

Advanced Higher Home Economics

External Assessment – Dissertation



Guidance notes for Teachers and Lecturers

- These guidance notes should be used in conjunction with published information relating to the external assessment dissertation for Advanced Higher Home Economics. The dissertation should provide details of the practical research candidates have undertaken within a research project or industrial placement. It should focus on the context of Health and Food Technology.

The dissertation is worth 100 marks

CHOOSING A DISSERTATION TITLE

When the candidate is selecting a dissertation title it must:

- be selected from an area found within the course content for the context that the candidate is undertaking
- be of an area which will be of interest to the candidate
- not be too wide or have too wide a scope. A title which examines a narrower field of study will allow for a more focussed dissertation
- be agreed by the candidate after discussion with the teacher/lecturer
- allow for the formation of objectives that can be realistically achieved in relation to the resources and time available
- clearly reflect 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 children's eating habits

GENERAL PRESENTATION

The presentation of the 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 the dissertation.

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

In addition to being well presented the 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 identified, the abbreviation can be used, whenever necessary, throughout the remainder of the dissertation. If several abbreviations are to be used in the dissertation candidates may wish to include a page of Glossary Terms as an Appendix.

Referencing

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

FRAMEWORK FOR THE DISSERTATION

The 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, the dissertation should contain the following:

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

FURTHER GUIDANCE FOR EACH SECTION OF THE DISSERTATION

❖ *Title Page*

This is an important part of the dissertation as it should indicate clearly to the reader the subject of the research, as well as the name of the candidate and the name of the school/college. An example of a possible format for this page is provided in **Appendix 1 (page 8)**, however this is not the only way candidates can present the information.

❖ *Contents Page*

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

❖ *Introduction (Steps 1-3)* *Mark allocation – 25 marks*

The introduction which should consist 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

The 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.

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

At this stage candidates should consider the possible objectives they may wish to address in their research

It is recommended that an interview with candidates be scheduled at this point to discuss the selected theme and possible objectives

Step 2 The selection of suitable and relevant source materials

The 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. Candidates should make sure that the source information is current, credible and relevant to the context being studied and is of a scientific, technological or sociological nature. ***It is vital that candidates record the details of all information sources as they refer to them.*** (See *Reference List on page 5-6* for the details required).

The literature search should give the background to the subject area. It also gives the candidates the opportunity to gain a wide range of views and opinions on the 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 research

extends or relates to this previous work must be clearly identified and explained in the final choice of objectives.

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

A minimum of 3 objectives, which the candidate hopes to prove or disprove in the primary research to be undertaken, should be clearly stated. Candidates should justify the choice of objectives and show how the research might benefit industry, aspects of lifestyle or consumerism or supply new knowledge.

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

- capable of being investigated
- capable of being carried out using the resources available and within the time allowed
- of interest to the candidate
- within the capabilities of the candidate

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

It is recommended that an interview with the candidate be scheduled at this stage to discuss the findings of literature search, objectives and possible methods of investigation to ensure that candidates can meet their stated objectives.

❖ Methodology (Step 4) Mark allocation – 30 marks

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

It should provide accurate details of the **primary research** undertaken. Although there are a number of different methods which can be used for investigative work eg questionnaires, interviews, product evaluations, comparative tests (products, consumer services, processes) etc it is recommended that candidates **do not use more than two** of these. As time is limited for practical research, candidates 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.

The 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.

Candidates should give a reasoned explanation for the choice of research methods referring to, for example, 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 the 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, it should not include any results.

❖ **Results (Step 5) Mark allocation – 15 marks**

The results of all the research undertaken 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. Where results are presented in graphical/tabular format, the relevant key results should be stated explicitly.

❖ **Conclusion (Step 6) Mark allocation – 30 marks**

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

The conclusions drawn from the research should relate to the objectives, which were clearly stated in the 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.

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

Candidates 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 their findings. Candidates should take care not to draw conclusions if they cannot be fully justified from the results. It is acceptable for the candidate to suggest possible conclusions as long as the candidate explains 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 candidates should provide full details of all the information sources that they have cited ie identified throughout the 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.
Eg 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.
Eg 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
Eg 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 candidates decide to use italics or to underline the titles of books and journals and for any websites they should 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 it is given instead of, or as well as a Reference List, it should include **all** references cited and any additional reference sources 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 2 or 3 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.

APPENDIX 1: SAMPLE TITLE PAGE

**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

Candidates may cite or identify reference sources in different ways in the text of the dissertation. For example, if quoting directly from a publication this may be presented as part of the 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 candidates can put the information into their own words but they 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 a candidate is using a reference source which has **two** authors the reference can be cited as a quote or in their 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 2 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 authors should be given in the Reference List which 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 it may be necessary to cite a reference from another text or journal. In this case the actual source information must also be identified.

(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 preferable 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