



Advanced Higher Latin

Good practice guidance on preparing candidates for assessment of the project–dissertation

This additional guidance is not mandatory.

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Introduction

This additional guidance complements information in other Advanced Higher Latin course documentation and Understanding Standards materials. It provides hints and tips on good practice in preparing candidates for assessment of the project–dissertation, and explains the benefits of being familiar with the other existing information.

While a significant amount of independent learning is expected of candidates at Advanced Higher level, most candidates require an appropriate amount of guidance, support and feedback at various stages. The assessment conditions for this are clearly explained in the 'Course assessment structure: project–dissertation' section of the [course specification](#).

This additional good practice guidance supports teachers and lecturers to:

- ◆ feel confident in understanding the assessment requirements for the dissertation
- ◆ provide appropriate guidance, support and feedback to candidates on planning, researching and producing their dissertations independently

Additional good practice guidance

Through engagement with teachers, lecturers, and other stakeholders, SQA has identified key points regarding the preparation for and production of the project–dissertation.

Additional good practice guidance is provided on the following:

- ◆ relevance of content: choice of topics and titles for research
- ◆ use of primary and secondary sources in Latin and English
- ◆ argument and analysis
- ◆ introduction
- ◆ conclusion
- ◆ bibliography and word count

The importance of good practice in each of these areas is shown in the table below. It identifies good practice points, why they are important, and offers guidance that teachers and lecturers can share with candidates.

| Relevance of content: choice of topics and titles for research | |
|---|---|
| Good practice | Further guidance |
| <p>Candidates should choose themes suited to Advanced Higher and actively engage with their chosen topic. They should ensure it allows a focus on texts in Latin.</p> <p>Even where a research question has a more specific focus, clear parameters for the research should be established.</p> | <p>Candidates should be aware that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ topics and titles chosen should have good research potential and offer the opportunity for in-depth analysis and evaluation and engagement with texts in Latin ◆ broad topics (for example slavery, or the role of women) need to be given a more specific focus, or approached from a specific angle, such as by geography or by period, in order to generate the appropriate level of analysis and argument ◆ they should clearly set the focus and scope of the dissertation so that the range of reference is neither too narrow nor too wide ◆ they may need to do some initial research and/or wider reading to identify relevant areas of interest and appropriate research questions ◆ identifying specific aspects and subsidiary questions or themes can help develop an analytical approach ◆ the scope of the project and/or range of reference needs to be clearly defined to allow for the breadth and depth of discussion expected at Advanced Higher level |

| Good practice | Further guidance |
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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ setting clear limits can make it easier to find appropriate, relevant examples that link clearly to their topic or title ◆ teachers and lecturers may be able to offer advice on choice of topics and titles for research |
| Candidates should consider using texts or parts of texts not already studied, and less mainstream topics. | <p>Experience shows that more unusual or unfamiliar topics often generate the most thorough research.</p> <p>Mainstream or familiar topics can produce good results, as long as candidates engage in research and wider reading and do not rely solely on prior knowledge.</p> |
| Candidates should include factual content that is generally accurate and consistent with the title. | <p>Candidates are likely to need guidance on being discriminating about the sources they use. Some sources, for example blogs, may be unreliable unless associated with a specific academic or university department.</p> <p>Teachers and lecturers should make candidates aware that they should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ double check the accuracy of key points, especially if they are fundamental to their argument ◆ cover every issue identified in the title in the course of the discussion ◆ make changes to the original title of the dissertation if it ends up disagreeing with the final content |
| Candidates should present their research evidence showing breadth and depth of reading and analysis. | <p>There must be depth as well as breadth. This can be difficult to achieve within the word limit if the topic chosen is too wide-ranging.</p> <p>A factual survey of the topic is not enough in itself; analysis and argument are also required.</p> |
| Candidates should ensure they fully understand the terms of their own research question, or its implications. | <p>Candidates should be aware that, if they miss out consideration of relevant themes and ideas they might be expected to include, it can reduce the breadth and depth of their discussion.</p> <p>Teachers or lecturers may offer candidates some guidance on this.</p> |

| Use of primary and secondary sources in Latin and English | |
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| Good practice | Further guidance |
| | There is no prescribed number of primary or secondary sources. The information here is for guidance only. |
| <p>Primary sources Candidates should make substantial and effective use of sources in Latin.</p> | <p>Candidates should be aware that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ primary sources in Latin should be integral to the project–dissertation ◆ a wide range of primary sources is desirable, but there is no prescribed number ◆ upwards of five or six may be appropriate, especially for historical or cultural topics ◆ they can use visual sources and should integrate these into their discussion ◆ a literary topic may not need as many, especially if the focus is on an aspect of the work of a specific author. However, reference to other author(s) can provide context and useful comparisons. |
| <p>Candidates should refer to, translate, and engage with primary sources in Latin.</p> | <p>Candidates should also be aware that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ how they use and engage with the texts are crucially important ◆ they should select passages for quotation carefully to ensure they are relevant and not overly long, and avoid quotation of large chunks of text ◆ they should quote Latin authors in Latin with an English translation supplied alongside or in a footnote ◆ quoting their Latin texts in English can result in missing opportunities to engage further with the Latin ◆ they should produce and use their own translations and check their accuracy by referring to commentaries and/or published translations ◆ they can only comment on the Latin in a meaningful way if they have understood it properly |
| <p>Effective referencing of primary sources.</p> | <p>Candidates should reference Latin sources in footnotes (author, title, line reference) and list in the bibliography (author, title, publisher or website).</p> <p>Candidates should acknowledge published translations in the footnotes and bibliography, and indicate in footnotes if and where they have used their own translation.</p> |

| Good practice | Further guidance |
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| <p>Active engagement with the Latin enhances the overall quality of candidates' dissertations.</p> <p>When citing a Latin passage as evidence to prove a point, candidates should ensure their commentary and/or discussion demonstrates how it does so.</p> <p>If candidates wish to compare one passage from a source with another, they should explain in their commentary and/or discussion the nature and significance of the similarity or difference.</p> | <p>Candidates may engage with the Latin in a variety of ways, depending on the topic, for example by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ commenting on word choice and other stylistic features, especially in a literary topic ◆ drawing out and commenting on implications of a Latin passage ◆ assessing the significance of genre, date and potential bias, especially in a historical topic ◆ not only stating a point, but also demonstrating it using evidence <p>If drawing comparisons, identifying a similarity or difference should usually be the first step.</p> <p>Candidates should consider the factors, which might account for that similarity or difference and how that contributes to their argument.</p> |
| <p>Secondary sources Candidates should make substantial use of a range of reliable secondary sources.</p> | <p>It would be appropriate for a candidate to use upwards of seven or eight secondary sources depending on the nature of the topic and quality of the material consulted.</p> <p>Assessment is holistic and focuses on how effectively candidates use sources, rather than the precise number used.</p> |
| <p>Candidates should do considerable secondary reading as the basis for their research. Finding suitable source material is a key part of the research process.</p> <p>Secondary reading allows candidates to identify different aspects of their topic, build these into a coherent argument and consider a range of implications.</p> | <p>Candidates should be aware that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ they need to gather enough research material to be able to discuss their topic in considerable depth ◆ initial reading can help identify potentially productive lines of inquiry and reveal key issues that may give more depth to their discussion and support more complex analysis ◆ wide secondary reading helps candidates put their topic in context and develop the specialised knowledge needed for deeper insight ◆ wide reading helps candidates to develop and demonstrate the skills needed to synthesise information from different sources ◆ they should seek to consult printed and/or online academic books and articles specific to their topic as well as more generic works |

| Good practice | Further guidance |
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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ they should check the academic credibility and reliability of their sources, especially those accessed online ◆ teachers and lecturers can offer guidance on the use of secondary sources |
| <p>Candidates should reference secondary sources in footnotes (author, title, page reference) and list in the bibliography (author, title, publisher or website).</p> <p>This allows key claims or assertions to be backed up, checked and verified.</p> | <p>Candidates should be aware that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ they need to cite sources of information appropriately, for example in footnotes, in order to provide firm evidence for their argument ◆ quoting from secondary sources may be appropriate but is not a requirement ◆ quotation from secondary sources should not be used as a substitute for their own analysis and explanation, especially where the concepts are complex or difficult ◆ they should be able to show they understand complex ideas by expressing them in their own words |
| Argument and analysis | |
| Good practice | Further guidance |
| <p>Developing analysis and a clear and coherent argument are crucial.</p> <p>Candidates should produce an argument which develops and builds towards a conclusion.</p> | <p>Analysis should be evidence-based. It often involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ interpreting source evidence by drawing out implications, assessing their significance and considering the conclusions to be drawn ◆ teasing out different aspects, exploring and explaining the relationship between them ◆ drawing comparisons and assessing their significance <p>Candidates may be able to strengthen their argument by assessing alternative interpretations, countering possible objections or taking issue with academic opinion. To do this effectively, candidates need evidence and reasoning to support their own point of view.</p> |
| <p>Candidates should carefully consider the overall structure and organisation of the project–dissertation to ensure it is clear, coherent and logical.</p> | <p>Candidates’ arguments depend to a large extent on the order in which they sequence their thoughts and ideas. Therefore, candidates should think carefully about not only the overall structure of their discussion but also the organisation of individual paragraphs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ each paragraph should have a clear focus and make a distinct point |

| Good practice | Further guidance |
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| <p>Candidates should ensure that ideas and thoughts within individual paragraphs are ordered and sequenced sensibly.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ paragraphs should follow each other in a logical sequence as this should help candidates produce an argument that develops and builds towards a conclusion <p>Division into sections or chapters is a matter of choice and depends to some extent on the nature of the topic, but there should be a formal introduction and conclusion.</p> |
| Introduction | |
| Good practice | Further guidance |
| <p>The introduction should provide context and an overview of the structure and/or argument.</p> <p>Candidates need to take care to ensure the introduction opens up discussion and does not answer the question before the dissertation has begun.</p> | <p>The introduction does not need to follow a rigid format. Candidates might consider doing some, but not necessarily all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ putting the topic or question in context ◆ explaining the relevance of the topic and/or question (why it is important) ◆ identifying the focus and scope of their research ◆ indicating key aims and objectives ◆ outlining their methodology and/or source material ◆ providing an overview of the structure and/or the intended line of argument <p>The exact terms of the introduction depend on the nature of the topic and will vary accordingly.</p> <p>The introduction is often the last part to be written.</p> <p>It is a good idea for candidates to write a draft of the introduction at the outset, but to revisit and revise it several times during the research process. When writing the final version, candidates should check that what they say in the introduction matches the content of and conclusions reached in their dissertation.</p> |

| Conclusion | |
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| Good practice | Further guidance |
| <p>The conclusion should sum up the main points and reach a final judgement.</p> | <p>Candidates should base the conclusion on claims made in the dissertation. No new points should be introduced at this stage. The precise terms depend on the nature of the discussion but if, for example, the title was framed as a question or questions, candidates must be sure to answer them. In the conclusion, candidates should consider some of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ answering the research question(s) ◆ summing up the main points ◆ reflecting on the strengths and weaknesses of the evidence ◆ evaluating alternative interpretations ◆ offering a reasoned judgement <p>Candidates should be aware that they should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ explain complex ideas and to use critical and technical terms appropriately ◆ proofread their work carefully to ensure maximum accuracy ◆ aim to express their thinking with clarity and precision ◆ write in a formal, academic style ◆ avoid writing in the first person |
| Bibliography and word count | |
| Good practice | Further guidance |
| <p>Candidates should use standard or recognised referencing conventions and footnotes to present their bibliography.</p> | <p>Candidates should be aware that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ their bibliography should follow standard or recognised conventions consistently ◆ they should reference Latin sources cited appropriately, including those accessed online with author, title, website, web address and the date last accessed ◆ they should separate primary sources from secondary sources in the bibliography ◆ they should include visual sources in a separate section ◆ effective presentation of the bibliography and references can have a positive effect on the quality of the dissertation ◆ quotations, footnotes, captions, contents page and bibliography do not need to be included in the final word count |

Existing good practice guidance

Project–dissertation assessment task and example logbook for candidates

The project–dissertation assessment task contains an exemplar logbook for candidates to help them plan and organise aspects of their work in preparation for the dissertation. Using a logbook or equivalent is not mandatory. The logbook may aid discussion of progress of the dissertation between the teacher or lecturer and the candidate.

Teachers and lecturers should be aware of the guidance for candidates contained both in the example logbook and in the project–dissertation assessment task. Teachers and lecturers may wish to use the logbook or similar to identify their candidates' support needs, for example in discussing with them their area of study and title for their dissertation, aims, purposes and the limits of the research project.

The example logbook contains guidance on:

- ◆ choice of topic and title
- ◆ use of primary and secondary sources
- ◆ research planning including timescales
- ◆ collating, analysing and evaluating evidence for the dissertation

The project–dissertation assessment task contains enhanced good practice guidance for candidates at the various stages of planning and producing the dissertation.

While designed to be useful for candidates working independently, the example logbook and guidance on the stages of the dissertation may also be helpful for teachers and lecturers. The logbook contains a section that teachers or lecturers can use at checkpoint and/or progress meetings.

The project–dissertation assessment task is on the [Advanced Higher Latin web page](#), under the 'Coursework' tab.

Course reports

Following examination diets, the principal assessor for Advanced Higher Latin produces a course report providing information on candidates' performance in each component of the course, including the project–dissertation.

Teachers and lecturers should find these useful when preparing candidates for future assessment as they contain a range of hints and tips on planning, preparation and production of the dissertation, for example:

- ◆ choice of topic and/or title for the dissertation and ensuring these can be explored in breadth and depth, lend themselves to analysis and evaluation, and allow active engagement with texts in Latin
- ◆ choice and use of sufficient primary and secondary sources for their research
- ◆ synthesising evidence gathered for their dissertation and building their argument
- ◆ the importance of effective referencing

Understanding Standards materials

SQA's Understanding Standards activities are designed to support and develop teachers and lecturers' understanding of the assessment requirements for National Qualifications so they, in turn, can ensure candidates understand the requirements for the course assessment.

Additional guidance on Advanced Higher Latin, including a webinar, is available under the 'Understanding Standards' tab on the [Advanced Higher Latin web page](#).

Advanced Higher Latin common questions

The common questions include questions and answers on the project–dissertation, which teachers and lecturers should find helpful when preparing candidates for assessment. It is available on the [Latin subject page](#), under the 'Common questions' tab.