

## IMSIS Dissertation Feedback & Mark Sheet

<b>Student Matriculation No.</b>	<b>Glasgow 2566749M DCU 20109610 Charles 30863710 Trento</b>
<b>Dissertation Title</b>	'Stand against the wiles of the devil.' Interpreting QAnon as a Christian extremist movement

### INDIVIDUAL INSTITUTION GRADING

<b>Reviewer 1 Initial Grade</b>	<b>Reviewer 2 Initial Grade</b>	<b>Late Submission Penalty</b> no penalty
<b>Word Count Penalty</b> (1-15% over/under = 1gr point; 15-20% over/under = 2 gr points; 20-25% over/under = 3 gr points; more than 25% over/under = 0 fail)		
<b>Word Count:</b> 20,053 <b>Suggested Penalty:</b> 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:** A4      **After Penalty:** A4

### DISSERTATION FEEDBACK

<b>Assessment Criteria</b>	<b>Rating</b>
<b>A. Structure and Development of Answer</b>	
This refers to your organisational skills and ability to construct an argument in a coherent and original manner	
• <i>Originality of topic</i>	Excellent
• <i>Coherent set of research questions and/or hypothesis identified</i>	Very 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>B. Use of Source Material</b>	
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>	Excellent
<b>C. Academic Style</b>	
This refers to your ability to write in a formal academic manner	
• <i>Appropriate formal and clear writing style</i>	Excellent

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• <i>Accurate spelling, grammar and punctuation</i>	Excellent
• <i>Consistent and accurate referencing (including complete bibliography)</i>	Excellent
• <i>Is the dissertation free from plagiarism?</i>	Yes
• <i>Evidence of ethics approval included (if required based on methodology)</i>	-Select from list-
• <i>Appropriate word count</i>	Yes

### ADDITIONAL WRITTEN COMMENTS

#### **Reviewer 1**

This dissertation is situated at the very cutting edge of contemporary literature on conspiracy-led violent extremism and is, therefore, nicely poised to make a genuine contribution to the state of the art. While works on QAnon are coming on stream rapidly, a deep dive into its religious/eschatological aspect remains absent. The dissertation's greatest strength is that it not only helps to address this gap, but does so via a solid analytical kernel that shows evidence of deep research and an appreciation around balancing analysis with empirical evidence. Providing a number of snapshots/images to back up the argument is a solid move, taking advantage of the parameters for analysis unique to a dissertation format—it is not easy to pull off.

The dissertation indicates a solid appreciation of the current literature and its future trajectory. The methodology is sound and due regard must be given to the generation of primary content. A deeper explication of the methodology/theoretical framework would have helped, nonetheless. The section on limitations shows a strong appreciation of the literature, once again, given that conversations on researcher ethics re. extremism are to the fore in the field. The hermeneutic/semiotics approach shows theoretical/analytical maturity and is very appropriate to this study—it is, therefore, a little disappointing that the literature on these fields were not consulted further—this would have strengthened the dissertation. Examinations of QAnon as a cult/religious/Christian movement represents a creative and effective way to take this analysis to its potential and again, this is underpinned by a strong research ethic. The conclusion is well earned and overall, I find this to be an excellent—and highly original—piece of research that could be edited and potentially published.

#### **Reviewer 2**

The dissertation investigates images produced within the QAnon movement that are being circulated on the Telegram communication platform. The most interesting analytical move is using hermeneutics and semiotics for analyzing the QAnon imagery inspired by Christian and broadly religious beliefs. Within security studies, this counts as an innovative research approach with a potential to bring new insights into how extremist ideologies represent themselves using visual content. Unfortunately, the value of the analysis is slightly diminished by the fact that the existing literature on hermeneutics and semiotics is not engaged in full. Further, the semiotics-based operationalization of how symbols are used to convey ideological standpoints could be done in a more robust way. This is a missed opportunity, since if operationalized properly, the findings would enjoy a much firmer empirical justification. However, the attempt to analyze QAnon imagery is highly timely and laudable, yet not easy due to the movements' notorious ideological fluidity. Overall, this is an interesting piece of research on an important topic, attempting to find new methodological ways of studying violent extremism online.