National Qualifications

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National
Qualifications

Modern Studies
Project-dissertation
General assessment information

This pack contains general assessment information for centres preparing candidates for the Coursework Component of Advanced Higher Modern Studies Course assessment.

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

Valid from session 2015/16 and until further notice

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Contents

Introduction

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

This project–dissertation is worth 50 marks out of a total of 140 marks. 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.

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.

The assessment task will be set and externally marked by SQA and conducted in centres under the conditions specified by SQA.

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 approximately one third 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:

♦ justifying an appropriate complex contemporary political/social issue
♦ evaluating research methodology
♦ using a wide range of sources of information
♦ analysing the issue
♦ evaluating arguments and evidence
♦ synthesising information to develop a sustained and coherent line of argument, leading to a conclusion supported by evidence
♦ organising, presenting and referencing findings using appropriate conventions

Assessment

Purpose

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

This project–dissertation will demonstrate challenge and application by demonstrating skills, knowledge and understanding within the context of a contemporary social/political issue. This may be related to an area candidates have studied as part of the mandatory content of the Course, but they are free to research any contemporary social/political issue.

Assessment overview

Candidates should identify and justify an appropriate complex contemporary political/social issue. They should research the question or issue, and record and organise their response to address the question or issue.

Assessors should provide reasonable guidance on the types of question or issue which will enable candidates to meet all the requirements of this project–dissertation. Assessors may also provide feedback to candidates on plans and initial drafts as well as the likely availability and accessibility of resources for their chosen question or issue.

Candidates should work on their project–dissertation with minimum support from the assessor.

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 will be set by centres within SQA guidelines and conducted under some supervision and control. The evidence for assessment will be produced independently by the candidate in time to meet a submission date set by SQA.

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

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 after they have started work on the Units in the Course.

There are no restrictions on the resources to which candidates may have access.

Centres must ensure that each candidate's evidence for their project–dissertation is their own work. However, reasonable assistance may be provided. The term 'reasonable assistance' is used 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, eg advice on submission dates. 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, assessors need to be aware that this may be going beyond reasonable assistance.

Clarification may be sought by candidates regarding the wording of a brief or specification or instructions for the assessment if they find them unclear. In this case, the clarification should normally be given to the whole class.

Assessor input and advice is acceptable in order to allow the candidate to progress to the next stages of the assessment.

The project–dissertation 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 are acceptable during the research phase of the project–dissertation. However, the completed dissertation must be the candidate's own work.

Evidence to be gathered

The following candidate evidence is required for this assessment:

♦ candidate's completed project–dissertation

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 Modern Studies 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 dissertation 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 dissertation. Markers will credit relevant and appropriate skills, knowledge and understanding wherever they appear in the 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 range for this project–dissertation is 4,000 to 5,000 words including evaluation of research methods but excluding references, bibliography, contents page, footnotes and appendices. The word count should be submitted with the completed project–dissertation. Other than an evaluation of research methodology, no marks will be available for the content of references, footnotes and appendices.
(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 a few words beyond the limit.

In presenting their findings, candidates will:

♦ justify an appropriate, complex, contemporary political/social issue (8 marks)
♦ evaluate research methodology (6 marks)
♦ use a wide range of sources of information (6 marks)
♦ analyse the issue (8 marks)
♦ evaluate arguments and evidence (8 marks)
♦ synthesise information to develop a sustained and coherent line of argument, leading to a conclusion supported by evidence (10 marks)
♦ organise, present and reference findings using appropriate conventions (4 marks)

Administrative information

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History of changes

Version	Description of change	Authorised by	Date

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