

Commentary on candidate evidence

Candidate 3

The evidence for this candidate achieved the following marks for each element of this course assessment component.

Justifying an appropriate, complex, contemporary political/social issue (8)

This candidate has chosen a popular hypothesis with aims that are nicely framed. Value for money, the social cost of prison and alternatives to prison sit well together and each is reasonably well-explored. The main introduction cites a range of sub-issues with supporting evidence to demonstrate the relevance of prison to society. However, the candidate could have better justified why this issue is of importance to society going forward. Additional commentary, better explaining the relationship between the chapter aims, would also be welcomed.

The candidate was awarded **6 out of the 8 marks** available in this element.

Evaluating research methodology (6)

This candidate provides a good level of evaluation which addresses several primary and secondary research methods. There is evidence that the candidate has considered ethics, ie '*...the ethicality of the survey*' and '*...made the survey more ethical by letting the people know...*'. The bottom of page 19 also refers to potential changes the candidate could have made to improve the validity and reliability of the survey results. The candidate's evaluation of the methods used is personalised and specific, demonstrating an excellent understanding of how, why and when social scientists should employ specific research methods in relation to the chosen issue.

The candidate was awarded **6 out of the 6 marks** available in this element.

Using a wide range of sources of information (6)

The sources used strongly support the candidate's analysis and evaluation in a convincing manner. Evidence in the appendices also suggests a good deal of research to support conclusions found in the main body of all three chapters. Key evidence from sources is used to advance a line of argument that is compelling and persuasive. Academic conventions are also adhered to throughout this dissertation, proving considerable research was undertaken on this topic.

The candidate was awarded **6 out of the 6 marks** available in this element.

Analysing the issue (8)

This candidate is able to demonstrate insightful and effective analysis supported with detailed evidence. Analysis is signposted with phrases such as, *'This highlights...'*, *'Due to the fact...'*, *'However, he addressed...'*, *'This is a vital factor to consider as...'*, *'Furthermore ...'*

Structured use of sub-headings makes chapter analysis and concluding remarks clear and effective. The candidate's depth of analysis is noteworthy and underlines a convincing line of argument.

The candidate was awarded **8 out of the 8 marks** available in this element.

Evaluating arguments and evidence (8)

Evaluations are copious, in-depth and appear throughout the main body. The candidate also uses alternative arguments to foster debate and support an effective line of argument. Chapter conclusions are distinct, valid and indicative of the candidates' understanding of prisons. This is a candidate that writes convincingly and who has carried out considerable research on this topic.

The candidate was awarded **8 out of the 8 marks** available in this element.

Synthesising evidence to structure and sustain a coherent line of argument leading to a conclusion, supported by evidence (10)

The overall conclusion threads mini-conclusions together nicely, offers recommendations and illustrates perceptive judgements on alternative viewpoints. There is a balanced view of this hypothesis that avoids generalisations and arbitrary judgements. Overall, an effectively written dissertation, argued with precise evidence which support perceptive conclusions.

The candidate was awarded **10 out of the 10 marks** available in this element.

Organising, presenting and referencing findings using appropriate conventions (4)

Clear, consistent and accurate references are present throughout. Appendices are organised, follow standard academic conventions and add to the sophistication of this piece of work. Data from primary and secondary research is integrated into the main body of the text to support evaluation and conclusions throughout. However, the bibliography is not creditworthy due to inconsistent citations, ie page 23.

The candidate was awarded **3 out of the 3 marks** available in this element.

Overall

This an impressive piece of writing that is well-researched and worthy of an A Band 1. It does not gain full marks due to information missing from the bibliography and not enough explanation in the introduction explaining how the chapter aims are closely linked together to prove or disprove the hypothesis. Why

this issue is significant could also be better articulated and more convincingly made.

Overall, this dissertation was awarded **47 out of 50 marks**.