IMESS DISSERTATION

Note: Please email the completed mark sheet to Year 2 coordinator (jiri.vykoukal@post.cz)

Please note that IMESS students are <u>not</u> required to use a particular set of methods (e.g. qualitative, quantitative, or comparative) in their dissertation.

Student:	Ziyi Wang
Dissertation title:	THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC INFLUENCE OF THE 16+1 INITIATIVE ON CEE COUNTRIES: FOCUS ON VISEGRAD GROUP

	70+	69-65	64-60	59-55	54-50	<50
	A	B	C	D	E	F
Knowledge *Knowledge of problems involved, e.g. historical and social context, specialist literature on the topic. Evidence of capacity to gather information through a wide and appropriate range of reading, and to digest and process knowledge.*			X			
Analysis & Interpretation *Demonstrates a clear grasp of concepts. Application of appropriate methodology and understanding; willingness to apply an independent approach or interpretation recognition of alternative interpretations; Use of precise terminology and avoidance of ambiguity; avoidance of excessive generalisations or gross oversimplifications.*			X			
Structure & Argument *Demonstrates ability to structure work with clarity, relevance and coherence. Ability to argue a case; clear evidence of analysis and logical thought; recognition of an argument limitation or alternative views; Ability to use other evidence to support arguments and structure appropriately.*			X			
Presentation & Documentation *Accurate and consistently presented footnotes and bibliographic references; accuracy of grammar and spelling; correct and clear presentation of charts/graphs/tables or other data. Appropriate and correct referencing throughout. Correct and contextually correct handling of quotations.*		X				
Methodology *Understanding of techniques applicable to the chosen field of research, showing an ability to engage in sustained independent research.*				X		

ECTS Mark:	C/62	**UCL Mark:**	62	**Marker:**	Idil Uz Akdogan
Deducted for late submission:				**Signed:**	
Deducted for inadequate referencing:				**Date:**	23.08.2023

MARKING GUIDELINES

A (UCL mark 70+): *Note: marks of over 80 are given rarely and only for truly exceptional pieces of work.*
Distinctively sophisticated and focused analysis, critical use of sources and insightful interpretation. Comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to the chosen field of research, showing an ability to engage in sustained independent research.

B (UCL mark 65-69):
A high level of analysis, critical use of sources and insightful interpretation. Good understanding of techniques applicable to the chosen field of research, showing an ability to engage in sustained independent research.

C (UCL mark 60-61):
Some evidence of critical analysis, knowledgeable interpretation. Wide range of sources used to develop a logic and coherent argument. Good understanding of techniques applicable to the chosen

field of research, the extent of independent research could have improved.

D (UCL mark 59-55):
Employ relevant sources and show ability to engage in systematic inquiry. Little critical analysis of the material. It demonstrate methodological awareness but the standard and rigor of the analysis can improve.

E (UCL mark 54-50):
Mostly descriptive argument. Employ relevant but limited sources. The structure, logic and overall quality of the argument needs improvement.

F (UCL mark less than 50):
Demonstrates failure to use sources and an inadequate ability to engage in systematic inquiry. Inadequate evidence of ability to engage in sustained research work and poor understanding of appropriate research techniques.

Comments, explaining strengths and weaknesses (*at least 300 words*):

The dissertation is well-structured, clear, and easy to follow. It shows a good knowledge of the topics discussed. The research questions are clearly presented and the argument behind the determinants of trade is strong. Nevertheless, a more concentrated approach would have been useful for overcoming some of the difficulties explained below.

First, there should be a strong argument for the reason for an analysis in which the focus is not only on economic relations, but also on the political ties between CEECs and China. The selected countries/regions have homogenous political and economic ties, neither with the EU nor China. Political and economic relations are highly time- and country-dependent, as explained on various pages (e.g., pages 26 and 28). In this respect, the author should be more specific about the reason for dissecting the Visegrad group from the rest of the CEECs. Perhaps, a good justification from a political perspective may have been useful. Otherwise, it is difficult to establish a strong argument to link political considerations to economic considerations by including only investment and trade relations and ignoring any other bilateral relations and/or sector-specific analysis between China and the selected countries. Additionally, other political and institutional factors are ignored in the empirical section; for example, one of the countries is a member of the Eurozone, while others are not.

The narrative reflects the application of an appropriate methodology and understanding. However, the willingness to apply an independent approach or interpretation, as well as the recognition of alternative interpretations, can be improved. More emphasis should be placed on diagnostic tests (e.g., unit root, heteroscedasticity, normality, and multicollinearity) for the robustness of the results, and further tests are needed to determine the model (LM, Hausmann, etc.). Descriptive statistics should have included all explanatory variables used in the model.

Dissertation provides a good knowledge of the relevant theories and the methodology used in the analysis, although a more sophisticated approach for the relevant theories would have improved the quality of the paper, particularly the factors determining the FDI varies significantly from simple gravity model used for determining the bilateral trade.

Specific questions you would like addressing at the oral defence (_at least 2 questions_):

1. What is the justification for focusing on Visegrad group of countries? How do these countries differ from other EU and non-EU countries?
2. What kind of political and economic considerations do the CEECs have regarding investments from China?