AH National Qualifications

English
Project-dissertation
General assessment information

This pack contains general assessment information for centres preparing candidates for the project-dissertation Component of Advanced Higher English Course assessment.

It must be read in conjunction with the specific assessment task(s) for this Component of Course assessment, which may only be downloaded from SQA's designated secure website by authorised personnel.

Contents

Introduction

This is the general assessment information for Advanced Higher English project–dissertation.

This dissertation is worth 30 marks out of the total of 100 marks. This is 30% 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 four Components of Course assessment. The other Components are a Literary Study question paper, a Textual Analysis question paper and a writing portfolio which contains two pieces. There is separate documentation for the writing Component (task and general guidance).

This document describes the general requirements for the assessment of the project–dissertation Component for this Course. It gives general information and instructions for assessors.

It must be read in conjunction with the Assessment task for this Component of Course assessment.

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*.

What this assessment covers

This assessment contributes 30% of the total marks for the Course.

The assessment will assess the skills, knowledge and understanding specified for the project–dissertation in the *Course Assessment Specification*.
These are:

♦ knowledge of literary forms and genres
♦ the ability to apply in-depth knowledge and understanding to complex and sophisticated literary texts
♦ the ability to plan, research and present the findings of an independent dissertation on an aspect of literature

The Added Value consists of challenge and application: the candidates will build on the skills they have acquired in the *Analysis and Evaluation of Literary Texts* Unit and apply them with greater independence.

Assessment

Purpose

The purpose of this assessment is to generate evidence for the Added Value of this Course by means of a project–dissertation.

Assessment overview

This project-dissertation will give candidates an opportunity to demonstrate the following skills, knowledge and understanding:

♦ knowledge of literary forms and genres
♦ the ability to apply in-depth knowledge and understanding to complex and sophisticated literary text(s)
♦ the ability to plan, research and present the findings of an independent dissertation on an aspect of literature

The assessor will support the candidate to choose the focus, theme and genre for his/her dissertation.

Assessment conditions

Assessors must exercise their professional responsibility in ensuring that evidence submitted by a candidate is the candidate's own work.

This project–dissertation is:

♦ set by centres within SQA guidelines
♦ conducted under some supervision and control

This assessment will be carried out over a period of time. Candidates should start at an appropriate point in the Course. This will normally be when they have completed most of the work on the Units in the Course.

This assessment has three stages:

♦ A planning stage which should be completed over a period of time.
♦ A development/research stage which should be completed over a period of time.
♦ A writing stage which should be completed over a period of time.

The dissertation should be between 2,500–3,000 words, including quotations but excluding footnotes and bibliography. The word count should be submitted with the dissertation. If the word count exceeds the maximum by more than 10%, a penalty will be applied.

The word length is appropriate to the complexity of the task, allowing candidates to conduct an in depth study of their chosen text(s).
This assessment is likely to involve redrafting pieces of work.

Texts studied for dissertation must be untaught. Writers or texts studied in dissertation cannot be used in the Literary Study exam.

There are no restrictions on the resources to which candidates may have access, for example, spellcheckers and dictionaries.

Candidates must undertake the assessment, whatever the nature, independently. However, reasonable assistance may be provided prior to the formal assessment process taking place. The term 'reasonable assistance' is used to try to balance the need for support with the need to avoid giving too much assistance. If any candidates require more than what is deemed to be 'reasonable assistance', they may not be ready for assessment or it may be that they have been entered for the wrong level of qualification.

Reasonable assistance may be given on a generic basis to a class or group of candidates, for example, advice on how to develop a dissertation plan. It may also be given to candidates on an individual basis. When assistance is given on a one-to-one basis in the context of something the candidate has already produced or demonstrated (eg detailed commentary on drafts) there is a danger that it becomes support for assessment and assessors need to be aware that this may be going beyond reasonable assistance.

Assessor comments on the selection of a task/topic is appropriate before the candidate starts the task.

Assessors should not provide specific advice on how to re-phrase or improve responses, or provide model answers specific to the candidate's task. It is not acceptable for the assessor to provide key ideas, to provide a structure or plan, to suggest specific wording or to correct errors in spelling and/or punctuation. This would go beyond reasonable assistance.

Once work on the assessment has begun, the candidate should be working independently.

The **writing stage** will be conducted under some supervision and control. This means that although candidates may complete part of the work outwith the learning and teaching setting, assessors should put in place processes for monitoring progress and ensuring that the work is the candidate's own and that plagiarism has not taken place.

Assessors should put in place mechanisms to authenticate candidate evidence. For example:

♦ regular checkpoint/progress meetings with candidates
♦ short spot-check personal interviews
♦ checklists which record activity/progress

Group work approaches, as part of the preparation for assessment, can be helpful to simulate real-life situations, share tasks and promote team working skills. However, group work is not appropriate once formal work on assessment has started.

Evidence to be gathered

The following candidate evidence is required for this assessment:

♦ a dissertation of between 2,500 and 3,000 words

General Marking Instructions

In line with SQA's normal practice, the following General 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.

General Marking Principles for Advanced Higher English project-dissertation

This information is provided to help you understand the general principles you must apply when marking candidate responses to this 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 must <u>always</u> 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) The candidate's dissertation will be marked in terms of knowledge, understanding, analysis, evaluation and expression.

(d) Assessment should be holistic. There will be strengths and weaknesses in every dissertation; assessment should focus as far as possible on the strengths, taking account of weaknesses only when they significantly detract from the overall performance. The dissertation does not have to be perfect to gain full marks.

Detailed Marking Instructions for Advanced Higher English project-dissertation

Assessors should assess the dissertation in terms of knowledge, understanding, analysis, evaluation and expression and arrive at a final mark. The following grid should be used in helping assessors arrive at a mark.

The assessor should select the band containing the descriptors that most closely describe the dissertation.

Once that best fit has been decided, then:

♦ where the evidence fully meets the standard described, the highest available mark from that band range should be awarded
♦ where the candidate's work just meets the standard described, the lowest mark from that band range should be awarded
♦ otherwise the mark from the middle of that band range should be awarded
♦ where the number of marks in the band selected is four, assessors should use their professional judgement to decide allocation of the mark. For example 14-11: Assessors should reconsider the candidate's abilities in the four main characteristics. If the candidate just misses a 14, award 13. If the candidate is slightly above a 10, award 11

0 marks should be awarded where the candidate provides no evidence of the ability to plan, research and present the findings of an independent dissertation on an aspect of literature.

If the word count exceeds the maximum by more than 10%, a penalty will be applied.

Dissertation

Range of marks	30-27	26-23	22-19	18-15	14-11	10-6	5-1
Knowledge and Understanding The dissertation demonstrates:	♦ a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the text(s) as a whole which demonstrates sustained insight into the issues explored ♦ a full and relevant exploration which demonstrates sustained consideration of the implications of the task ♦ extensive textual evidence which is clearly focused on the demands of the task through broad but judicious selection of references	♦ secure knowledge and understanding of the text(s) as a whole which demonstrates some insight into the issues explored ♦ a relevant exploration which demonstrates secure consideration of the implications of the task ♦ extensive textual evidence to support the demands of the task, demonstrating selection from across the breadth of the text(s)	♦ broad knowledge and understanding of the text(s) as a whole ♦ a relevant approach to the task which demonstrates broad consideration of the implications of the task ♦ relevant textual evidence to support the demands of the task which demonstrates selection from across the breadth of the text(s)	♦ appropriate knowledge and understanding of the key elements and/or central concerns and/or significant details of the text(s) ♦ a relevant approach to the task ♦ textual evidence which supports the demands of the task but with some limitations in breadth of selection	♦ knowledge and understanding of the key elements and/or central concerns and/or significant details of the text(s) but with some insecurities ♦ an appropriate approach to the task but with some weakness in relevance ♦ some textual evidence to support the demands of the task	♦ knowledge and understanding of the key elements and/or central concerns and/or significant details of the text(s) but with some in accuracies ♦ an appropriate approach to the task but with many weaknesses in relevance ♦ limited textual evidence to support the demands of the task	♦ little knowledge and understanding of the key elements and/or central concerns and/or significant details of the text(s) ♦ an inconsistent approach to the task which demonstrates little relevance ♦ little textual evidence to support the focus of the task

Range of marks	30-27	26-23	22-19	18-15	14-11	10-6	5-1
Analysis **The dissertation demonstrates:**	♦ relevant analysis of a task-appropriate range of literary techniques and/or features of language which skilfully strengthen the line of argument	♦ relevant analysis of a task-appropriate range of literary techniques and/or features of language which strengthen the line of argument	♦ relevant analysis of a range of literary techniques and/or features of language, as appropriate, which support the line of argument	♦ relevant analysis of a range of literary techniques and/or features of language, as appropriate to the task	♦ some attempt to analyse literary techniques or features of language but with weakness in the depth and/or relevance of the analysis	♦ some attempt to analyse a limited range of literary techniques or features of language but with weakness in the depth and/or relevance of the analysis	♦ an attempt to analyse literary techniques or features of language which lacks range and/or depth and/or relevance to the task
Evaluation **The dissertation demonstrates:**	♦ a committed, clear stance with respect to the text(s) and the task and skilfully based on precise evidence presented within the dissertation	♦ a clearly identifiable evaluative stance with respect to the text(s) and the task and securely based on evidence presented within the dissertation	♦ a relevant evaluative stance with respect to the text(s) and task and based on evidence presented within the dissertation	♦ a discernible evaluative stance with respect to the text(s) and the task and based on evidence presented within the dissertation	♦ an implied evaluative stance with respect to the text(s) and the task	♦ an implied evaluative stance with respect to the text(s) and the task but which has some weakness in relevance	♦ no discernible evaluative stance with respect to the text(s) and the task
Expression **The dissertation demonstrates:**	♦ skilful and considered use of structure, style and language, including appropriate critical/analytical terminology, to develop an argument with a sustained and precise focus on the task	♦ skilful use of structure, style and language, including appropriate critical/analytical terminology, to develop an argument with a sustained focus on the task	♦ consistently accurate use of structure, style and language, including appropriate critical/analytical terminology, to develop an argument focused on the task	♦ consistently accurate use of structure, style and language, including appropriate critical/analytical terminology, to develop an argument relevant to the task	♦ some weakness in accuracy or use of structure, style and language, including appropriate critical/analytical terminology which affects the strength of the argument but does not impede understanding	♦ some weakness in accuracy or use of structure, style and language, including appropriate critical/analytical terminology which affects the strength of the argument and occasionally impedes understanding	♦ significant errors in structure, style and/or language, including incorrect or inappropriate use of critical/ analytical terminology, which impede understanding

Administrative information

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History of changes

Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date
1.1	Inclusion of word count including quotations and information on writers/texts added to Assessment conditions.	Qualifications Manager	September 2016
1.2	Marking instructions on (Knowledge and Understanding) and (Expression) updated to reflect current marking practice.	Qualifications Manager	September 2017

Security and confidentiality

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