**Marking criteria for German Year Abroad Essays**

During their Year Abroad students are encouraged to improve their written German language skills by assembling a *dossier* (Materialsammlung @ Warwick Blogs) of materials (newspaper articles, notes taken from books, suitable internet links, locally collected brochures...), on the basis of which they should produce an essay of an ‘argumentative’ nature.

Markers will bear the following questions in mind:

To what extent has the student been able to produce German of an appropriate linguistic level (i.e. between second- and final-year level German for students going abroad in the third year of their course)?

To what extent has the student undertaken an appropriate amount of reading and research, in line with the instructions for the exercise? (A failure to follow the instructions in this regard will lower the mark given. However, an extraordinarily voluminous amount of research will not, as a matter of course, be considered to ‘add value’.) Also, to what extent has the student been able to produce an argument rather than a essay that is merely descriptive?

The criteria below are intended as a guide, describing the typical attributes of each category. Pieces of work will often have attributes belonging to different categories (excellent German, but no structure; erratic German, but showing ability to communicate well and express probing ideas, etc.). In such cases, these features will serve to pull the mark up or down towards particular categories. Careless basic errors will also reduce the mark.

In finely balanced cases, linguistic ability will outweigh the ‘contents’ criteria. The work’s presentation is a subsidiary category, to be judged against the instructions for the exercise (e.g. on the matter of referencing).

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| **Class** | **numerical equivalent** | **range of marks** | **Linguistic ability** | **Contents** | **Presentation (handwritten or word processed)** |
| First  Excellent  1st  (extremely rare) | 96 | 93-  100 | Exceptional work of extreme linguistic quality; no errors or only such errors as an  educated native speaker might occasionally make | A highly sophisticated, logical argument; excellent knowledge and understanding, duly underpinned by relevant and perhaps unusual documentation or research | Impeccable presentation, with very effective paragraphing and faultless use of punctuation. Footnotes and bibliographical references are flawless. |
| High 1st (very rare) | 89 | 85-92 | Native-speaker or near-native speaker standard; high degree of accuracy; broad and  idiomatic range of vocabulary; varied and sophisticated grammatical structures | A sophisticated, logical argument, demonstrating very good knowledge and understanding, with a clear effort to adduce relevant documentation or evidence | The presentation is very neat, with clear and effective paragraphing, and an  effective use of punctuation. Footnotes and bibliographical references are of a very high standard. |
| Mid 1st | 81 | 78-84 | Very fluent German; broad and idiomatic range of vocabulary; uses varied and sophisticated grammatical structures; high level of accuracy | Clear ability to express a searching and complex argument, logically structured and clearly based on appropriate further reading or research |
| Low 1st | 74 | 70-77 | Fluent German; broad and largely idiomatic range of vocabulary; a clear effort to use varied and sophisticated grammatical structures; very good to high level of accuracy | Ability to express a searching and/or fairly complex argument, which is logically structured and clearly based on appropriate further reading or research. |

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| **Upper Second High 2.1** | **68** | **67-69** | **Generally fluent German. A good range of vocabulary, allowing the clear and effective expression of ideas. Pays attention to idiomatic expressions, especially at the higher end of the range. Reasonable (low 2.1) to very good (high 2.1) level of accuracy. Begins to use varied or more sophisticated syntactical structures.** | **Ability to produce a pointed argument. A reasonable to very good level knowledge and understanding, with reasonable to good levels of organisation and analysis, visibly based on generally appropriate further reading or research.** | **The presentation is neat, with clear paragraphing and a largely effective use of punctuation. Footnotes and bibliographical references are of a good standard.** |
| **Mid 2.1** | **65** | **64-66** |
| **Low 2.1** | **62** | **60-63** |
| Lower Second High 2.2 | 58 | 57-59 | Competent use of German; a rather limited range of vocabulary or a limited range of syntactical variation. Good level of accuracy | A fair level of knowledge and understanding, with some analysis, and organisation; a fairly convincing argument but which shows only limited or no clear evidence of appropriate further reading or research. At the top end of  the range (57-59), the work may demonstrate a reasonable level of linguistic accuracy, but remain too simple in content for the category above. In the middle to lower end of the range the content is  descriptive rather than argumentative. | An acceptable presentation, although the student may have to address his/her understanding of effective paragraphing. There may be  some weakness in  punctuation.  Footnotes and bibliographical references are of a fair standard. |
| Mid 2.2 | 55 | 54-56 | Fairly competent use of German: rather limited range of vocabulary, which occasionally impacts on the student’s ability to put his/her ideas across clearly; frequent errors. |
| Low 2.2 | 52 | 50-53 | Frequent errors obscure the meaning and/or point to serious problematic areas in the student’s linguistic grasp. | A limited level of knowledge or understanding OR a superficial or largely untenable argument. |

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| Third High 3rd | 48 | 47-49 | *In the upper part of the range*: a limited range of vocabulary, and/or a very weak grasp of German morphology and/or syntax, leading to numerous errors in case, endings, use of verb forms and tenses, sentence structure etc. | Some relevant knowledge and understanding, but the expression of ideas is hampered by linguistic limitations OR the student has clearly undertaken too little or no further reading or research. | Poor presentation  AND/OR the student should clearly address his/her understanding of  paragraphing.  Punctuation is often also a clear area of weakness. Footnotes (if any) and bibliographical references are of a passable standard. |
| Mid 3rd | 45 | 44-46 | *In the lower half of the range*: a very limited range of vocabulary and/or a worryingly weak grasp of German morphology and/or syntax. Poor spelling and numerous errors in verb forms, word order or case use. | The linguistic problems clearly undermine the student’s ability to formulate ideas and/or the student is unable to produce probing ideas in German, and the student has clearly undertaken too little or no further reading or research. |
| Low 3rd | 42 | 40-43 |  |
| Fail  High Fail | 38 | 35-39 | Command of the German language so weak as to compromise seriously the reader's understanding of content; clear inability to master basic grammatical points | A very poor capacity for expressing ideas in German, and the student has clearly undertaken too little or no further reading or research. | Very poor presentation or extremely poor and/or very inefficient paragraphing, slapdash punctuation *etc*. Very poor standard footnotes (if any) and bibliographical references; their absence is likely to indicate that the student has not followed the instructions for the task. |
| Fail | 25 | 19-34 | Very poor quality of German, well below the standards required for second/third year degree-level. | Work of some linguistic merit may fall into this category if it is short-weight, or extremely derivative. |
| Low Fail | 12 | 1-18 |
| Zero | Zero | 0 | 0 | Work of no merit OR Absent, work not submitted, penalty in some misconduct cases | |