change to submission dates.		
Academic honesty referencing:	Academic honesty is required. In the main body of your submission you must give credit to authors on whose research and ideas your work is based. Append to your submission a reference list that indicates the books, articles, etc. that you have used, cited or quoted in order to complete this assessment.		

Module Learning Outcomes (from module syllabus)

- Design a leadership framework that aligns with the needs of complex adaptive systems;
- Demonstrate enhanced critical awareness of leadership and management influence in complex adaptive systems through an applied understanding of Actor-Network Theory.

TASK DESCRIPTION

For this assessment, you will produce a portfolio of evidence-based on your investigation of a leadership dilemma.

1. Conduct a 30-minute interview with a leader of your choice that explores the concepts introduced in week 1 and week 2 of the module (complexity, the future of jobs, redistribution of wealth, resilience, societal competitive advantage or innovation). Identify what they see as their current and most significant leadership dilemma. Submit your interview questions and record of the interview as evidence, along with a bibliography of sources used to inform your interview questions.
2. Based on the outcome of the interview write an 800-word blog post that highlights the leadership dilemma identified and includes a call to action.
3. Write a series of 'tweet' style social media posts (no more than 280 characters) that draws attention to the identified leadership dilemma and uses the #leadershipdilemmas. Share these posts on any social media of your choosing and in the #leadershipdilemmas channel in the module Teams site. Choose five of your 'tweets' and put them in a table, along with any responses they had, and submit these along with a 500-word statement that:
 - Reflects on your experience of writing about and sharing your thoughts on leadership using social media platforms.
 - Considers the significance of human and non-human actors in communicating ideas and values with reference to actor-network theory.

4. Based on the interactions and reach of your posts conduct a network analysis of your own network and identify in a development plan (approximately 600 words) how you will strengthen your networks across boundaries to help you achieve your research objectives. Reference your plan with any resources you will use.
5. Participate in a 20-minute debate with fellow DBA candidates on a given topic. Submit a reflection on the outcomes of the debate (approximately 600 words) as evidence.
6. Produce a slideshow (using a media of your choice) that describes how at least one of the decision making concepts introduced in the module (Sensemaking, Soft Systems Methodology, Design Thinking or Cynefin) can contribute to solving the identified dilemma. The presentation should include speaker notes of approximately 600 words and be appropriately referenced using the Harvard convention.
7. Using your knowledge of the leadership approaches introduced in the module create a model of leadership that is best suited to achieving the desired outcomes for the dilemma identified. Include a 400-word description of the model with appropriate citations.

As far as possible your evidence should be compiled into one Word document with links to other media (where used) and activities clearly labelled. The portfolio should be presented professionally and demonstrate creativity.

GUIDANCE FOR STUDENTS IN THE COMPLETION OF TASKS

NOTE: The guidance offered below is linked to the five generic assessment criteria overleaf.

1. Engagement with Literature Skills

Your work must be informed and supported by scholarly material that is *relevant* to and *focused* on the task(s) set; you should make use of scholarly reviews and primary sources, as appropriate (for example, refereed research articles and/or original materials appropriate to the discipline). You should provide evidence that you have accessed a wide *range* of sources, which may be academic, governmental and industrial; these sources may include academic journal articles, textbooks, current news articles, organisational documents, and websites. You should consider the *credibility* of your sources; academic journals are normally highly credible sources while websites require careful consideration/selection and should be used sparingly. Any sources you use should be current and up-to-date, mostly published within the last five years or so, though seminal/important works in the field may be older. You must provide *evidence* of your research/own reading throughout your work, using correctly a suitable referencing system, including in-text citations in the main body of your work and a reference list at the end of your work.

Guidance specific to this assessment: *All evidence should be appropriately referenced using the UWTSD Harvard referencing standard. You should aim to reference a minimum of one source for every 100 words written. Sources selected must be highly credible and at least one third selected from the last 5 years.*

2. Knowledge and Understanding Skills

At level 7, you should be able to demonstrate a systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of your academic discipline, field of study or area of professional practice, with a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to your own research or advanced scholarship. Your work must demonstrate your growing mastery of these concepts, principles, current challenges, innovation and insights associated with the subject area. *Knowledge* relates to the facts, information and skills you have acquired through your learning. You demonstrate your *understanding* by interpreting the meaning of the facts and information (knowledge). This means that you need to select and include in your work the contemporary concepts, techniques, models, theories, etc. appropriate to the task(s) set. You should be able to explain the theories, concepts, etc. meaningfully to show your understanding. Your mark/grade will also depend upon the *extent* to which you demonstrate your knowledge and understanding; ideally, each should be complete and detailed, with comprehensive coverage.

Guidance specific to this assessment: *Demonstration of knowledge and understanding of the concepts outlined in the learning outcomes of the module with reference to the essential reading included in the reading list.*

3. Cognitive and Intellectual Skills

You should be able to: evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline; evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses; deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively to make sound judgements in the absence of complete data. Your work must contain evidence of logical, analytical thinking, evaluation and synthesis. For example, to examine and break information down into parts, make inferences, compile, compare and contrast information. This means not just describing what! But also justifying: Why? How? When? Who? Where? At what cost? At all times, you must provide justification for your arguments and judgements. Evidence that you have reflected upon the ideas of experts within the subject area is crucial to you providing a reasoned and informed debate within your work. Your choice of methodologies to gather data and information must be rigorously defended. Furthermore, you should provide evidence that you are able to make sound judgements and convincing arguments using data and concepts. Sound, valid,

persuasive conclusions are necessary and must be derived from the content of your work. Where relevant, alternative solutions and recommendations may be proposed.

Guidance specific to this assessment: *Advanced level critical thinking and writing skills are expected*

4. Practical Skills

At level 7, you should be able to demonstrate originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline. This includes acting autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level, originality in tackling and solving problems, and decision-making in complex and unpredictable contexts or situations.

You should be able to demonstrate mastery of the leading edge subject-related concepts and ideas as they relate to real-world situations and/or particular contexts. How do they work in practice? You will deploy models, methods, techniques, and/or theories, in those contexts or circumstances, to assess current situations, perhaps to formulate plans or plausible, justifiable recommendations to solve problems, or to propose new models, or to create artefacts, which may be innovative and creative, thereby demonstrating your understanding of how the boundaries of knowledge are advanced through research and/or application. This is likely to involve, for instance, the use of real-world artefacts, examples and cases, the application of a model within an organisation and/or benchmarking one theory or organisation against others.

Guidance specific to this assessment: *The portfolio outcomes must be applied to the selected leadership dilemma and demonstrate original thinking and creativity.*

5. Transferable Skills for Life and Professional Practice

Your work must provide evidence of the qualities and transferable skills necessary for postgraduate-level employment in circumstances requiring sound judgement, personal responsibility and initiative in complex and unpredictable professional environments. This includes demonstrating: the independent learning ability for continuing professional development to advance existing skills and acquire new competencies of a professional nature that will enable you to assume significant responsibility within organisations; that you can initiate and complete tasks, projects and procedures, whether individually and/or collaboratively, to a professional level; that you can use appropriate media to effectively communicate information, arguments and analysis in a variety of forms for a variety of audiences; fluency of expression; clarity and effectiveness in presentation and organisation. Work should be coherent and well-structured in presentation and organisation.

Guidance specific to this assessment:

- *The 7 pieces of evidence should be compiled into one documents where possible and external links provided to any other media sources.*
- *Written in English in an appropriate business/academic style.*
- *Length: 4,000 words (equivalent) +/- 10% (Marks will be taken off for skills for professional practice where the word count is exceeded)*
- *Formatting: Typed on A4 paper in Times New Roman or Arial font 12 with at least 2.5-centimetre space at each edge, double spaced and pages numbered.*
- *Document format: Portfolio with a clear title page and each piece of evidence clearly labelled*

Additional Information

Essential Resources:

- Resources listed on the lecture schedule and Moodle
- The module handbook & reading list
- UWTSD References Guide <https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/library/infoskills/referencing-guides/>
- The below assessment criteria

STUDENT FEEDBACK FORM

This section details the *extent* to which the assessment criteria are demonstrated by you, which in turn determines your mark. The marks available for each category of skill are shown. Lecturers will use the space provided to comment on the achievement of the task(s), including those areas in which you have performed well and areas that would benefit from development/improvement.

Generic Assessment Criteria	Marks available	Marks awarded
1. Engagement with Literature Skills	20	
2. Knowledge and Understanding Skills	20	
3. Cognitive and Intellectual Skills	25	
4. Practical Application Skills	25	
5. Transferable Skills for Life and Professional Practice	10	

Assessment Mark (Assessment marks are subject to ratification at the Exam Board. These comments and marks are to give feedback on module work and are for guidance only until they are confirmed.)	Late Submission Penalties (tick if appropriate)		%
	Up to 1 week late (50% Max)		
	Over 1 week late (0%)		

ASSIGNMENT 2

Student name:		Student ID number:	
Programme:	Doctor of Business Administration		
Module:	Leadership and Decision Making in Complex Environments		
Module code:	BMDB7004	Contribution to Overall Module Assessment (%):	50%
Lecturer:	Julie Hayward	Internal Verifier:	Gareth Hughes
Assignment Title:	Academic Interview	Word count (or equivalent):	4000
Submission deadline:	W/C 28th June 2021	The return date of provisional marks & written feedback:	26th July 2021
Submission method:	All written assessments, where practical and possible, must be submitted via Turnitin unless otherwise instructed by the Lecturer. (Please DO NOT put this assessment specification into Turnitin or it will match many similarities with other students' submissions.) Alternative submission method (if applicable): Late submission of the assessment will result in a late penalty mark. Penalties for late submission: Up to one week late, maximum mark of 50%. Over one week late, 0%. Only the Extenuating Circumstances Panel may approve a change to submission dates.		
Academic honesty / referencing:	Academic honesty is required. In the main body of your submission you must give credit to authors on whose research and ideas your work is based. Append to your submission a reference list that indicates the books, articles, etc. that you have used, cited or quoted in order to complete this assessment.		

Module Learning Outcomes (from module syllabus)
• design a leadership framework that aligns with the needs of complex adaptive system • devise plans that anticipate and allow for rapid adaption to unintended consequences that emerge as a result of actions taken in complex environment • demonstrate enhanced critical awareness of leadership and management influence in complex adaptive systems through applied understanding of Actor-Network Theory

TASK DESCRIPTION

A 45-minute academic interview that seeks to assess attainment of the above learning outcomes.

Students will be asked a series of questions linked to the concepts covered in the module content, including but not limited to:

- Actor-Network Theory
- Complex adaptive systems
- Network science
- Approaches to leadership and their theoretical underpinning
- Sensemaking and other leadership decision-making frameworks
- Ashby's Law of Requisite Variety

GUIDANCE FOR STUDENTS IN THE COMPLETION OF

TASKS

NOTE: The guidance offered below is linked to the five generic assessment criteria overleaf.

6. Engagement with Literature Skills

Your work must be informed and supported by scholarly material that is *relevant* to and *focused* on the task(s) set; you should make use of scholarly reviews and primary sources, as appropriate (for example, refereed research articles and/or original materials appropriate to the discipline). You should provide evidence that you have accessed a wide *range* of sources, which may be academic, governmental and industrial; these sources may include academic journal articles, textbooks, current news articles, organisational documents, and websites. You should consider the *credibility* of your sources; academic journals are normally highly credible sources while websites require careful consideration/selection and should be used sparingly. Any sources you use should be current and up-to-date, mostly published within the last five years or so, though seminal/important works in the field may be older. You must provide *evidence* of your research/own reading throughout your work, using correctly a suitable referencing system, including in-text citations in the main body of your work and a reference list at the end of your work.

Guidance specific to this assessment: *During the interview, it is expected you will refer to the sources of information that have informed your response.*

7. Knowledge and Understanding Skills

At level 7, you should be able to demonstrate a systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of your academic discipline, field of study or area of professional practice, with a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to your own research or advanced scholarship. Your work must demonstrate your growing mastery of these concepts, principles, current challenges, innovation and insights associated with the subject area. *Knowledge* relates to the facts, information and skills you have acquired through your learning. You demonstrate your *understanding* by interpreting the meaning of the facts and information (knowledge). This means that you need to select and include in your work the contemporary concepts, techniques, models, theories, etc. appropriate to the task(s) set. You should be able to explain the theories, concepts, etc. meaningfully to show your understanding. Your mark/grade will also depend upon the *extent* to which you demonstrate your knowledge and understanding; ideally, each should be complete and detailed, with comprehensive coverage.

Guidance specific to this assessment: *Demonstration of knowledge and understanding of the concepts outlined in the learning outcomes of the module with reference to the essential reading included in the reading list.*

8. Cognitive and Intellectual Skills

You should be able to: evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline; evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses; deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively to make sound judgements in the absence of complete data. Your work must contain evidence of logical, analytical thinking, evaluation and synthesis. For example, to examine and break information down into parts, make inferences, compile, compare and contrast information. This means not just describing what! But also justifying: Why? How? When? Who? Where? At what cost? At all times, you must provide justification for your arguments and judgements. Evidence that you have reflected upon the ideas of experts within the subject area is crucial to you providing a reasoned and informed debate within your work. Your choice of methodologies to gather data and information must be rigorously defended. Furthermore, you should provide evidence that you are able to make sound judgements and convincing arguments using data and concepts. Sound, valid, persuasive conclusions are necessary and must be derived from the content of your work. Where relevant, alternative solutions and recommendations may be proposed.

Guidance specific to this assessment: N/A

9. Practical Skills

At level 7, you should be able to demonstrate originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline. This includes acting autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level, originality in tackling and solving problems, and decision-making in complex and unpredictable contexts or situations.

You should be able to demonstrate mastery of the leading edge subject-related concepts and ideas as they relate to real-world situations and/or particular contexts. How do they work in practice? You will deploy models, methods, techniques, and/or theories, in those contexts or circumstances, to assess current situations, perhaps to formulate plans or plausible, justifiable recommendations to solve problems, or to propose new models, or to create artefacts, which may be innovative and creative, thereby demonstrating your understanding of how the boundaries of knowledge are advanced through research and/or application. This is likely to involve, for instance, the use of real-world artefacts, examples and cases, the application of a model within an organisation and/or benchmarking one theory or organisation against others.

Guidance specific to this assessment: N/A

10. Transferable Skills for Life and Professional Practice

Your work must provide evidence of the qualities and transferable skills necessary for postgraduate-level employment in circumstances requiring sound judgement, personal responsibility and initiative in complex and unpredictable professional environments. This includes demonstrating: the independent learning ability for continuing professional development to advance existing skills and acquire new competencies of a professional nature that will enable you to assume significant responsibility within organisations; that you can initiate and complete tasks, projects and procedures, whether individually and/or collaboratively, to a professional level; that you can use appropriate media to effectively communicate information, arguments and analysis in a variety of forms for a variety of audiences; fluency of expression; clarity and effectiveness in presentation and organisation. Work should be coherent and well-structured in presentation and organisation.

Guidance specific to this assessment: You should coherently address the questions posed using appropriate academic and professional language.

STUDENT FEEDBACK FORM

This section details the *extent* to which the assessment criteria are demonstrated by you, which in turn determines your mark. The marks available for each category of skill are shown. Lecturers will use the space provided to comment on the achievement of the task(s), including those areas in which you have performed well and areas that would benefit from development/improvement.

Generic Assessment Criteria	Marks available	Marks awarded
1. Engagement with Literature Skills		15
2. Knowledge and Understanding Skills		25
3. Cognitive and Intellectual Skills		25
4. Practical Application Skills		25
5. Transferable Skills for Life and Professional Practice		10

Assessment Mark (Assessment marks are subject to ratification at the Exam Board. These comments and marks are to give feedback on module work and are for guidance only until they are confirmed.)	Late Submission Penalties (tick if appropriate)		%
	Up to 1 week late (50% Max)		
	Over 1 week late (0%)		

GENERIC ASSESSMENT CRITERIA							
Level 7							
In accordance with the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, at the end of Level 7 students should be able to demonstrate: a systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline or area of professional practice; a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship; originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline; conceptual understanding that enables the student to evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline to evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses. They will be able to deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences. They will demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level to continue to advance their knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level. They the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility; decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations/professional environments; and the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development.							

Level 7	FAIL	FAIL	MARGINAL FAIL	SATISFACTORY (Pass)	GOOD to VERY GOOD (Merit)	EXCELLENT (Distinction)	EXCEPTIONAL (Distinction)
Category	0-29%	30-44%	45-49%	50-59%	60-69%	70-84%	85-100%
Engagement with literature (including current research, referencing, academic conventions and academic honesty)	Little or no evidence of reading and/or reliance on inappropriate sources. Views and findings mostly unsupported and non-authoritative. Referencing conventions used incoherently or largely absent.	Poor engagement with essential reading. No evidence of wider reading. Reliance on inappropriate sources, and/or indiscriminate use of sources. Heavily reliant on information gained through class contact. Inconsistent and weak use of referencing.	Engagement with a very limited range of relevant and credible sources. Some omissions and minor errors. Referencing conventions evident though not always applied accurately or consistently.	Engagement with an appropriate range of research-informed literature, including sources retrieved independently. Some over-reliance on texts. Referencing may show minor inaccuracies or inconsistencies	Engagement with a wide range of research-informed literature, including sources retrieved independently. Selection of relevant and credible sources. Very good use of referencing, with no/very few inaccuracies or	Engagement with an extensive range of relevant and credible literature, informed by the latest research. Consistently accurate application of referencing.	Exceptional engagement with an extensive range of relevant and credible literature, informed by the latest research. High-level referencing skills consistently and professionally applied.

Level 7	FAIL	FAIL	MARGINAL FAIL	SATISFACTORY (Pass)	GOOD to VERY GOOD (Merit)	EXCELLENT (Distinction)	EXCEPTIONAL (Distinction)
Category	0-29%	30-44%	45-49%	50-59%	60-69%	70-84%	85-100%
				.	inconsistencies		
Knowledge and understanding (A systematic, conceptual understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of the discipline; a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research)	Major gaps in knowledge and understanding of the subject matter is not systematic. Substantial inaccuracies. No awareness of current problems, insights or the latest research and/or advanced scholarship within the discipline.	Gaps in knowledge, with only superficial systematic understanding. Some significant inaccuracies and/or irrelevant material. No critical awareness of current problems, insights, or latest research within the discipline.	Limited knowledge and systematic understanding of the concepts and principles within the subject area, which to some marginal extent, is informed by current research and scholarship. Some critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, but often under-developed.	Knowledge is accurate and reasonably detailed. A systematic understanding of the field of study informed by, to some extent, current research and scholarship. A critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights though this may be under-developed occasionally.	Knowledge has a well-defined focus, which is reasonably extensive, coherent and detailed, with a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights. Exhibits good understanding of the breadth and depth of contemporary and established views, and the work is, at least in part, well-informed by current research and scholarship.	Excellent mastery of a complex and specialised area of knowledge. A systematic, excellent understanding of the concepts of the subject informed by current research and scholarship. Highly critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights. A critical, awareness of how the boundaries of knowledge are advanced through research.	Exceptional mastery of a complex and specialised area of knowledge. An exceptionally critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights. An outstanding understanding of the concepts of the subject, well-informed by current research and scholarship. A critical, sophisticated and nuanced awareness of how the boundaries of knowledge are advanced through research.
Cognitive and intellectual skills	Wholly or almost wholly descriptive work. Little or	Largely descriptive work, with superficial use	Limited attempt at critical evaluation/ critique of	Some critical evaluation/ critique of current	Sound critical evaluation/ critique of current	Excellent critical evaluation/ critique of	Exceptional critical evaluation/ critique of

Level 7	FAIL	FAIL	MARGINAL FAIL	SATISFACTORY (Pass)	GOOD to VERY GOOD (Merit)	EXCELLENT (Distinction)	EXCEPTIONAL (Distinction)
Category	0-29%	30-44%	45-49%	50-59%	60-69%	70-84%	85-100%
(Critical evaluation of current research and methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses; make sound judgements in the absence of complete data.)	no evaluation or critique or attempt at a systematic approach. Failure to develop arguments, leading to illogical or invalid judgements. Unsubstantiated generalisations, made without use of credible evidence.	of critical evaluation of research and methodologies. Absent or weak development of hypotheses and judgements. Information accepted uncritically, uses generalised statements made with scant evidence and unsubstantiated opinions. Ideas sometimes illogical and contradictory.	current research and methodologies, tending towards description. Limited attempt to propose new hypotheses. Can deal with complex issues but not systematically or creatively. Some evidence to support emerging judgements but these may be underdeveloped or with a little inconsistency / mis-interpretation. May assert rather than argue a case.	research and methodologies, though slightly underdeveloped in places, Proposes adequate but limited new hypotheses, where relevant. Can deal with complex issues but not fully systematically or creatively. Ability to make judgements based on data (that may be incomplete) but with some tendency to assert/state opinion rather than argue on the basis of reason and evidence.	research and methodologies, Proposes new hypotheses, where appropriate. Can deal with complex issues systematically and with some creativity. Ability to make sound judgements based on data (that may be incomplete)	current research and methodologies, Proposes innovative hypotheses, where appropriate. Can synthesise complex issues systematically and creatively. Ability to investigate contradictory or incomplete information and make strong, persuasive, arguments and sophisticated judgements.	current research and methodologies, Proposes innovative hypotheses, where appropriate. Exemplary systematic and creative synthesis of complex issues. Ability to investigate contradictory or incomplete information and make strong, persuasive, arguments and sophisticated, nuanced, judgements. Potential for journal publication or doctoral research.
Practical skills (Originality / creativity in the application of knowledge, tools and techniques and in tackling and solving	Limited or no use of methods, materials, tools and/or techniques. Little or no appreciation of	Rudimentary application of methods, materials, tools and/or techniques but without consideration	An awareness and mostly appropriate application of well-established methods, materials, tools	An appropriate application of standard methods, materials, tools and/or techniques. Clear	A very good application of a range of methods, materials, tools and/or techniques. Very good	An advanced application of knowledge, methods, materials, tools and/or techniques. The context of	Exceptional application skills in complex, unpredictable, contexts, drawing skilfully on the latest research within

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problems in complex and unpredictable professional situations; practical use of established techniques of research and enquiry to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline.)	the context of the application. Limited understanding of the application of theory to practice or making appropriate links between the two. Very weak problem-solving skills in complex and unpredictable contexts.	and competence. Flawed appreciation of the context of the application. Weak understanding of the application of theory to practice, with only occasional evidence of making appropriate links between the two. Weak problem-solving skills in complex and unpredictable contexts.	and/or techniques, with occasional errors. Basic appreciation of the context of the application. Theoretical knowledge and understanding applied in practice, but not always making logical links between the two. Can identify problems and propose basic solutions without fully appreciating the complexity of unpredictable contexts.	appreciation of the context of the application. Mainly consistent, accurate and logical application of theory to practice, making appropriate links between the two. Can identify problems and propose mostly appropriate solutions in complex and unpredictable contexts, with elements of originality.	consideration of the context of the application, with perceptive insights. Can identify problems and propose appropriate solutions in complex and unpredictable contexts. Evidence of originality and creativity.	the application is well considered, and insightful. Can identify complex problems and propose excellent solutions. An excellent grasp of techniques applicable to own research or advanced scholarship. Shows originality in application of knowledge and techniques, and of how established techniques of enquiry create and interpret knowledge in the discipline.	the discipline. Can identify complex problems and propose sophisticated, original solutions. An outstanding application of techniques applicable to own research or advanced scholarship. Shows originality in application of knowledge and techniques, and of how established techniques of enquiry create and interpret knowledge in the discipline with assimilation and development of cutting edge processes and techniques.
Transferable skills for life and professional	Communication medium is inappropriate or misapplied.	Communication medium is poorly designed	Can communicate in a suitable medium but	Can communicate effectively in a suitable format,	Can communicate well, confidently and	Can communicate professionally confidently and	Can communicate with an exceptionally

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practice (Exercise of self-direction, autonomy and personal responsibility; plan and implement tasks at a professional level; independent learning; use appropriate media to communicate effectively and professionally to a variety of audiences; fluency of expression; systematic approach; clarity and effectiveness in presentation and organisation.)	Work is poorly structured, disorganised and/or confusingly expressed. Very weak use of language and/or very inappropriate style. Little or no evidence of autonomy (or collaboration, where relevant) in the completion of tasks. Little or no evidence of the skills required in professional, postgraduate employment.	and/or not suitable for the audience. Work is poorly presented in a disjointed manner. It is loosely, and at times incoherently, structured, with information and ideas often poorly expressed. Weak use of language and/or inappropriate style. Weak independent initiative (or collaboration, if relevant). Limited evidence of the skills required in professional, postgraduate employment.	with some room for improvement. Mostly ordered presentation and structure in which relevant ideas / concepts are reasonably expressed. Work may lack coherence in places. Can work as part of a team, but with limited involvement in group activities. Demonstrates some but not all of the basic skills required in professional, postgraduate employment, with some areas of minor weakness.	but may have minor errors. Mostly coherent, organised work, in a suitable structure and is for the most part clearly expressed. Can work effectively independently and/or as part of a team, with clear contribution to group activities. Demonstrates the skills required in professional, postgraduate employment, with some areas of strength and some of minor weakness.	consistently in a suitable format. Work is coherent, fluent, well-structured and organised. Can work very well autonomously and/or as part of a team, with a good contribution to group activities. Demonstrates comprehensive professional, postgraduate employment skills.	consistently in a suitable format. Work is coherent, very fluent and is presented professionally. Can work autonomously with initiative. Where relevant can work professionally within a team, showing leadership skills as appropriate, managing conflict and meeting obligations. Demonstrates excellent professional, postgraduate employment skills and a strong appetite for further development.	high level of professionalism. Work is remarkably coherent, very fluent and is presented professionally. Can work outstandingly well and professionally within a team, showing advanced leadership skills. Demonstrates exemplary professional, postgraduate employment skills and a strong appetite for further development.