

IMSIS Dissertation Feedback & Mark Sheet

Student Matriculation No.	Glasgow 2337200 DCU 17116287 Charles 64451738
Dissertation Title	Cyber Hype Versus Cyber Reality – How Severe Is The Threat That Chinese Cyber-Attacks Pose To United States’ National Security?

INDIVIDUAL INSTITUTION GRADING

Reviewer 1 Initial Grade <i>For internal use only</i>	Reviewer 2 Initial Grade <i>For internal use only</i>	Late Submission Penalty <i>no penalty</i>
Word Count Penalty (1 UofG grade point per 500 words below/above the min/max word limit +/- 10%)		
Word Count: 23526 Suggested Penalty: no penalty		

JOINT GRADING (subject to agreement of the external examiner and approval at Joint Exam Board)

Final Agreed Mark. (Following correspondence reviewers should list the agreed final internal grade taking before and after any penalties to be applied).

Before Penalty: B1 [17] **After Penalty:** B1 [17]

DISSERTATION FEEDBACK

Assessment Criteria	Rating
A. Structure and Development of Answer	
This refers to your organisational skills and ability to construct an argument in a coherent and original manner	
• <i>Originality of topic</i>	Good
• <i>Coherent set of research questions and/or hypothesis identified</i>	Good
• <i>Appropriate methodology and evidence of effective organisation of work</i>	Good
• <i>Logically structured argument and flow of ideas reflecting research questions</i>	Very Good
• <i>Application of theory and/or concepts</i>	Very Good
B. Use of Source Material	
This refers to your skills to select and use relevant information and data in a correct manner	
• <i>Evidence of reading and review of published literature</i>	Excellent
• <i>Selection of relevant primary and/or secondary evidence to support argument</i>	Very Good
• <i>Critical analysis and evaluation of evidence</i>	Very Good
• <i>Accuracy of factual data</i>	Very Good
C. Academic Style	
This refers to your ability to write in a formal academic manner	
• <i>Appropriate formal and clear writing style</i>	Very Good
• <i>Accurate spelling, grammar and punctuation</i>	Very Good
• <i>Consistent and accurate referencing (including complete bibliography)</i>	Very Good
• <i>Is the dissertation free from plagiarism?</i>	Yes
• <i>Evidence of ethics approval included (if required based on methodology)</i>	Yes

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- *Appropriate word count*

Yes

ADDITIONAL WRITTEN COMMENTS

Reviewer 1

The student asks an important and timely research question, concerning whether the latest China's cyber-attacks to the US pose a real threat to U.S. national security. Convincingly, the student demonstrates that although China's cyber political espionage poses intelligence and counterintelligence threats to U.S. national security, these are not existential threats, or at least not to the extent claimed by US government officials. As such, China's cyber-enabled commercial espionage poses a greater threat to the U.S.

The student presents the argument in a logical and coherent manner, demonstrating the ability to critically engage with a wide range of scholarly literature grounded in the field of national security and International Relations, appreciating their diverse nuances. The student carefully navigates both fields, defining concepts key to the study and making theoretically sound decision when applying theory the research and in the precess of data collection. Importantly, the student acknowledges the diverse limitations of the study given by the limited availability of data, and their impact on the study's findings.

The most valuable and original contribution of this work rests in the collection of new and original data by the student, done through the application of both quantitative and qualitative research methods. The student has demonstrated impressive abilities to deal with a range of research methods, to apply these methods coherently and rigorously, and to be bale to coherently intergate theoretical conpects into the process of data collection.

In terms of areas where some furhter elaboration could have been helpful:

The main objective of the study is to assess whether China's cyber attacks on the US pose a real threat to the latter's national security. However, a troughouth discussion of how the US defines national security, and concepts such as 'cyberwarfare' and 'commercial espionage' etc. would have led to a greater appreciation of the student's argument and findings.

Furthermore, the student carried out an extensive work of data collection. Being this the most novel aspect of the study, a more throughouth discussion with regard to how the student dealt with the process of data collection - including detailed challenges and limitations - as well as a more elaborated discussion of the findings, of the process of selection that went into their presentation (e.g. how and why the student chose to present certain aspects of the data above others?), all would have lent greater value to the study, and would have done greater justice to the extensive work carried out by the student. As it appears, the presentation of these aspects of the researc have been sacrificed to give greater space to the discussion to a series of other sub-questions. While still important, these sub-questions have somehow detracted from a elaborated discussion and focus on the main question.

Finally, in the conclusion the student reflects on the limitations of the study and how they impact the ability of the student to provide suggestions for policy making. Exposing in gretae detail how the student believes that such limitations could be overcome, at both the practical and theoretical level, would have made an ever more interesting conclusion.

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Overall, a very well done piece of research.

Reviewer 2

The dissertation aims to assess the level of the actual risk stemming from Chinese cyber activities in conjunction with the U.S. reactions. The paper offers an informed perspective on both issues. However, it suffers from several, mostly methodological, shortcomings. According to my reading, the overall designed could have been clearer. The dissertation reads rather as two separate case studies, this feeling is further reinforced by truncating the methodological section into two different sections of the paper. This is not only confusing but also represents a formal deficiency. From the methodological viewpoint, the Chinese case is generally convincing while the U.S. one lacks a clear methodological grounding. Although the analytical conclusions of the U.S. case appear relevant, the method applied resembles more a plain thematic analysis than a full-blown CDA, moreover, the same incongruence applies to Habermas' framework. Finally, the dissertation contains some formal issues, such as confused paging and forgotten author's comments. Overall, this is a sincere effort that might benefit from a simpler research design which would avoid the methodological overload.