

## IMSIS Dissertation Feedback & Mark Sheet

<b>Student Matriculation No.</b>	<b>Glasgow</b> 2680530 <b>DCU</b> 21109354 <b>Charles</b> 74189862
<b>Dissertation Title</b>	An Analysis of China's Conflict Mediation Approach: The mediating dragon in the graveyard of empires

### INDIVIDUAL INSTITUTION GRADING

		<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> 22005 <b>Suggested Penalty:</b> no penalty		

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

<b>Final Agreed Mark.</b> (Following correspondence reviewers should list the agreed final internal grade taking before and after any penalties to be applied).
<b>Before Penalty:</b> D3 [9] <b>After Penalty:</b> D3 [9]

### 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>	Good
• <i>Coherent set of research questions and/or hypothesis identified</i>	Satisfactory
• <i>Appropriate methodology and evidence of effective organisation of work</i>	Poor
• <i>Logically structured argument and flow of ideas reflecting research questions</i>	Poor
• <i>Application of theory and/or concepts</i>	Weak
<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>	Good
• <i>Selection of relevant primary and/or secondary evidence to support argument</i>	Weak
• <i>Critical analysis and evaluation of evidence</i>	Very Poor
• <i>Accuracy of factual data</i>	Weak
<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>	Satisfactory
• <i>Accurate spelling, grammar and punctuation</i>	Good
• <i>Consistent and accurate referencing (including complete bibliography)</i>	Satisfactory
• <i>Is the dissertation free from plagiarism?</i>	Yes
• <i>Evidence of ethics approval included (if required based on methodology)</i>	Not required

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• <i>Appropriate word count</i>	Yes
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### ADDITIONAL WRITTEN COMMENTS

#### **Reviewer 1**

The dissertation argues that China's role as a mediator is a critical aspect of its broader foreign policy and points to some global dynamics which make this role particularly suitable right now. This sounds like it might be a plausible argument if grounded in some body of empirical evidence. The dissertation is quite well written at the level of individual sentences and it appears to have an appropriate structure. However, there is an overall lack of coherence. Partly this is because the research questions are mis-stated. You claim to have set out to answer to the questions of 1) whether China's mediation in the Afghan peace process was a success, and 2) how does China claim to maintain a policy of non-interference while mediating conflicts abroad? The first question is moot because after the Taliban takeover in August 2021, it is unclear how China could have played a mediating role or indeed whether there was any peace process. The question would only make sense if the Taliban had not taken over completely and were still engaged in conflict with rival groups of approximately equal strength. You could have focussed on the period before August 2021 when the Western-backed government in Kabul was still fighting the Taliban, or you could have focussed more broadly on China's role in Afghanistan after the Taliban takeover. But you did not reposition the dissertation in either of these ways, making the whole premise of your argument questionable. The second research question is an ethical one about the extent to which mediation counts as interference in internal affairs. This is impossible to resolve on the basis of empirical evidence, but it could provide the basis for a theoretical argument about the definition of interference, and the nature of China's mediation. Yet you do not develop any such argument. The literature review engages with a wide range of relevant sources, but reveals a lack of critical perspective, as there is no real underlying argument. The limitations of the dissertation and suggestions for further research should be mentioned at the end in the Conclusion, not at the end of the Methodology.

#### **Reviewer 2**

This is an intriguing dissertation, with an interesting and relevant topic and a potentially relevant case. The author is evidently highly engaged with the research issue. That being said, much went wrong in the process of writing the dissertation. The main sensation when reading it is that of a broken structure – as if there is a potentially coherent dissertation lurking behind the text, but not quite in it. The author jumps from empirical to the conceptual, from one aspect to another, without a clear (or at least persuasive) underlying logic. Some key aspects of a dissertation, such as methodology, come way too late in the text; others, like theoretical or conceptual framework, are missing completely.

Secondly, the dissertation is not sufficiently anchored in the empirical material's chronology. The conflict in Afghanistan effectively ended in 2021 with Taliban's victory and the withdrawal of U.S. and other coalition forces. This was a major event in the conflict's trajectory, with major impact on other actors, China included, but the dissertation does not reflect the repercussions satisfactorily. The connection between China's rising power in the international system and its approach to mediation, while hypothetically very interesting, seems to have led the author to an analytical dead end in this specific case.

Finally, the purportedly analytical section at the end of the dissertation can hardly claim to be that. There are specific events mentioned and commented upon, but a coherent case study with a



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demonstrated internal logic is strangely missing here.