

Marking criteria Independent Project for Finalists – 2026-27

Class	Scale	Numerical equivalent	Presentation	Discussion
First	High first	94/100	Exceptional presentation of the highest quality, combining originality of content, intellectual sophistication, professionalism and communicative effectiveness at a standard that would stand out in academic and professional contexts. • Demonstrates outstanding and authoritative understanding of the topic and its relevant cultural and contextual dimensions, including its complexities, nuances and wider implications. • Claims are consistently supported by highly relevant, and expertly contextualised evidence and references, which are integrated seamlessly into a persuasive argument, showing extensive independent research. • The presentation is extremely well structured, with ideas developed into a compelling, coherent and persuasive argument sustained throughout. Organisation consistently enhances clarity and intellectual impact. • Delivery is highly engaging, confident, polished and professionally assured, with excellent pacing and clarity throughout. • Distinctive and memorable use of visual aid (poster) to communicate complex ideas with clarity and impact. • Keywords in the target language appear clearly on the poster, are chosen purposefully for the topic, and used effectively to enhance audience understanding and engagement with the topic.	• Engages fully with the discussion and demonstrates an outstanding understanding of the topic, including its wider theoretical, cultural and disciplinary contexts. • Provides intellectually sophisticated and insightful responses that extend and deepen the ideas presented, illustrated with relevant examples that reflect outstanding critical thinking and analytical precision. • Responds confidently, clearly and with remarkable agility to questions, demonstrating exceptional flexibility in thinking. • Communicates ideas with exceptional persuasiveness and effortlessly adapts answers to new angles or unexpected questions. • Engages naturally and collaboratively with the interlocutor(s) and demonstrates exceptional active listening, building on the interlocutor(s)' contributions.

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	Mid First	82/88	Very high-quality presentation, delivered confidently and in a highly professional manner, demonstrating strong audience awareness, intellectual engagement and communicative effectiveness at a standard that would be highly effective in academic and professional contexts. • Demonstrates detailed, sophisticated and authoritative knowledge of the topic and its relevant cultural and contextual dimensions. • Demonstrates substantial independent research, with claims consistently supported by relevant, specific and well-contextualised evidence and references. • Shows very perceptive, critical and accurate analytical engagement with the complexities, nuances and broader implications of the topic and its cultural context. • The presentation is meticulously structured, with a coherent and persuasive line of argument sustained throughout. Effective organisation enhances clarity and contributes to a polished overall narrative. • Delivery is highly engaging, well-paced and highly intelligible throughout. • The poster is used highly effectively to support and enhance communication, guiding the audience effectively, highlighting key points and facilitating the communication of complex ideas. • Keywords in the target language appear clearly on the poster, are chosen purposefully for the topic, and used effectively to enhance audience understanding and engagement with the topic.	• Engages fully with the discussion and demonstrates a thorough understanding of the topic and its key contexts. • Provides in-depth responses illustrated with relevant examples that extend and develop the ideas presented rather than simply repeating them, demonstrating sustained critical engagement and analytical thinking. • Responds confidently, clearly and effectively to questions, demonstrating flexibility in thinking and the ability to engage with different perspectives. • Communicates ideas clearly and persuasively, adapting answers to new angles or unexpected questions with ease, using well-reasoned arguments and relevant evidence. • Engages thoughtfully with the interlocutor(s) and demonstrates active listening, building constructively on the discussion.
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	Low First	74/78	Very high-quality presentation, delivered confidently, professionally and with strong audience awareness. • Demonstrates a detailed and accurate knowledge of the topic and its relevant cultural and contextual dimensions. • Claims are consistently supported by relevant and specific evidence and references, which are generally well contextualised, demonstrating very effective independent research and engagement with fully relevant references. • Demonstrates thoughtful and critical engagement with the topic, consistently moving beyond description to develop a clear and convincing line of analysis. • The presentation is very well structured. Ideas are organised logically, and communicated clearly, coherently and persuasively. • Delivery is engaging, well-paced and highly intelligible throughout. • The poster is used effectively to support and enhance communication, guiding the audience, emphasising key points and helping to clarify complex ideas. • Keywords in the target language appear clearly on the poster and seem relevant to the topic.	• Engages very well with the discussion and demonstrates a very good understanding of the topic and its relevant cultural and contextual dimensions. • Provides well-developed responses illustrated with relevant examples, demonstrating critical engagement with the topic, although analysis may occasionally lack the depth, sophistication or nuance of the highest bands. • Responds clearly, confidently and effectively to questions demonstrating flexibility in thinking and engagement with different perspectives. • Communicates ideas clearly and convincingly and adapts responses to new angles or unexpected questions with confidence and generally with ease. • Engages actively with the interlocutor(s) and demonstrates effective listening skills, contributing constructively throughout the discussion. • The keywords are highly relevant to the topic, and the meaning(s), significance and/or use of the keywords are explained clearly and accurately.
Upper second	High 2:1	68	High-quality presentation, delivered in a clear and professional manner and with strong audience awareness.	• Engages well with the discussion and demonstrates a good understanding of the topic
	Mid 2:1	65		

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	Low 2:1	62	• Demonstrates a very good understanding of the topic and its relevant cultural and contextual dimensions. • Claims are generally supported by appropriate evidence and references, which are generally well contextualised, demonstrating some independent research. References are complete and verifiable. • Generally moves beyond description, through critical engagement with most areas of the topic and accurate analysis of the material. • The presentation is well structured and generally supported by a clear, coherent and convincing argument. • Delivery is generally engaging, well paced and intelligible throughout, with only limited hesitation. • The poster is used well to support and enhance communication, helping the audience follow and understand key points. • Keywords in the target language appear clearly on the poster and seem relevant to the topic. In the lower part of this category: • Audience awareness may not be sustained consistently throughout. • Some unclear phrasing, hesitation or repetition may reduce the effectiveness of communication in places. • Some claims may not be fully justified or supported by sufficiently detailed evidence • There may be occasional lapses and inconsistencies when presenting quotations and references.	and its relevant cultural and contextual dimensions. • Provides informed responses illustrated with relevant examples that generally reflect critical thinking and analysis. • Generally, responds clearly and effectively to questions. • Communicates most ideas persuasively and is able to adapt answers to new angles or unexpected questions with relative ease. • Engages with the interlocutor(s) and demonstrates active listening. • The keywords are highly relevant to the topic. The meaning(s), significance and/or use of the keywords is generally well explained. In the lower part of this category: • Demonstrates broad-based understanding of the topic and its cultural and contextual dimensions, including keywords, but likely with minor inaccuracies or oversimplifications. • Critical insight is present but not consistently sustained.
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			The visual aid may support the presentation adequately without consistently enhancing audience understanding.	
Lower second	High 2:2	58	Competent presentation containing generally reliable information, but there is room for improvement in	Engages reasonably well with the discussion and demonstrates a reasonable understanding of the

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	Mid 2:2	55	several areas. Demonstrates some audience awareness.	topic and its relevant cultural and contextual dimensions, although there may be occasional inaccuracies or oversimplifications.
	Low 2:2	52	• Demonstrates an accurate understanding of the core aspects of the topic and its relevant cultural and contextual dimensions, although there may be some gaps or inaccuracies. • Uses evidence and references to support claims, although their range, quality or application may be uneven. References are generally provided, but there may be inconsistencies in formatting, completeness or accuracy. • Demonstrates some critical engagement with the topic, although the content of the presentation tends to be descriptive in places and may lack depth and accuracy. • The presentation is generally coherently structured although some sections may lack clarity, balance or logical progression. • The delivery is reasonably engaging, and it is generally easy to follow. There might be some hesitations and lapses in clarity. • Reasonable use of the visual aid (poster) to support the presentation, although its contribution to communication may be uneven or not always fully effective. • Keywords in the target language are included, but they may be incomplete, generic or written inaccurately. In the lower part of this category:	• Communicates some ideas persuasively but may struggle with more complex questions and responses tend to lack depth. • There may be some hesitancy when responding to questions which can undermine the interlocutors' confidence in the quality of the analysis presented. • Can adapt some answers to new angles or unexpected questions, but with some effort. • Engages with the interlocutor(s), although active listening and responsiveness may not be consistently demonstrated. • The keywords are generally relevant to the topic but may lack specificity. The meaning(s), significance and/or use of the keywords are explained, but the explanations may be only partially developed or may lack depth. In the lower part of the category: • There are more noticeable gaps in the understanding of the topic and its cultural and contextual dimensions, including the keywords. • Additional input may occasionally be required from the interlocutor(s) to maintain the flow of the discussion.

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			• The content of the presentation may be largely descriptive, with limited critical engagement or development of ideas. • It may be difficult to verify statements from sources because quotations or references are incomplete or reproduced inaccurately. References may omit key details, resulting in poor academic practice. • There may be noticeable gaps or misunderstandings in the knowledge of the topic or its relevant context(s). • Examples may not always be well chosen or their relevance to the argument may not be clearly demonstrated. • Communication may occasionally be unclear due to hesitation, repetition, uneven pacing or imprecise expression. • The visual aid (poster) may seem disconnected from parts of the presentation or may not be used effectively to support audience understanding.	
Third	High 3 rd	48	Presentation of limited quality, demonstrating a basic level of knowledge and skills, but with notable shortcomings across several areas. Limited audience awareness.	• Demonstrates a basic understanding of the topic and its cultural and contextual dimensions, but with noticeable gaps in
	Mid 3 rd	45		

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	Low 3 rd	42	• Demonstrates a limited or basic understanding of the topic and its relevant cultural and contextual dimensions. Omissions, inaccuracies or misunderstandings are evident. • Shows little evidence of independent research and engagement with the relevant sources. May provide references, but they may have little or no relevance to the topic, or do not support the content of the presentation. Key information may be omitted, making it difficult to verify the sources. • Demonstrates limited analysis of the material, with presentation often remaining descriptive, underdeveloped or lacking focus. • The presentation shows some organisational structure but may lack coherence, balance or a clear line of argument. • Delivery may not be engaging or appropriately paced, impeding audience understanding of key points. • Limited or ineffective use of the poster to support communication. The poster may be poorly integrated into the presentation or contribute little to audience understanding. • Keywords in the target language may be omitted, inaccurate or of limited relevance to the topic. Work at the lower end of this category may show weaknesses across the board.	knowledge and understanding. Responses contain inaccuracies, misunderstandings or oversimplifications. • Responses are often descriptive, underdeveloped or lacking in depth. • There may be considerable hesitancy when responding to questions, creating an impression of limited familiarity with the material and reducing confidence in the quality of the analysis presented. • Struggles to adapt answers to new angles or unexpected questions and may rely heavily on prepared material. • Engages with the interlocutor(s) at a basic level, but active listening and responsiveness are often limited. Responses may only partially address the questions asked. • There are noticeable gaps in understanding the keywords. Their meaning(s), significance and/or use may be insufficiently developed, unclear or inaccurate.
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Fail	High Fail	32/38	Presentation does not meet the standards required for the appropriate stage of an Honours degree. • Demonstrates little or no understanding of the topic and its relevant contexts. Contains frequent errors. • Shows no evidence, or almost no evidence, of independent research. References are absent, irrelevant, or insufficient to verify sources. • The presentation is likely to be disjointed and difficult to follow. Any line of argument is unclear or absent. • The poster may be absent, poorly integrated or ineffective in supporting audience understanding. Keywords in the target language may be absent or largely inaccurate.	• Demonstrates insufficient engagement with the discussion and little or no understanding of the topic, and its relevant contexts • Responds to questions with limited clarity and effectiveness, demonstrating minimal critical engagement. • Communicates ideas poorly and struggles to develop coherent or convincing responses. • May be unable to provide keywords. Demonstrates limited ability to understanding of the keywords. Explanations of their meaning(s), significance and/or use are frequently underdeveloped, unclear or inaccurate.
	Low Fail	12/25	Very poor-quality presentation well below the standards required for the appropriate stage of an Honours degree	Very poor discussion well below the standards required for the appropriate stage of an Honours degree.
Zero	Zero	0	Presentation of no merit OR Absent, penalty in some misconduct cases	Presentation of no merit OR Absent, penalty in some misconduct cases