Advanced Higher History

Project-dissertation

Assessment task

This is the assessment task for the project-dissertation component of Advanced Higher History course assessment.

It must be read in conjunction with the general assessment information for this component of course assessment.

This assessment is given to centres in strictest confidence. You must keep it in a secure place.

Introduction

This is the assessment task for the Advanced Higher History project–dissertation.

This project–dissertation is worth 50 marks out of a total of 140 marks. The marks contribute approximately one third of the overall marks for the course assessment. The course will be graded A–D.

Marks for all course components are added up to give a total course assessment mark which is then used as the basis for grading decisions.

This is one of two components of course assessment. The other component is a question paper worth 90 marks.

This document gives marking instructions for assessors for the project–dissertation component of this course and instructions for candidates.

It must be read in conjunction with the general assessment information for this component of course assessment.

The assessment instructions for candidates are provided in Appendix 1 and must be detached and given to the candidate.

Equality and inclusion

This course assessment has been designed to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to assessment. Assessments have been designed to promote equal opportunities while maintaining the integrity of the qualification.

For guidance on assessment arrangements for disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs, please follow the link to the Assessment Arrangements web page: www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/14977.html

Guidance on inclusive approaches to delivery and assessment in this course is provided in the *Course/Unit Support Notes*.

General marking instructions

In line with SQA's normal practice, the following marking instructions are addressed to the marker. They will also be helpful for those preparing candidates for course assessment.

Evidence will be submitted to SQA for external marking. All marking will be quality assured by SQA.

Part One: General marking principles for the project-dissertation
This information is provided to help you understand the general principles you must apply when marking candidate responses to this project-dissertation. These principles must be read in conjunction with the detailed marking instructions, which identify the key features required in candidate responses.

(a) Marks for each candidate response will **always** be assigned in line with these general marking principles and the detailed marking instructions for this assessment.

(b) Marking should always be positive. This means that, for each candidate response, marks are accumulated for the demonstration of relevant skills, knowledge and understanding; they are not deducted from a maximum on the basis of errors or omissions.

(c) Candidates can structure their dissertations in a variety of ways and may also demonstrate their skills, knowledge and understanding in a variety of ways and at different points in their project–dissertation. Markers will credit relevant and appropriate skills, knowledge and understanding, wherever they appear in the project–dissertation.

(d) Principal Assessors will provide guidance on marking specific candidate responses which are not covered by either these principles or the detailed marking instructions.

(e) The word limit for this project-dissertation is 4,000 words (excluding references, bibliography, appendices, etc). The word count should be submitted with the completed project (dissertation). No marks will be awarded for the content of references, bibliography appendices, etc.

(f) If the word count exceeds the maximum by10%, a penalty will be applied. If a marker believes that the coursework is more than 10% beyond the word limit, they should mark the candidate's work as normal then refer this to the Principal Assessor. They must state clearly that it is being referred for being beyond the word limit. Markers should take a common sense view of the length of the work and not, for example, refer a piece for being only a few words beyond the limit.

(g) Candidates will be given credit for appropriate referencing or inclusion of relevant appendices. This should not be used as a way of moving information from the body of the dissertation to bypass word count restrictions.

Part Two: Detailed marking instructions
To obtain more than 24 marks, there **must** be a reference to primary sources and to historiography. If the candidate does not refer to and evaluate primary sources then they are not meeting the requirements of the task. Advanced Higher History dissertations require depth in the study and there should be consideration of both primary and secondary sources. If the candidate is unable to show that they have referred to or quoted from historians, or considered historical schools of thought, then they are not meeting the basic requirements of the marks scheme.

The grid that follows describes how responses will be assessed against the following four criteria:

♦ structure
♦ analysis/evaluation/line of argument
♦ thoroughness/relevance of information and approach
♦ historical sources/interpretations

The two key criteria which are used to help determine where a dissertation is placed within a mark range are **analysis/evaluation/line of argument**, and **thoroughness/relevance of information and approach**.

The descriptions on the marking grid provide guidance on the features of dissertations falling within mark ranges. Most dissertations will exhibit some, but perhaps not all, of the features listed; others will be stronger in one area than another. Features described in one column may well appear in a response which overall falls more within another column(s). **'Historical sources/ interpretations' is the only criteria area that should be thought of as a hurdle. The others are not**. Markers should reward what the candidate has tried to argue and not penalise what may have been omitted. A candidate's arguments and evidence may differ substantially from the marks scheme, but the candidate should still be given whatever credit they deserve.

The grid below guides markers in placing responses within an overall likely mark range, and indicates how to award individual marks against the four marking criteria.

The marking instructions below describe the typical qualities of responses. Individual candidate responses do not follow a set pattern and some responses may fall outside these descriptions, or be close to two or more descriptions. Where this is the case, markers will use their professional expertise in awarding marks appropriately.

Detailed marking instructions for the project-dissertation: mark ranges and individual marking criteria

		Mark ranges						
		0-20 marks	**21-24 marks**	**25-29 marks**	**30-34 marks**	**35-39 marks**	**40-44 marks**	**45-50 marks**
Marking criteria	**Structure**	No attempt to set out a structure for the essay. No relevant functional introduction. No separate sections which relate to relevant factors. No conclusion which makes an overall judgement on the issue.	An attempt to structure the essay, seen in at least one of the following: ♦ relevant functional introduction ♦ separate sections which relate to relevant factors ♦ conclusion which makes an overall judgement on the issue	The structure displays a basic organisation but this may be loose. This would refer to: ♦ relevant functional introduction ♦ separate sections which relate to relevant factors ♦ conclusion which makes an overall judgement on the issue	The structure is readily apparent with a competent presentation of the issues. This would include: ♦ relevant functional introduction with main interpretations ♦ separate sections which relate to relevant factors ♦ conclusion which makes an overall judgement on the issue, bringing together the key issues	Clearly structured, perceptive, presentation of issues. This would be included in: ♦ relevant introduction, with main interpretations prioritised, which looks at the debate and a suggested line of argument ♦ separate sections which relate to relevant factors ♦ conclusion which makes an overall judgement on the issue, evaluating the key issues	Well-defined structure displaying a very confident grasp of the demands of the question. Relevant introduction, with main interpretations prioritised, which looks at the debate and a clear line of argument. Separate sections which relate to relevant factors. Conclusion which makes an overall judgement on the issue, based on synthesis and evaluation of key issues/points.	Structured so that the argument convincingly builds and develops throughout. Relevant introduction with main interpretations prioritised, a clear direction of debate and a clear line of argument. Separate sections which relate to relevant factors. Conclusion which makes an overall judgement on the issue, based on direct synthesis and evaluation of key issues/points.

| | Thoroughness/relevance of information and approach | No evidence of relevant knowledge of the issue. | Treatment of the issue shows little relevant knowledge.

Some elements of the factual content and approach relate only very loosely to the issue. | Treatment of the issue shows sufficient knowledge which reflects a basic understanding of the issue.

The factual content links to the issue. The approach relates to analysis. | Treatment of the issue shows an awareness of the width and depth of knowledge required for a study of the issue.

The factual content links to the issue. The approach relates to analysis. | Treatment of the issue is based on a fair quantity of research, demonstrating width and depth of knowledge.

Evidence is linked to points of analysis or evaluation. | Treatment of the issue is based on wide research and demonstrates a considerable width and depth of knowledge.

Evidence is clearly linked to points of analysis or evaluation. | Treatment of the issue is clearly based on a wide range of serious reading and demonstrates a considerable width and depth of knowledge.

Evidence clearly supports, linked to points of analysis or evaluation. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

	Analysis/evaluation/line of argument						
Analysis/evaluation/line of argument	No evidence of analysis. *Or* Analysis is not relevant to the question.	There is much narrative and description rather than analysis or evaluation. There is a weak sense of argument.	There is an attempt to answer the evaluative aims of the question and analyse the issues involved. This is possibly not deep or sustained. Argument is generally clear and accurate but there may be confusions.	There is a firm grasp of the evaluative aims of the question and the candidate tackles it with a fairly sustained analysis. Argument is clear and accurate, and comes to a suitable (largely summative) conclusion.	There is a firm grasp of the evaluative aims of the question and an assured and consistent control of the arguments and issues. Argument is clear and directed throughout the essay The conclusions arise logically from the evidence and arguments in the main body, and attempts synthesis.	There is a firm grasp of the evaluative aims of the question and a very assured and consistent control of all the arguments and issues. Fluent and insightful presentation of the issues and arguments. Clarity in direction of argument, linking in evaluation. The conclusions give a robust overview/synthesis and a qualitative judgement of factors.	Fluent and insightful presentation of the issues with a detailed and effective analysis and evaluation which advances the argument and considers various possible implications of the question, going beyond the most obvious ones. The conclusions give a robust overview/ synthesis and a qualitative judgement of factors.
Historical sources/ interpretations	No discernible reference to historical works. No reference to primary sources.	No discernible reference to historical works. No reference to primary sources.	There is some awareness of historians' interpretations in relation to the issue. Historians may be used as illustrative points of knowledge. Clear reference to at least one primary source.	There is an awareness of historians' interpretations and arguments. Historians may be used as illustrative points of main lines of interpretation. Clear reference to at least one primary source.	There is a sound knowledge and understanding of historians' interpretations and arguments. There is some awareness of possible variations of these interpretations or connections between them. Clear reference to at least one primary source.	There is a sound knowledge and understanding of historians' interpretations and arguments which is consistent. There is some awareness of possible variations of these interpretations or connections between them. There may be an appreciation of the context which gives rise to these interpretations. Clear reference to at least one primary source.	There is a sound knowledge and understanding of historians' interpretations and arguments and an engagement with current historiography. Shows consistent awareness of possible variations of these interpretations and connections between them, including an appreciation of the context which gives rise to these interpretations. Clear reference to at least one primary source.

Further general advice to markers

All markers will mark positively and reward what is there in the response. However, there are criteria which, if not met, means the candidate will fail.

Factors which lead to a response failing:

♦ **Total misunderstanding of the title.** It is unusual for a candidate to misinterpret their own title, but it can happen. Similarly, a dissertation may be wholly or partly outwith the content of the field of study. While what is there should be marked positively, it is likely that such a dissertation will not pass. Where the title contains an isolated factor, this factor must receive due attention.

♦ **Extreme brevity.** Although there is no lower word-limit, a very short dissertation of less than 2,000 or 3,000 words would have to be extremely well-argued to get a pass. It is highly unlikely that there will be sufficient depth and breadth of argument to convince a marker it had covered enough of the markable criteria to achieve more than a few marks.

♦ **Lack of historiography.** Responses without recognition of different historical interpretations **will not be awarded more than 24 marks**. There is a fairly open definition of 'historical interpretations' as the minimum expected standard. At Advanced Higher level, there must be **clear evidence of wide research and reading, and therefore some awareness that there are different views on an issue**. With respect to the criteria for historiography, if a candidate were to introduce a new paragraph with a phrase such as 'Naturally, other historians have argued …' or 'There is another school of thought on this matter …' that will suffice for meeting the C standard. If they (accurately) quote historians by name, or refer to particular schools of thought, or give quotes from historians and changing views over time, the dissertation will fall into the higher mark ranges, on this criteria.

♦ **Primary sources.** Responses without recognition of primary sources will **not be awarded more than 24 marks**. At Advanced Higher level, there must be signs of the candidate's research and the employment of a full range of the relevant available evidence.

♦ **Referencing**. Features which are NOT in themselves fatal to the candidate's chances:
  — **Structure.** This may be poor and the candidate might seem to ramble. However, other insightful and relevant aspects may be explored in enough depth to persuade the marker that the candidate should be awarded a pass at some level. A sense of structure often 'appears' during the essay, so a candidate should not be penalised just because of a poor introduction.
  — **Accuracy.** Several minor inaccuracies, or a few fairly major ones, will not in themselves be sufficient for a response to fail. It may be that the marker becomes increasingly convinced that the candidate is not in full control of their evidence, and that may deter the awarding of high marks, but it does not automatically lead to a 'fail'.

— **Relevance.** While relevance is important, it is not the sole criterion on which a response is judged. It is a question of degree; responses should be marked positively. A response with enough relevance to convince the marker of its overall virtue, despite the odd lapse or digression, could achieve a pass at the middle-mark range.

— **Thoroughness.** The degree of detail, the way the candidate uses their evidence to build up their case, is a major factor in determining marks. It is NOT a pass-fail factor. If a candidate omits what a marker thinks is a key factor, but comprehensively discusses a lot of other key factors, high marks can still be awarded. The candidate may seem to present an ill-balanced and distorted view of the width of relevant issues in the chosen title, but that selectivity is the candidate's privilege. The marker should mark the essay for what argument it does contain, and not for the degree to which it conforms to the marker's view. Equally, in terms of depth of detail, many dissertations are a very good review, albeit sometimes superficial, of a lot of the issues that are relevant. Candidates who follow this approach, which may appear light on analysis or evidence, may still have done enough to merit a mid-range mark, or even slightly more.

— **Use of language.** Candidates' linguistic skills vary. Essays can often be clumsily expressed in fairly poor English, but still merit high reward. Equally, there can be fluent and stylish pieces that 'flatter to deceive' when the marker gets beyond the language and studies the other criteria.

— **Presentation**. Appropriate footnoting and an annotated bibliography are evidence of skills of research and synthesis, and allow markers to check for plagiarism. Therefore, lack of footnotes or annotated bibliography are factors leading to low marks.

— **Conclusion.** This is an important aspect of the dissertation. It pulls it together and shows how the candidate has marshalled their facts and arguments. A good conclusion is crucial in gaining marks for analysis and thoroughness, and a weak conclusion will hinder the chances of getting top marks. However, the lack of a conclusion will not in itself lead to an automatic 'fail'.

Appendix 1: Instructions for candidates

Advanced Higher History project–dissertation

This project–dissertation is worth 50 marks out of the total of 140 marks. This is approximately one third of the overall marks for the course assessment. The course will be graded A–D.

This project–dissertation gives you an opportunity to develop your knowledge of History at Advanced Higher level, and to apply this knowledge to a question or issue of interest to you. The project–dissertation encourages you to develop as an independent learner and to develop skills which will be invaluable to you in future study or work. Among those skills are planning, research, presentation and evaluation.

You can research any historical issue of your choice. This may be related to areas within the mandatory course content if you wish, but you are free to research any relevant question or issue. A successful project–dissertation is likely to be in an area in which you have a genuine interest, either from a study, future career or personal point of view.

In your project-dissertation you will:

♦ identify an appropriate complex historical issue for research
♦ use information from a range of primary and secondary sources
♦ draw on in-depth knowledge and understanding
♦ analyse perspectives from historiography
♦ synthesise evidence and historiography in a sustained and coherent line of argument
♦ draw a well-reasoned conclusion based on evidence
♦ organise, present and reference findings using appropriate conventions

Within your project–dissertation, you can demonstrate these skills in any order that you think makes sense for the issue you have chosen.

The word limit for this project–dissertation is 4,000 words (excluding references, bibliography, appendices, etc). The word count should be submitted with the completed project-dissertation. No marks will be awarded for the content of references, bibliography appendices, etc. If the word count exceeds the maximum by10%, a penalty will be applied.

Your assessor will let you know how the assessment will be carried out and any required conditions for doing it.

In this assessment, you will have to:

Identify an appropriate complex historical issue for research
The issue you choose must be one which allows you to meet the requirements of the project–dissertation. A complex issue will require analysis, evaluation and allow you to synthesise points into a line(s) of argument, leading to a conclusion.

There is a list of approved titles which you can use if you wish. Alternatively you may want to develop your own title. If you are doing this you should consider:

♦ the purpose of researching the issue
♦ the relevance of the issue in the context of the subject (why it is worth learning about the issue)
♦ what historical factors or areas for analysis/evaluation the research may be likely to involve
♦ what primary and secondary sources are likely to be available
♦ whether there are relevant historiographical perspectives you can explore

Your teacher/lecturer may support you by advising on the likely availability of sources.

Use information from a range of primary and secondary sources
You should collect information relevant to your issue, from a range of sources. This means you should use at least two sources of information. Marks are allocated for using these sources in support of your line of argument.

You should use both primary and secondary sources. If you do not use at least one primary source, you will be unable to gain more than 24 marks for your project–dissertation.

Draw on in-depth knowledge and understanding
You should show that you have researched the issue. You should aim to show both an understanding of the details of the issue you are studying (depth), and understanding of the wider historical context (breadth).

In considering the depth of the issue itself, you should think about:

♦ relevant historical factors
♦ relevant historiographical perspectives
♦ anything else that might be relevant

In considering the wider historical context, you should think about:

♦ how the issue affected/influenced other historical developments
♦ whether the issue was affected/influenced by other developments
♦ anything else that might be relevant

For a knowledge mark to be awarded, points must be:

♦ relevant to the question or issue you have chosen
♦ developed (by providing additional detail, exemplification, reasons or evidence)
♦ used to respond to the demands of the question or issue

Analyse perspectives from historiography
You should aim to include an analysis of different perspectives on the issue you are researching. These are likely to be from recognised published historians.

You should aim to show that you understand historians' interpretations and arguments. These will not necessarily be opposing views on an issue. Instead, different historians may emphasise different historical factors, or interpret the significance of events differently.

You should aim to show that you understand the prevailing present thinking on the issue. Please note that this does not necessarily mean the most recent historical writings. In some areas, the prevailing thinking may not have changed for a significant period of time — so historical writings that are decades old may still be 'current'.

Synthesise evidence and historiography in a sustained and coherent line of argument and draw a well-reasoned conclusion based on evidence
You should draw together different pieces of information to support your response to the question or issue. These can come from the sources you have researched, and/or your own knowledge.

The conclusion should include an overall judgement about the question or issue. This should be based on the developed points within your argument. You should organise your overall response into a coherent line of argument in response to the question or issue. Your conclusions can, but do not have to, be made at the end. Your conclusions could be positioned throughout the dissertation as a logical part of your line of argument.

Organise, present and reference findings using appropriate conventions
When writing your project-dissertation you should make clear, accurate and direct reference to the sources of information so that the assessor knows where your information comes from. To help you do this, you should:

♦ Use "quotation marks" around any text that has come from other sources.
♦ Acknowledge the sources of diagrams, illustrations or images.
♦ Write a bibliography (a list of all sources).

You do not need to use a recognised referencing system, but you should aim to use a consistent approach to referencing throughout your project-dissertation.

Remember that plagiarism (passing off other people's work and ideas as your own) is cheating. This includes copying passages from the internet and not acknowledging the source. It is also plagiarism if:

♦ all or some of your project-dissertation has been produced by someone else

♦ you have copied from a book, an internet site or an essay bank without referencing

Markers can easily spot plagiarism. If plagiarism is detected, you will lose marks. It may result in your qualifications being cancelled.

Working with others
You must choose your own question or issue to research. However, others in your class may have chosen a similar one. It might be helpful to work part of the time with others when you are researching your question or issue.

If this is the case, it is important that the evidence you produce is your own work.

Administrative information

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History of changes

Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date
1.1	Clarification on reference to primary sources and word count.	Qualifications Manager	September 2016
1.2	Detailed marking instructions grid amended to provide clarification	Qualifications Manager	January 2017

Security and confidentiality

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