

Advanced Higher Home Economics

External Assessment — Dissertation

Guidance notes for Candidates

Your dissertation should provide details of the practical research you have undertaken within a research project or industrial placement. It should focus on the context of Health and Food Technology.

Your dissertation is worth 100 marks

CHOOSING A DISSERTATION TITLE

When you are selecting a dissertation title it must be one that:

- ◆ is selected from an area found within the course content for the context that the you are undertaking
- ◆ is of an area of study which will be of interest to you
- ◆ is not be too wide or have too wide a scope. Choose a title which examines a narrow field of study and allows for a focussed dissertation
- ◆ is agreed after discussion with your teacher/lecturer
- ◆ allows for the formation of objectives that can be realistically achieved in relation to the resources and time available
- ◆ clearly reflects the research undertaken

The following list illustrates examples of dissertation titles from previous years:

Home Economics: Health and Food Technology

1. Organic food and consumer choice — what is the attraction?
2. The contribution of ready meals to consumers' diets
3. The influence of the media on childrens' eating habits

GENERAL PRESENTATION

The presentation of your dissertation is very important. It should be clear, easy to read and look professional, therefore the following guidelines should be followed:

- ◆ type, word process or neatly hand write the report
- ◆ use standard typeface
- ◆ use A4 size paper
- ◆ type/write on one side only
- ◆ double space text
- ◆ leave margins of at least 40 mm (1.5 inches) on left and right hand sides
- ◆ leave margins of at least 25 mm (1 inch) at top and bottom of each page

- ◆ number pages sequentially
- ◆ consecutively number and reference any diagrams, tables, charts, graphs, etc contained within your dissertation.

The length of your dissertation should be approximately 3,500 words excluding Appendices, graphs, charts and tables. You will **NOT** receive any additional marks for writing a dissertation longer than 3,500 words.

In addition to being well presented your dissertation should also be written clearly and logically and be grammatically correct.

Any acronyms used should be fully written out initially with the acronym in brackets following the text, eg British Standards Institute (BSI). Once you have identified the abbreviation you may use it, whenever necessary, throughout the remainder of your dissertation. If several abbreviations are to be used in your dissertation you may wish to include a page of Glossary Terms as an Appendix.

Referencing

References should be cited throughout the dissertation. Whenever you refer to information to provide background to your study, to provide evidence to support your reasoning and arguments and when using specific quotes, you **must** identify or cite the reference sources. You do this by giving the author's surname and date of publication in the text of your dissertation and the **full** reference details should be in your Reference List at the end. Examples of how to identify or cite your reference sources are given in **Appendix 2 (pages 9 – 11)**.

FRAMEWORK FOR THE DISSERTATION

Your dissertation should consist of:

- a) A literature review (Introduction/Background)
- b) What to research and why? (Objectives)
- c) How to do the research?(Methodology)
- d) What was found? (Results)
- e) How do the results relate to the objectives and previous research findings? (Conclusion)

STRUCTURE

Although each dissertation may vary in the quantity and type of information in the various steps, your dissertation should contain the following:

- ◆ Title Page
- ◆ Contents Page
- ◆ Introduction
- ◆ Methodology
- ◆ Results
- ◆ Conclusion
- ◆ Reference List
- ◆ Appendices

FURTHER GUIDANCE FOR EACH SECTION OF YOUR DISSERTATION

Title Page

This is an important part of your dissertation as it should indicate clearly to the reader the subject of your research, as well as your name and name of the school/college which you attend. A well presented title page can give a good impression to the marker! An example of a possible format for this page is provided in **Appendix 1 (page 8)**, however this is not the only way you can present the same information.

Contents Page

This should be a list in sequence, with page numbers, of all the relevant sections in your dissertation. Where possible a separate list of graphs, charts and tables should be included.

Introduction (Steps 1-3) Mark allocation — 25 marks

Your introduction, which consists of a review of the literature/appropriate reference sources, should cover the following areas:

Step 1 The identification and explanation of a specific issue, situation or problem

Your chosen issue, situation or problem must be identified from within the course content at Higher or Advanced Higher level, ie it should relate to the appropriate context being studied, for example relating to food or the food industry, textiles or the textile industry or the welfare of the family. It should be clearly stated with the main points to be considered carefully explained.

You should also explain why the issue, situation or problem you have chosen is important within the area of study.

At this stage you should consider possible objectives you may wish to address in your research.

It is recommended that an interview with your teacher/lecturer be scheduled at this point to discuss your selected theme and possible objectives.

Step 2 The selection of suitable and relevant source materials

Your introduction, which is a literature search based on **secondary research**, should show evidence of wide reading around the chosen subject and an understanding of the subject area. It may include information obtained from books, journal articles, the Internet or other written sources. You should make sure that the source information is credible, current and relevant to the context being studied and is of a scientific, technological or sociological nature. ***It is vital that you record the details of all information sources as you refer to them*** (see *Reference List section, pages 5–6* for the details required).

The literature search should give the background to your subject area. It also gives you the opportunity to gain a wide range of views and opinions on your chosen issue, situation or problem.

The literature search should also provide the reason(s) for choosing the particular study by outlining and critically commenting on previous work in the same area of interest. The way in which your research extends or relates to this previous work must be clearly identified and explained in your final choice of objectives.

Step 3 **The construction of a set of objectives for the primary research to be undertaken**

A minimum of three objectives, which you hope to prove or disprove in your primary research to be undertaken should be clearly stated. You should justify your choice of objectives and show how your research might benefit industry, aspects of lifestyle or consumerism or supply new knowledge.

When drawing up your objectives make sure they are **realistic** and **achievable**, ie they should be:

- ◆ capable of being investigated
- ◆ capable of being carried out using the resources that are available to you and within the time allowed
- ◆ of interest to yourself
- ◆ within your own capabilities.

The objectives should show a logical progression through your research. However you may wish to revise your objectives, which can be done at any stage of your research, in response to interim findings eg after the literature search or in the investigative stages.

It is recommended that an interview with your teacher/lecturer be scheduled at this stage to discuss the findings of your literature search, objectives and possible methods of investigation to ensure that you can meet your stated objectives.

Methodology (Step 4) *Mark allocation — 30 marks*

This section of your dissertation should follow on logically from the Introduction.

It should provide accurate details of the **primary research** undertaken by you. Although there are a number of different methods which can be used for your investigative work, eg questionnaires, interviews, product evaluations, comparative tests (products, consumer services, process), etc it is recommended that you **do not use more than two** of these. As time is limited for your practical research, you will be given more credit for doing a small number of investigations thoroughly and accurately rather than trying to do a wide range of investigations in less detail.

Your methodology should demonstrate a sound understanding of the research process including, for example, the piloting of questionnaires, sample selection and the implementation of the methodology to ensure the results are as reliable as possible.

You should give a reasoned explanation for your choice of research methods referring to, for example, your objectives and appropriate references. **The work carried out must be described accurately and in sufficient detail to allow another person to repeat the research undertaken.** Examples of research materials, eg questionnaires, should be included as an Appendix at the end of your dissertation. The layout of this section will vary considerably from one dissertation to another depending on whether it is of a scientific, sociological or technological nature. Although this section will describe the research or work which was actually carried out by you, **it should not include any results.**

Results (Step 5) *Mark allocation — 15 marks*

The results of all your research should be presented in a concise and easily understood written format using tables and graphs where appropriate. All graphs, charts and tables must be presented with adequate titles, legends, captions and units. If your results are presented in graphical/tabular format, you should explicitly state the relevant key results.

Conclusion (Step 6)

Mark allocation — 30 marks

This section should focus mainly on the results of your primary research.

The conclusions drawn from your research should relate to the objectives, which were clearly stated in your introduction to the study. They should consist of a discussion of the main research findings. Where specific objectives have been outlined in the introduction, each objective should have its own conclusion in this section. Critical appraisal of the results obtained and suggestions or explanations as to why such results were obtained should be included.

Your conclusions should be supported with valid and impartial data, logical and convincing arguments and appropriate references and sources.

You should also comment critically on the study undertaken, eg by identifying any limitations and/or aspects of the research approaches taken which may affect the reliability and accuracy of your findings. You should take care not to draw conclusions if they cannot be fully justified from the results. It is acceptable to suggest possible conclusions as long as you explain clearly why they are only tentative.

The dissertation should recommend, wherever possible, what further work may be of benefit generally to the chosen area of research.

Reference List

In this section you should provide full details of all the information sources that you have cited, ie identified throughout your report.

The details required are as follows:

- (i) Books Author's surname(s), initial(s), date, title of book (in italics or underlined), place of publication: publisher's name.
Example: Frings, G.S. (1987) *Fashion: from concept to consumer* London: Prentice Hall
- (ii) Journals Author's surname(s), initial(s), date, title of article, name of journal (in italics or underlined), volume and number, pages.
Example: Walker, R., Dobson, B., Middleton, S., Beardsworth, A. and Keil, T. (1995) Managing to eat on a low income *Nutrition and Food Science*, No.3 pp 5 - 10
- (iii) Electronically sourced material Author's surname(s), initial(s), date, title of article, source of article if appropriate (in italics or underlined), web site location
Example: Gibson, J., Armstrong, G. and McIlveen, H. (2000) A case for reducing salt in processed foods *Nutrition and Food Science* Vol 30 Issue 4 pp 67 – 173
<http://www.emerald-library.com/brev/01730da/htm>
NB (It is not acceptable to give the web site location only)
- (iv) Newspapers Authors surname(s), initial(s), year, title of article, name of newspaper (in italics or underlined), full date of publication
Examples: Hatfield, S.,(2003) What makes Nike's advertising tick? *The Guardian*, Tuesday June 17 2003, p2003 p.15
Laidlaw, J., (2003) A good yarn *Scotsman Magazine*, Saturday 28 June, 2003, p.6

Remember that when there is more than one author, all the authors must be named in the order that they appear in the publication or on the website, as shown above. If you decide to use italics or to underline the titles of books and journals and for any websites you must use the same format for the complete list.

The reference sources should also be listed alphabetically by authors' surnames eg:

Frings, G.S. (1987) *Fashion: from concept to consumer* London: Prentice Hall.

Gibson, J., Armstrong, G. and McIlveen, H. (2000) A case for reducing salt in processed foods
Nutrition and Food Science Vol 30 Issue 4 pp 167 – 173.
<http://www.emerald-library.com/brev/01730da/htm>

Hatfield, S., (2003) What makes Nike's advertising tick? *The Guardian*, Tuesday June 17 2003, p.15.

Laidlaw, J., (2003) A good yarn *Scotsman Magazine*, Saturday 28 June, 2003, p.6

Walker, R., Dobson, B., Middleton, S., Beardsworth, A. and Keil, T. (1995) Managing to eat on a low income *Nutrition and Food Science* No. 3 pp 5 – 10

NOTE:

Although a Bibliography is not required if you do give one instead of, or as well as a Reference List, you should include **all** references cited and any additional reference sources you have used for background information. However the majority of reference sources listed in the Bibliography should have been cited in the dissertation. A lengthy list of reference sources with only two or three cited is not good practice.

Appendices

These may consist of supporting material such as a sample questionnaire, additional lists of information, leaflets/brochures, documents or tables which, if included in the main text, would interrupt its flow.

**DISSERTATION
FOR
ADVANCED HIGHER HOME ECONOMICS**

Health and Food Technology

DISSERTATION TITLE/AREA OF INVESTIGATION

Candidate name

Scottish Candidate Number

Date

**Name and Address of
School/College**

Appendix 2: Identifying or Citing References

1. Citing references — 1 author/organisation

You may cite or identify reference sources in different ways in the text of your dissertation. For example, if you are quoting directly from a publication this may be presented as part of your text as follows:

It has been found that “children in Scotland spent an average £10.80 per head per week over the period 1995 – 96 to 1997–98, among the highest amounts in Great Britain” (Office for National Statistics, 1999).

OR

Figures published by the Office for National Statistics (1999) showed that “children in Scotland spent an average £10.80 per head per week over the period 1995 – 96 to 1997–98, among the highest amounts in Great Britain”.

However it is better if you can put the information into your own words but you would still need to cite the reference, eg:

During the period 1995–96 and 1997–87 it has been shown that spending by Scottish children was one of the highest in Great Britain with an average of £10.80 per head per week (Office for National Statistics, 1999).

The reference source for this information would be included in the Reference List and the full details would be given as:

Office for National Statistics (1999) *Regional Trends 34* (1999 edition) London: Stationery Office.

2. Citing references — 2 authors

If you are using a reference source which has **two** authors the reference can be cited as a quote or in own words (as shown in 1 above) but **both** authors surnames and date of publication should be given, eg:

Anderson and Morris (2000) found that “ a decrease in income was associated with a change in the variety and quantity of foods eaten, a reduction in intake of several foods currently recommended for a healthy diet and a gain in body weight in women.”

This reference source would be presented in the Reference List as:

Anderson, A.S. and Morris, E.M. (2000) Changing fortunes: Changing food choices, *Nutrition and Food Science*, Vol 30 No. 1 pp 12 – 15

3. Citing references — more than 2 authors

Where a reference source with more than two authors is cited it can be presented as shown above in 1 as a quote or in your own words. However only the first author's surname followed by et al and the date need be given in the text, eg:

Research carried out in 1992 showed that the food preferences of elderly people receiving meals on wheels in Nottinghamshire varied considerably across the county. Whilst there was an overall regional preference pattern for main and sweet courses there were noticeable differences in the degree of liking/disliking for individual food items within the area (Tilston et al, 1994).

The full details of the reference source i.e. including the names of **all** the authors should be given in the Reference List and should be presented as follows:

Tilston, C.H., Neale, R.J., Gregson, K. and Proce, A. (1994) Study of food preferences of an elderly population receiving meals on wheels in Nottinghamshire *Journal of Consumer Studies and Home Economics* 18, pp 31 – 43

4 Citing references from another reference source

Sometimes you may wish to cite a reference which you found in another text or journal. In this case you must also identify the actual source from which you found the information.

(a) If the person cited was the author of a chapter in a book, eg:

Birch (1987) suggests that the home, parents and family have considerable influence on children's food experiences in their early years.

This would appear in the reference list, stating the author and title of the chapter together with details of the actual publication, as:

Birch, L.L. (1987) The Acquisition of Food Acceptance of Patterns in Children in Brookes, R.A. (ed) (1987) *Eating Habits, Food Psychology and Learned Behaviour*, Chichester: Wiley

(b) If the person was not the author of a chapter but was referred to somewhere in a book or other reference source, eg:

Birch (1987) suggests that the home, parents and family have considerable influence on children's food experiences in their early years (cited by Brookes, 1987).

This would appear in the Reference List as:

Brookes, R.A. (ed) (1987) *Eating Habits, Food Psychology and Learned Behaviour*, Chichester: Wiley

It would also be best if the exact page number could be given too after the name of the publisher.

5. Citing references — author unknown

Occasionally, for newspaper or journal articles, or for information from a website the author's name is not apparent. In this case the reference can be cited as above in 1 using Anon instead of the author's surname, and date of publication, such as the following:

Financial pressures resulting in the closure of care homes for the elderly is causing concern. Recently the Church of Scotland has announced that it will close 14 homes by next year which will affect almost 300 elderly residents (Anon, 2003).

Its presentation would be as shown in the Reference List as:

Anon (2003) Homes to close, *The Scotsman*, Saturday 21 June 2003