

# Commentary on candidate evidence

The candidate evidence has achieved the following marks for each element of the project-dissertation.

## Candidate 1

### **Justifying an appropriate, complex, contemporary political or social issue for research (8 marks)**

The candidate was awarded **8 marks** because they have chosen a topical and contemporary issue. The introduction clearly outlines the importance of the issue and gives a sound justification throughout for exploring this topic area. Various factors are identified for further discussion, including neo-liberalism, migration and alienation, alongside the collapse of the USSR, to justify the relevance. The reference to Fukuyama shows the candidate has considered viewpoints, perspectives and theoretical aspects related to the issue. The aims are clearly stated and there is clear consideration of the wider context of this issue.

### **Evaluating research methodology (6 marks)**

The candidate was awarded **5 marks** in this element because in the section on the survey and the article by Li Minqi their analysis covers sampling issues and academic expertise and knowledge, which they use to efficiently assess the extent to which their methods and sources are trustworthy and reliable. They also refer to ethical issues of anonymity and, in a roundabout way, informed consent in their analysis of their own survey. While there is scope for greater detail regarding the books used and potential for discussing political bias in academic works, the candidate has done just enough to warrant the marks awarded. Despite these strengths, the candidate does not outline any potential changes and approaches they would make to improve their research thus preventing full marks from being awarded in this element. Unusually, the candidate evaluates their research methods as part of their introduction. Although this is permissible, the more commonly adopted structure is to evaluate research methods within a distinct section of their own.

### **Using a wide range of sources of information (6 marks)**

The candidate was awarded **2 marks** because they use evidence from some relevant, contemporary sources to support their line of argument. However, there are only eight references throughout the main body and a limited range, only eight sources, listed in the bibliography. Far too little research has been undertaken, though the candidate is clearly knowledgeable about contemporary political developments.

### **Analysing the issue (8 marks)**

The candidate was awarded **6 marks** because they show knowledge across several different political contexts, consistently analysing and critically evaluating

key aspects of the issue. Across the three chapters of the dissertation, the candidate explores France, Greece, Italy, Portugal and the UK, making links between them and assessing similarities and differences in how economic turbulence has impacted their politics. The analysis shows clear understanding of the issue: the multiple causes of resurgence in socialist and populist ideals. However, a lack of specific evidence in parts detracts from the force and authority of the arguments presented. Chapter 2 only references the candidate's own survey and one opinion poll. Chapter 3 is almost entirely derived from the candidate's own knowledge. In this context, these weaknesses limit the marks available.

### **Evaluating arguments and evidence (8 marks)**

The candidate was awarded **6 marks** because evaluative comments are made and there is reasoned judgement in respect of alternative viewpoints on the issue. This is a well-written and sophisticated dissertation. Chapter 1 ends with a detailed and insightful evaluation of the situation in France and how this differs to Greece. Chapter 3 also includes insightful evaluative judgements; however, this is mostly predicated on the candidate's own knowledge, rather than being evidence-based. The evaluations are not consistent or integrated fully enough to score more highly, Chapter 2 being clearly the weaker of the three in this respect.

### **Synthesising information to develop a sustained and coherent line of argument, leading to a conclusion, supported by evidence (10 marks)**

The candidate was awarded **4 marks** because synthesis is evident in supporting a line of argument and the conclusion offered follows from what the candidate has argued throughout. However, a lack of detailed evidence limits this dissertation's quality and the breadth of synthesis on offer. There is insufficient supporting evidence and a limited variety of sources used to support the arguments offered. As a consequence, there is an overreliance on singular pieces of evidence or the candidate's own knowledge to support points made.

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

The candidate was awarded **0 marks** in this element because only eight references/footnotes are referenced across the whole dissertation and there are clear omissions where there should be citations. URLs are also presented in an inconsistent style in the bibliography. While the candidate presents two appendices and references these in the main body, the presentation of the data in Appendix 1 does not follow appropriate academic conventions, omitting the provenance of the data, such as when, where, who and how it was carried out.

Overall, this dissertation was awarded **31 out of 50 marks**. This is an articulate, well-informed, but thinly researched dissertation. Greater research to support the arguments presented would have strengthened this piece of work. The failure to achieve any marks in the 'organising' section is unfortunate as this could be overcome relatively easily with better awareness of the national standards and application of best practice and advice.

## Candidate 2

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

The candidate was awarded **4 marks** because their introduction explores the importance of the issue, identifying the increase in media coverage of this crime in recent years and the potential damage of corporate crime to people in society, along with criticisms of the Serious Fraud Office and the potential benefits to the economy if this issue is tackled. Coverage is, however, brief and aims are not fully outlined in the introduction. Some credit can be given for the introductory remarks for each of the three chapters, which elaborates a little on each aspect. The introduction fails to consider alternative perspectives, for example that corporate crime does not in fact hugely damage society or that it may do so less damage than other forms of crime. The aims are worded in a way that potentially leads to a descriptive response and could be better constructed. The focus on public opinion in Chapter 3 would also have been better integrated across Chapters 1 and 2, rather than being treated separately.

### **Evaluating research methodology (6 marks)**

The candidate was awarded **3 marks** because they make relevant evaluative comments regarding newspaper bias and how they have tried to counter this. They also explain the changes they would make to surveys and interviews in future, explaining how these would change the results gleaned. However, the response lacks depth: specific examples of the bias within a newspaper article, negatives of their survey and why the MSP was a reliable source to interview. Ethics are mentioned. However, the treatment is not credited as it not an evaluation of a research method they have utilised. The section concludes with a description of two further methods and how these were used but it lacks evaluation.

### **Using a wide range of sources of information (6 marks)**

The candidate was awarded **5 marks** because they have used a wide range of sources, including numerous newspaper articles, BBC news reports, blog articles, government reports, official statistics, websites and their own research. These sources are cited regularly throughout the main body of the dissertation and follow acceptable academic conventions. The candidate's own survey is referenced several times throughout the dissertation but was deemed to be of insufficient quality to justify the weight given to it, drawing on just 42 respondents.

### **Analysing the issue (8 marks)**

The candidate was awarded **5 marks** because they discuss a range of relevant aspects across each chapter. Analysis is clear in discussing the Serious Fraud Office and tax evasion in Chapter 1 and Grenfell Tower and the phone hacking scandal in Chapter 2. However, there is a lack of balance and consideration of alternative viewpoints in the treatment of issues covered. Further exploration of the damaging effects of crimes such as murder, mentioned towards the end of Chapter 2, would have improved this element of the work. Chapter 3 fails to adequately assess public opinion which was the stated objective.

### **Evaluating arguments and evidence (8 marks)**

The candidate was awarded **4 marks** because the response includes reasoned evaluation of the damage caused by corporate crime, leading to distrust of big business and the perception that individual crimes are seen as less harmful. However, the response is too descriptive and fails to include a reasoned or in-depth consideration of alternative perspectives or evidence, limiting the mark awarded.

### **Synthesising information to develop a sustained and coherent line of argument, leading to a conclusion, supported by evidence (10 marks)**

The candidate was awarded **5 marks** because synthesis is clearly evident, and the overall conclusion follows from their line of argument. Nevertheless, the brevity of the conclusion reflects a lack of balance in the analysis of the issue. The focus on the government's ineffectiveness in tackling corporate crime, rather than on the damaging effects of it, shows limited scope and understanding of the full complexity of the issue.

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

The candidate was awarded **3 marks** because the references to research throughout the main body of the dissertation is done in a clear and consistent manner. The bibliography is well-organised, with headings for the different types of source and academic conventions used in the presentation and details provided. Appendix 1 lacks detail on the provenance of the data presented. Appendix 2 includes an extensive and well-presented survey, however there are issues with some questions and a lack of detailing the respondents' demographic information. These flaws mean the mark for the appendices aspect of this element cannot be awarded.

Overall, this dissertation was awarded **29 out of 50 marks**. This an interesting study of the impact of crime. While the candidate makes some good analytical points, drawing on contemporary issues, there is a failure to knit these together in a sustained and cohesive line of argument. The initial aims set out by the candidate have led to Chapter 1 being far longer than both 2 and 3, and this is detrimental to the coverage and balance of the piece. This is an example where a 2-chapter treatment of the issues may have been more beneficial.