

Marking Guidelines for Honours Research Project - MLSC 499A/B

Grades are assigned divided between:

Thesis:	40%
Defense:	40%
Bench Work:	20% (assigned by your supervisor)

Thesis & Defense:

All theses are examined by least two examiners, one of whom may be the supervisor. The thesis and the defense are ranked on the student's understanding of their project and their ability to communicate their findings. The scientific significance of the project does not play a major role in marking, although projects that have been well-executed or present a novel scientific result may receive bonus marks.

Bench Work:

Reflects primarily factors such as effort, initiative, and ability to focus on research goals, but also reflects factors such as enthusiasm, bench technique and safety awareness. **Note that A+ is reserved for students who have displayed exceptional ability in ALL aspects of lab work.**

THESIS EVALUATION:

Thesis marking is broken down into sections that offer criteria corresponding to departmental expectations for an excellent, fair, or poor thesis. The thesis is a **presentation** of results. The scientific impact of the experiments should not be considered in marking.

Thesis Introduction - 12 Marks Total

____ / 4 - Objectives of the research:

Excellent - stated in specific terms that make it clear which aspects of the problem will be considered. Sufficiently restricted to permit analysis in some depth.

Fair - not stated in terms that are specific enough to define the limits of the problem. Tend to be somewhat broad (or narrow) for an Honours thesis.

Poor - stated in terms that are very broad, abstract or vague and are inadequate to define the problem. Are too broad to treat in enough depth in an Honours thesis - or are much too limited.

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_____/ 8 Review of literature: understanding and relevance to the research project:

Excellent - terms and concepts are clearly explained. Introduction structured to be consistent with the scope of the topic. Shows some breadth of coverage of the topic and good synthesis of material.

Fair - concepts not always clearly explained. Introduction fairly well structured in relation to the stated topic; but breadth of coverage is too great, wanders from the topic, or has narrow view. Fair understanding and synthesis of material read. Some information irrelevant or used incorrectly.

Poor - terms and concepts not explained or incorrectly explained. Introduction badly structured and very little of it is related to the objective or purpose. Tends to be disconnected summaries, indicating lack of understanding of literature. Much inaccurate use of information.

Experimental Description - 24 marks

_____/ 8 Presentation of Data

Excellent - references, figures and tables are easy for the reader to find and follow. Legends for figures and tables provide sufficient information. Effective use of tables and graphics.

Fair - sometimes difficult to find the references, figures, tables etc. cited in the text. Tables and graphics not used effectively. Legends provide insufficient information.

Poor - difficult to find the references, figures, tables etc. cited in the text. Tables and graphics used inappropriately. Ideas and presentation of data are not developed systematically.

_____/ 12 - Interpretation of Data

Excellent - careful and logical. Concise and direct. Effective discussion of principles, relationships and significance of results in light of published work. Conclusions stated clearly.

Fair - fairly careful. Tends to be a recapitulation of results with little or no interpretation in light of previously published work. Conclusions somewhat unclear.

Poor: - true meaning of data obscured by over interpretation, or illogical interpretation. Lack of discussion - information limited to recapitulation of results. Absence of concluding statements.

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____ / 4 - Sources of information (i.e. references):

Excellent - most appropriate for the research conducted. Maximum use made of primary sources. Were sufficient for research conducted.

Fair - generally satisfactory but selection could have been improved; could have made better use of primary sources. Missed some good sources.

Poor - not the best of those available. Too much dependence on general or review papers, or on books. Should have consulted more sources of information.

Thesis Presentation - 4 marks

____ / 4 - Overall organization and presentation of the thesis:

Excellent - use of sub-headings is appropriate and effective. Pleasant to read. Ideas and description of data develop logically. Meanings are clear. Sentence structure is concise, grammatical and cohesive. No spelling errors. References cited correctly.

Fair - shows evidence of some system, but this could be improved. Meanings are generally clear. Sentence structure occasionally rambling or unclear. Some repetition and some extraneous material. Some spelling errors. Some references incomplete or inconsistent.

Poor - lacks systematic arrangement. Subheadings too few for clarity or inappropriately used. Meanings often not clear. Sentence structure not grammatically correct. Much extraneous material. Considerable repetition. Many spelling errors. References often cited incorrectly.

____ / 40 Final Grade