**DVM undergraduate grading framework for years 1 and 2 uO SIDGS, July 2020**

**Grading criteria**

At the undergraduate level in DVM, professors and teaching assistants typically use the following five criteria to assess students’ assignments (exams, papers, oral presentations, etc.):

1. **Relevance:** To what extent does the assignment demonstrate an understanding of the question, of policy and/or theoretical debates, as well as of evidence central to the question?
2. **Accuracy and sophistication of the conceptual analysis:** To what extent does the assignment explain and deftly analyze relevant theories and/or concepts in the literature?
3. **Accuracy and sophistication of the empirical analysis:** To what extent does the assignment accurately present and subtly analyze relevant evidence (quantitative data, cases, testimonies, comparisons, etc.)?
4. **Substantive coherence and originality:** To what extent does the assignment coherently integrate theory and evidence? Does it offer original insights at one or both levels?
5. **Form:** Is the assignment clear, organized and the right length? Does it use proper wording, syntax and grammar? Is it supported by complete bibliographic references or is it plagiarised, wholly or in part? Is its (written or oral) presentation creative?

The weight assigned to each criterion depends on the learning objectives and other expectations spelt out in each syllabus and for each assignment. For example, theory courses often place more emphasis on the analysis and/or use of relevant concepts or theoretical frames; quantitative research or project management courses place more emphasis on the explanation and use of appropriate quantitative methods or project management tools. Most of these criteria also apply to novel assignments (blogs, podcasts or videos, community service reports, etc.). When other aspects such as collaboration are graded, professors should provide clear guidance on expectations.

The following grading framework shows how those criteria are applied to assess different components of DVM assignments at the first- and second-year levels. The final mark reflects an overall academic judgment and is not just a mechanical sum of marks received in each category. In the Annex, you will find rubrics that professors use to communicate specific expectations for different types of assignments.

**The grading framework**

**A- to A+ (excellent / exemplary): 80-100%**

* The introduction succinctly restates the question and/or key points; it also previews the paper/answer in an engaging manner.
* The assignment elaborates on relevant concepts and/or theoretical debates and assesses the applicability of the theories/approaches/policies in question. An A+ reflects a sophisticated analysis of the theories/approaches in question and avoids a simple binary analytical approach.
* The assignment accurately presents and analyzes relevant data (quantitative, historical, cases, etc.). A+ reflects an assessment of actual and/or potential unintended positive and negative consequences of the actual situation or of the suggested policy interventions.
* The assignment uses a comparative approach, temporal or cross-case analysis (where appropriate), assessing similarities and differences. An A+ reflects considerable effort in properly highlighting similarities and differences and drawing appropriately supported conclusions.
* The conclusion pulls together the key arguments in an assured and compelling manner, and includes a clear declaration of the student’s position; particularly for an A+, there is some indication of originality, and the student’s own stated position is nuanced.
* The assignment is exemplary in its organization, length, in its use of language (diction, syntax, grammar and spelling), includes adequate citations, and has complete and consistent bibliographic references.

**B to B+ (competent / job well done): 70-79%**

* The introduction restates the question and/or key debates in a competent manner; it also previews the paper/answer, though in a less compelling way. Some vagueness or ambiguity may be present.
* The assignment elaborates on relevant concepts and/or theoretical debates, though it misrepresents some ideas in the literature and does not adequately assess the applicability of the theories/approaches in question. It explains some concepts used to guide the argument, though it misses distinctions and/or connections and may present the analysis in a binary form (e.g. good/bad).
* The assignment presents and analyzes relevant data (quantitative, historical, cases, etc.), but it misses or misinterprets some subtleties or nuances. It also presents some actual and/or potential unintended positive and negative consequences of given policies, but not in a thorough manner.
* The assignment uses a comparative approach, temporal or cross-case analysis, but provides a limited assessment of the similarities and differences, or draws conclusions that are not fully supported by the data.
* The conclusion pulls together most arguments in a competent manner, though without offering original insights and may not present a declaration of the student’s position that follows the logic of the paper.
* The assignment is adequately organized but may be missing some elements, may be too long or short. Its use of language (diction, syntax, grammar and spelling) and its bibliographic references contain some errors.

**C to C+ (developing / a good start): 60-69%**

* The introduction offers a general outline but it misses important elements of the assignment and does not engage the reader. A clear line of argument is likely missing from the introduction onward.
* The assignment presents elements of relevant concepts and/or theories, but it does not demonstrate a clear understanding of their significance, does not explain the conceptual frame guiding (or not guiding) the assignment, does not assess the applicability of the assumptions of the theories/approaches in question, and presents the analysis in a binary or other simplistic form.
* The assignment contains relevant data, but it misses or misinterprets core methodological and/or empirical considerations. It may be one sided, missing an analysis of either the positive or the negative actual and/or potential unintended consequences of given policies. The assignment may contain polemical elements.
* The assignment does not use a comparative approach, temporal or cross-case analysis, to assess similarities and differences and the conclusions are not fully supported by the data. There may be errors of logic, such as confusing temporal connectedness with causality.
* The conclusion merely restates the partial evidence and analysis in the assignment and does not present a clear declaration of the student’s position.
* The assignment achieves some communication despite numerous and varied errors in the constituent elements, particularly in wording and syntax. It also displays limited care and competence in organization and documentation. Some important elements may be missing or hard to find. Problems of language may occasionally impair the ability of the reader to understand what the student is saying.

**D to D+ (needs much more work): 50-59%**

* The introduction provides a minimal quantity of relevant information on the issues raised by the question or in the guidelines for the assignment. No clear argument is enunciated.
* The assignment presents an incomplete and fragmented explanation of relevant policies, concepts and/or theories. It contains many errors of interpretation, only presents a few elements of a framework that could have guided key arguments in the answer/paper, does not assess the applicability of the assumptions of the theories in question, and/or presents the analysis in a binary form.
* The assignment offers little in the way of relevant evidence. The assignment does not offer anything in the way of comparative analysis, or the analysis is weak, incomplete or one-sided.
* The conclusion is incoherent and/or inappropriate and does not clearly present the student’s position.
* The assignment achieves minimal communication given its poor organization, inadequate length, numerous errors or omissions in its wording, spelling and bibliographic references. Problems of language impair the ability of the reader to understand what the student is saying.

**E (needs much more work): 40-49%**

* Similar to the indicators noted above, but even weaker. Problems of language seriously impair the ability of the reader to understand what the student is saying.
* The assignment may contain some plagiarism, possibly accidental. See the FSS Guidelines for plagiarism revised in 2020.

**F or EIN (bigger problems need to be addressed): Under 40%**

* The assignment is extremely deficient with regard to most of the criteria noted in section one.
* Assignments based on grave plagiarism warrant filing an accusation of plagiarism with the Vice-Dean of Undergraduate Studies.
* Students who do not submit an assignment will receive an incomplete (EIN) for said assignment and possibly for the course.

**Annexe: Critères d’évaluation pour les travaux non traditionnels**

**(DGD, projets de groupe, apprentissage par l'expérience)**

**DGD / Groupes de discussions / Tutoriels**

Group Projects

Professor Lauchlan T. Munro

Group projects are often used throughout the undergraduate cycle. Using groupwork as an evaluative tool reduces the number of assignments submitted for a given number of students, and so allows professors and TAs to provide more detailed feedback on each. At times, the groupwork itself is a pedagogical tool, since collaboration, mutual respect, and the ability to listen, advocate respectfully and compromise are part of the “soft skills” that an undergraduate education is meant to provide.

Group work also provides challenges to equitable evaluation. If the whole group gets the same mark, those who contributed the most get the same mark as those who contributed the least. The problem comes in three forms. Under the “free-rider problem”, a lazy or unscrupulous student contributes little or no work, knowing that more diligent and conscientious students will do the bulk of the work. In another scenario, a weaker student simply benefits from the contributions of stronger students and thus gets a higher mark than her/his contribution may deserve. In a third scenario, a student does a brilliant piece of work but their contribution does not fit well with what the rest of the group has done (the “lone ranger” problem). (The first two are the most common.) Complicating matters, it is hard for professors to fully understand the social dynamics within each group.

One can design a grading scheme to counteract these three problems. In one recent course the professor gave 60% weighting to the overall coherence and quality of the group’s project, while insisting that each part of the assignment must bear the name(s) of the student(s) who contributed to it, and giving these individual contributions a 40% weighting in the group assignment. Members of the same group can thus get quite different marks. This way, all students have an incentive to contribute to the work of the whole group, while being held responsible for a specific piece of work that fits within the larger whole. The 60/40 weighting is not written in stone; other weightings (e.g. 50/50, 35/65) could be used, as long as each evaluated piece of work has enough weight to incent appropriate behaviours from students. In this example, the course was on project management, which is inevitably a team activity; hence, the greater weighting placed on the overall team output.

In this weighted evaluation of teamwork, weaker students and free-riders will not benefit as much from the work of others as they would in a scenario where every student in the group gets the same mark. Individual students whose contribution is particularly strong will benefit more in this marking scheme than in one where every student in the group gets the same mark. The weighted evaluation scheme for group work also addresses the lone ranger problem as long as the specific piece of work by each individual student is assessed not only on its own merits, but also on how well it fits in with the group project as a whole.

To prevent behaviours by students that undermine this incentive structure (e.g. where everyone signs their name to every piece of work), the professor may specify a maximum number of student contributors to each piece of work (usually two students) and a maximum number of pieces of work to which each student must make a substantial, and graded, contribution.**Top of Form**