

Policy and New Products

Research Report 12



The Use and Marking of Extended Writing Tasks

Summary

The writing of extended pieces of prose is considered important. It is used in assessments in many subjects, and is marked in many different ways. On the other hand, fairness and equity suggest that writing should only be used when the arrangements explicitly include writing.

These issues led to two small pieces of research. One of these focused on the assessment of extended writing itself. The other looked at the use of extended writing and alternative question formats as instruments to assess other skills. This is the combined report on these pieces of research. It makes these recommendations:

- ◆ Where communicative ability is a key subject aim or assessment objective, this should be made explicit consistently in the aims, assessment specifications, and wording of the relevant questions or tasks, and in the marking guidelines. The assessment specifications should indicate the use of a checklist, a holistic model, an analytical model, or a combination of these.
- ◆ Where communicative ability is a not key subject aim or assessment objective, questions or tasks should not refer to it, nor should marks be added or deducted because of it.
- ◆ Whether or not communicative ability is a key subject aim or assessment objective, all assessment guidance and marking guidance should acknowledge the need for clarity and coherence of writing.

Background

The ability to write a clear and consistent prose is a very important skill for candidates.

Currently, many subjects explicitly require extended writing, in their arrangements or in the instructions in their question papers. Some don't, but still award or deduct marks for some aspects of writing. Some do require extended writing, but don't award any marks for it. The way extended writing is marked varies considerably across subjects and across levels.

Writing is considered important, and is used widely and in many different ways. On the other hand, fairness and equity suggest that writing should only be used when the arrangements explicitly include communicating subject specific knowledge and skills in writing.

These issues led to two small pieces of research. One of these focused on the assessment of extended writing itself in whichever subject. The other looked at the use of extended writing and alternative question formats as instruments to assess other skills. This is the combined report.

Types of extended writing

There is a definitive and accurate list of extended writing assessment instruments currently used by SQA in our *Guide to Assessment* (2008). The following examples are only indicative.

- ◆ **Restricted response.** This describes writing that is produced (often in a time-constrained examination) in answer to low-to-mid-value questions that are very specific and often supported by a suggested or defined area of coverage. In such responses, the principal assessment objective is usually to elicit evidence of the candidate's subject-specific knowledge and its applications.
- ◆ **Extended response.** Also usually produced in controlled examination conditions, the extended response is longer. It also differs in terms of the expected or required complexity. It will often be accorded a higher value and have slightly wider assessment objectives, often requiring candidates, for example, to demonstrate the ability to select and deploy evidence in support of analysis and evaluation of a stated proposition or assertion.
- ◆ **Essay.** While this term carries different meanings in different contexts, it probably offers the best description of writing that is produced in the context of an examination in response to a relatively high-value, open-ended question that might be answered in any of a number of ways. In essays, the assessment objectives usually extend, beyond eliciting evidence of knowledge and understanding, to eliciting evidence of the candidate's ability to communicate knowledge and understanding through clarity, coherence and substantiation of a line of thought, argument, or point of view.

- ◆ **Coursework submission.** Although varied in format according to the requirements of different subjects, almost all coursework submissions required by SQA specify extended writing that goes beyond the demands of essays produced under examination conditions. There may be, for example, significantly greater emphasis on scale, consultation, gathering of evidence and data, analysis, synthesis, critical thinking, evaluation, shaping, sequencing, development of a line of thought or argument, and acknowledgment and referencing of sources. This writing is variously referred to in different subjects as a research project, an assignment, an investigation, a folio, a dissertation, a report, a case study. It arises from coursework but offers a wide choice to candidates in selection of task, activities and approach. It represents a relatively high proportion of the total marks available.

Objects and instruments of assessment

Extended writing is required in some 40 subjects (see Appendix 1). In these subjects, it may be used to assess communicative skills as well as cognitive skills to varying extents.

Evidence of **cognitive** competence and skill can be found in the candidate's ability to:

- ◆ demonstrate subject-specific knowledge and understanding
- ◆ think critically and constructively, conceptualise, differentiate, analyse, transfer, synthesise, solve problems
- ◆ select and deploy relevant evidence (in arguing a case, developing a line of thought, comparing and contrasting)
- ◆ evaluate, make reasoned judgements

Evidence of **communicative** competence and skill in writing can be found in the candidate's ability to:

- ◆ use technical vocabulary with a specified degree of accuracy
- ◆ use general vocabulary with a specified degree of accuracy
- ◆ use punctuation conventions positively and accurately
- ◆ construct an appropriate argument, line of thought that is relevant to the question or the prescribed or selected task
- ◆ construct sentences of appropriate length, accuracy and variety that substantiate the argument
- ◆ construct paragraphs that develop salient points of the argument
- ◆ use a range of suitable conjunctions to make appropriate links within and between sentences and paragraphs
- ◆ adopt an appropriate stance toward the reader, using a tone that reveals a sufficient degree of formality and objectivity

At one end of the spectrum of possible assessment scenarios, evidence of cognitive competence may be all that the subject-specific assessment objectives require. In such cases, usually in science subjects, it may well be decided that communicative competence in extended writing should be regarded for assessment purposes as neutral — that is, it should add or detract nothing from the final assessment of the product, whose sole purpose is to convey evidence of cognitive competence. The assumption behind such a decision will usually be that the strengths or weaknesses of communicative skills evident in extended writing will be so closely correlated to the strengths and weaknesses of cognitive skills that they need not be taken into account in the assessment of the product. Another reason to disregard specific communicative skills may be that they are indistinguishable from the subject-specific knowledge and skills, for instance the use of technical vocabulary.

At the other end of possible assessment scenarios, evidence of communicative competence may well be one of the main subject-specific assessment objectives or even the main subject-specific assessment objective. For example, in English, an intrinsic part of assessment will be the candidate's ability to select and shape an appropriate vehicle (to use a metaphor) to communicate his or her response to a question or task.

Clearly, in current practice, assessors are assessing extended writing products in a wide variety of ways:

- ◆ Some appear simply to be regarding extended writing as no more than a vehicle for delivering subject-specific knowledge and understanding and are assuming that candidates bring with them a particular level of communicative competence that is, for assessment, neutral — neither here nor there as far as the aims and assessment objectives of that subject are concerned.
- ◆ Others appear to be giving much more credit to the quality of the writing as a subject-specific skill to be assessed and rewarded, usually because the development of communicative competence and writing skills is a clear and stated subject aim or course objective.

These two approaches, and their implications, will be discussed in the next chapters. We assume that where communicative competence and writing skills are among the main objects of the course, these will be the object of assessment, and that they should not be part of the assessment if they are NOT a main objective.

Extended writing as an object of assessment

Examples of variety

An earlier paper¹ drew attention to the wide variation in the values accorded to extended writing in eight subjects. Further examination of subject aims, rationales, outcomes, question papers and marking instructions in a wider range of subjects (the vast majority of the 40 identified in preliminary work) only confirms the extent of this variation.

The examples outlined below are intended not as critiques of individual subjects at individual levels but as evidence of the extent of the variation.

In **Higher Economics**, the Arrangements document makes clear that one of the aims of the course is to enable candidates to develop, among other skills, the skill of 'communicating economic ideas in a logical and effective manner' (p5), and that candidates who complete the course satisfactorily will have acquired 'transferable skills such as the ability to adopt a logical approach and to communicate complex points clearly'.

The Assessment Objectives also state that assessment should ensure that candidates 'can communicate their understanding' (p13); and that, for an award at Grade C, candidates should be able to 'communicate economic ideas effectively' (p16) and, for an award at Grade A, 'communicate complex economic ideas effectively' and 'demonstrate clarity, coherence and logic in the presentation of their answers'.

In Section B of the Specimen Question Paper candidates are asked (frequently) to 'explain', 'suggest', 'describe' in their answers to particular questions, but Marking Instructions concentrate almost exclusively on the expected content of their answers. How the quality, coherence and clarity of candidate responses are to be taken into account can only be inferred from occasional instructions, such as:

- Q 3 (b) 'Mark according to overall quality'
- Q 4 (a) 'Four, well explained reasons for full marks'
- Q 4 (c) 'Three, well described advantages for full marks'
- Q 6 (b) 'Three reasons, well developed for full marks'

It is clear that in this subject, there is significant emphasis and, by implication, value accorded candidates' skills in communicating subject-specific ideas effectively in extended writing. What is not entirely clear is the assessment mechanisms or strategies by which these skills are to be recognised and rewarded.

In **Geography**, although there is little evidence in the course aims, assessment objectives, outcome statements or performance criteria in the Arrangements

¹ *A survey of the requirement for, and assessment of, essays across a range of subjects examined at Higher level (2005)*

documents, the Question Papers appear to demand an appropriate level of communicative competence:

- ◆ 'Questions should be answered in sentences' in Instructions to Candidates
- ◆ emboldened command words ('Describe', 'Explain', 'Suggest', 'Comment on') in individual questions
- ◆ candidate answers to be 'successfully conveyed', 'carefully explained', 'use some form of comparative statement' in Marking Instructions
- ◆ 'exceedingly bad spelling or lack of punctuation' requiring PA referrals at Advanced Higher
- ◆ an expected differentiation in the quality of writing reflected in terms such as 'very well written', 'well written', 'well presented' and 'workmanlike' in different category mark ranges for both elements of the Advanced Higher Geographical Folio.

Marking Instructions clearly reward communicative competence, although it is not an explicitly stated objective.

In **Higher Managing Environmental Resources**, the Arrangement document does not give prominence to extended writing communication skills in the subject rationale, but it does acknowledge them at several other points:

- ◆ (In the Details of the Instrument for External Assessment) '**Section B** This section will consist of four questions requiring extended responses' (p21).
- ◆ (In the Grade Descriptions) 'at grade C...candidates should be able to demonstrate the ability to... select, organise and present relevant knowledge in extended responses' (p21); and 'at grade A...candidates should be able to demonstrate... particular proficiency in selecting, organising and presenting relevant knowledge in extended responses' (p22).
- ◆ (In the use of the additional 40 hours) 'This time may be best distributed throughout the duration of the course. It should be used (among other things) to develop extended response skills and to practise techniques in answering the more challenging questions associated with the course assessment' (p22).

The final question of the Higher Specimen Question Paper is:

Answer **EITHER A OR B**.

A. Describe the development and structure of an ecosystem of your choice. **(15)**

OR

B. Identify and analyse current and possible future conflicts of interest for a land or water use of your choice. Describe the steps that could be taken to resolve these conflicts. **(15)**

Clearly, an extended written response is required, yet no mention of the quality of this response in terms of the clarity and coherence of extended writing is made in the Specimen Marking Instructions.

This may seem minor in the total assessment scheme of things in this subject, but it occurs frequently and often in more major ways in many other subjects. Here, extended writing communication skills are required of candidates by the question (and by the course specification) but do not appear at all as a significant part or aspect of assessment.

In **Higher History**, the Arrangement document makes clear that key subject aims include 'constructing and sustaining lines of argument...presenting conclusions in a clear way ... adopting a structured approach' (p4). Central importance is also given to developing the candidate's ability to produce effective extended writing. For example, 'Candidates should ... develop the skills of extended writing or producing an extended response for a variety of purposes including descriptive and analytical essays or equivalent responses, of differing lengths' (p13); and 'It is anticipated that the skills relating to extended writing or producing an extended response will be built up gradually, founded where relevant on achievements at Intermediate 2 or at Standard Grade' (p14).

The Specimen Question Paper makes clear that in Paper 1 'All questions will require an extended response which should include an introduction, developed arguments and analysis, and a conclusion' (p2). The wording of the questions set also appears to require and encourage extended responses with direct questions such as 'What were ...How difficult ...How important ...How accurate ... How valid ...How far ... In what ways ...To what extent' or unambiguous instructions to 'Discuss' or 'Discuss the view'.

The Specimen Marking Instructions for Paper 1 concentrate on the expected features (as opposed to the expected content) of the extended responses, and include helpful generic guidance on the assessment of essays. The approach taken is to encourage markers to recognise and reward relatively high-order (cognitive) 'quality of thought' skills and well developed (communicative) 'clarity and coherence' skills.

A similar approach to the marking of essays is also evident in the Advanced Higher History 2007 Marking Instructions, and to the marking of short essays and extended responses in the Specimen Marking Instructions for Intermediate 2 History.

It is clear that in Higher History the emphasis on the communication skills of candidates in producing extended writing in the subject rationale and aims not only influences the wording of questions and tasks but is also accorded detailed consideration and due value in the summative assessment of candidate responses. As an example, therefore, of good practice in the holistic assessment of integrated cognition and communication skills, all of the Specimen Marking Instructions for Higher History Paper 1 are provided in Appendix 2.

Conclusions on the use of extended writing as an instrument of assessment

- ◆ It seems clear that extended writing skills are generally seen as a significant and desirable part of the rationale of most subjects (although there are notable exceptions and clear variations among subjects over the prominence that should be given to such skills).
- ◆ It seems even more clear that the extended writing response to subject-specific questions (in essay or other format) is widely accepted as a convenient and valid means of assessing the cognitive competence and skill of candidates (witness the frequency with which it features in question papers and other tasks).
- ◆ It seems far less clear, however, that there has emerged an entirely satisfactory mechanism or strategy by which extended writing communication skills might be consistently and reliably assessed in widely different subject-specific circumstances, levels and contexts.

Reasons for this may well lie deep in our imperfect and limited understanding of the nature of language and the role it plays in our thinking, our reasoning, and our cognitive processes, and in the difficulty we find in separating out the apparently intertwining strands of cognitive and communicative ability when asked to assess extended writing. This may have something to do with the fact that we can regularly and reliably recognise and quantify facts and precisely defined details of content, but lack confidence and consistency and the capacity to agree when asked to make qualitative judgements.

Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that extended writing is extremely useful — to the writer as a means of clarifying and communicating our thinking, and to those who read it as a means of assessing and responding to the relevance and validity of what we have written. There are also clearly useful advantages in using extended writing tasks as instruments of assessment:

- ◆ they allow candidates some freedom of choice—in selecting and structuring and sequencing what they consider to be relevant features of content (although choice in these areas may be constrained by the terms of the question or by the evidence requirements of the task)
- ◆ they give opportunity for demonstration of discrete and related higher order cognitive skills (applying knowledge, analysing, synthesising, evaluating, thinking critically)
- ◆ they are conducive to synoptic assessment allowing candidates opportunity to demonstrate skill in understanding relationships, making connections, comparisons and contrasts between ideas, cause and effect and disparate areas of content

The disadvantages correspond in some respects to the advantages:

- ◆ the relative freedom of choice afforded to candidates may result in such a range of responses that it is difficult for assessment guidelines to cover all possibilities

- ◆ opportunities to demonstrate higher order cognitive skills may be constrained if candidates don't have appropriate levels of communicative competence
- ◆ the assessment of essays and other forms of extended writing is notoriously unreliable — consistency of individual markers is an issue, as is standardisation of the assessments of groups of markers

In response to these advantages and disadvantages, and in response to the diversity of emphasis and value given to extended writing in a range of SQA qualifications, it is recommended that the prescription of a single generic model for the assessment of extended writing, even if it were possible to construct such a model, should be resisted.

A more realistic and considered approach might be to suggest a series of models for use as appropriate to the requirements of different qualifications and different levels of qualification.

It is suggested that at the heart of each of these models there ought to be the two words that are most frequently and independently used in subjects where differentiation in quality of extended writing is addressed in marking instructions: **clarity** and **coherence**.

Clarity of extended writing may be evidenced by:

- ◆ accurate use of specialist subject-specific terminology
- ◆ accurate use of general vocabulary
- ◆ sufficient or consistent accuracy in spelling

Coherence of extended writing will emerge from the following linguistic criteria:

- ◆ accurate use a range of suitable conjunctions to make appropriate links within and between sentences and paragraphs
- ◆ accurate use of punctuation
- ◆ sufficient or consistent accuracy in the construction of sentences of varying length and type

It is recommended, therefore that all models for the assessment of extended writing in SQA qualifications should acknowledge the need for clarity and coherence of writing.

Three models are suggested by which this might be facilitated:

- ◆ a checklist model
- ◆ a holistic model
- ◆ an analytic model

The checklist model

A checklist might simply be a tick against a single all-encompassing statement such as: “The candidate’s extended writing is sufficiently clear and coherent to reveal the substance of the candidate’s response”.

A more detailed checklist might look like this:

| Clarity and coherence of response | |
|--|---|
| Accurate use of specialist vocabulary | √ |
| Accurate use of general vocabulary | √ |
| Accurate use of punctuation | √ |
| Accurate construction of sentences | √ |

The holistic model

A genuinely holistic model for the assessment of extended writing is provided in Appendix 2 (Marking Instructions for History). A similar approach is taken in English, where the piece of extended writing is considered and assessed in its totality, but against specific subject-related criteria. (See Appendix 3.)

In all holistic models of assessment, the product itself is the subject of assessment, not simply its contents. This has the clear advantage of respecting the integrated nature of the cognitive and communicative skills that have been deployed to create the extended writing. The more controlled the terms of the question or the task, and the more firm the criteria of assessment in terms of the cognitive and communicative skills to be deployed, the less likely it should be that significant variations in the application of the assessment criteria will occur.

The analytic model

In some subjects, assessors adopt a slightly modified approach to holistic assessment that seeks to assess the totality of the piece. In this approach, discrete values are accorded to different parts or aspects. For example, in the Advanced Higher Physical Education Project Report (see Appendix 4) the 70 marks available are broken down into 5 groups of marks. Each group is awarded on the basis of all criteria applied together to a part of the response:

| MARK RELATED CRITERIA | MARKS |
|-----------------------------------|-------|
| 1. Rationale and Project Proposal | 12 |
| 2. Research | 17 |
| 3. Interpretation and Discussion | 17 |
| 4. Application to Performance | 12 |
| 5. Evaluation | 12 |
| TOTAL | 70 |

A similar approach is taken to the assessment of long (several thousand words) pieces of extended writing in other subjects:

- ◆ the Modern Studies Advanced Higher Dissertation (10 marks for introduction, 25 marks for analysis, and 10 marks for conclusion)
- ◆ the Biology Advanced Higher Investigation Report (4 marks for introduction, 6 marks for procedures, 5 marks for results, 7 marks for discussion, 3 marks for presentation)
- ◆ the Chemistry Advanced Higher Investigation Report (4 marks for introduction, 6 marks for procedures, 5 marks for results, 7 marks for discussion, 3 marks for presentation)

An important consideration in any analytic model of assessment is whether or not the value of the whole can be demonstrated to correspond reliably to the sum of its parts. It should also be kept in mind that many analytic approaches may represent the simple aggregation of a series of mini holistic assessments. Differences, therefore between analytic models and holistic models of assessment may not be as fundamental as they might appear, although the analytic model may seem more appropriate to the assessment of extended writing *per se*, while the holistic model may seem more appropriate to the assessment of other communicative presentation skills.

Extended writing as an assessment instrument

Unavoidable assessment of writing skills

When used as an assessment instrument, extended writing can require many skills. The previous section discussed the extended writing skills that a course might include explicitly. This section discusses how skills that are assessed through extended written answers might be assessed without taking the quality of writing into account, or without using extended writing altogether.

We assume, however, that clarity in even short written answers cannot be separated out and be treated as if it has no influence whatsoever on judging and marking the correctness and quality of candidate responses in any external written assessment. This chapter will therefore assume that clarity of writing will be assessed and marked in accordance to suggestions in the previous chapter.

Question types that do not require extended writing

It is possible to avoid extended writing. The latest version of the *Guide to Assessment* lists the following selected or constructed response questions as suitable for assessing cognitive abilities:

- ◆ Alternative response questions (true/false)
- ◆ Assertion/reason questions

- ◆ Cloze questions
- ◆ Completion questions
- ◆ Grid questions
- ◆ Matching questions
- ◆ Multiple choice questions
- ◆ Multiple response questions
- ◆ Short answer questions

Table 1 shows the cognitive abilities that can be assessed by each of these question types, according to the *Guide to Assessment*.

Table 1: cognitive abilities assessed by selected or constructed response questions

| | Alternative response (true/false) | Assertion/reason | Cloze | Completion | Grid | Matching | Multiple choice | Multiple response | Short answer |
|---------------|-----------------------------------|------------------|-------|------------|------|----------|-----------------|-------------------|--------------|
| Recall | √ | | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| Discriminate | √ | | | | | | | | |
| Understanding | | | | √ | | | √ | √ | √ |
| Comprehension | | | | | √ | √ | | | |
| Application | | | | √ | √ | √ | | | √ |
| Reasoning | | | √ | | | | | | |
| Analysis | | √ | | | | | | | |
| Evaluation | | √ | | | | | √ | √ | |
| Synthesis | | | | | | | √ | √ | |

Other forms of assessment that are already in use that could ameliorate, at least, the difficulties of assessing extended writing:

- ◆ the Higher Modern Studies Decision Making Exercise
- ◆ the use of bullet points (advice given to candidates preparing for Close Reading Higher)
- ◆ the italicised 'prompts' in History Higher Paper 2
- ◆ the Higher History Extended essay, which is planned and prepared in advance

Marking

No specific guidance is necessary for assessment instruments which avoid the use of extended writing — they can be marked as usual. Where clarity or other extended writing skills are assessed together with subject specific knowledge and skills, the advice given in the previous section applies.

Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions

The current situation, with its inconsistencies and variation of approach, does not appear tenable. If extended writing is required of candidates, whatever the context of their study, candidates have the right to expect that the skills they have developed to meet this requirement will be duly taken into account when their work is assessed.

SQA would appear, therefore, to have a duty to ensure greater consistency and transparency of approach to the assessment of extended writing: within subject and course documentation (Arrangements, Question Papers, Marking Instructions); between subject levels (where differences of approach may exist); and across all subjects where extended writing is a requirement.

Recommendations

- 1 Where communicative ability in extended writing is a key subject aim or assessment objective, the wording of questions and tasks should facilitate its demonstration, and the means by which it will be judged should be made explicit in marking instructions.
- 2 No single generic marking model should be prescribed for all courses at all levels, but each course's assessment specifications should indicate the use of one or more of three models:
 - ◆ a checklist model
 - ◆ a holistic model
 - ◆ an analytic model

All models for the assessment of extended writing in SQA qualifications should acknowledge the need for clarity and coherence of writing.

- 3 In instances where communicative ability in extended writing is NOT a key subject aim or assessment objective, assessment panels and assessment teams should be required to justify their use of extended writing as an instrument of assessment, especially in situations where other instruments of assessment can be demonstrated to produce equally reliable but more valid assessments.
- 4 In instances where communicative ability in extended writing is NOT a key subject aim or assessment objective but the use of extended written responses cannot be avoided, one or more of the following options is advised, depending on the types of subject-specific knowledge and skill that are the main focus of assessment:
 - ◆ Reducing the extent of writing to a minimum (through prompts, preparation beforehand, or as in the Decision Making Exercise).
 - ◆ Allocating a minimal amount of marks for the writing, based on separate criteria.
 - ◆ Allowing presentations with visual and oral input (PowerPoints, products) in internal assessments.
 - ◆ Assessment guidance should also acknowledge that disabled candidates who have significant difficulties with writing are entitled to reasonable adjustments, such as the use of linguistic support, to allow them to produce an extended piece of writing.

Appendix 1: Diet 2008 National Qualifications with extended written responses

| Course | level | Form of extended response |
|-----------------------------|-------|---|
| Accounting | H | extended theory questions |
| Accounting | AH | extended answer questions |
| Administration | H | extended response questions |
| Administration | AH | extended response questions management report (2500-3000 words) |
| Architectural Technology | H | extended response questions |
| Biology | Int 2 | extended response questions |
| Biology | H | extended response questions |
| Biology | AH | extended response questions investigation report (2000-2500 words) |
| Human Biology | H | extended response questions |
| Biotechnology | Int2 | extended response questions |
| Biotechnology | H | extended response questions |
| Building Construction | H | extended response questions |
| Business Management | H | extended response questions |
| Business Management | AH | extended response questions business report (2500- 3000 words) |
| Care | H | extended response questions |
| Chemistry | Int 1 | extended response questions |
| Chemistry | Int 2 | extended response questions |
| Chemistry | H | extended response questions |
| Chemistry | AH | extended response questions investigation report (2000-2500 words) |
| Classical Greek | SG | extended response questions written report (short paragraph) |
| Classical Greek | Int 1 | extended response questions |
| Classical Greek | Int 2 | extended response questions |
| Classical Greek | H | extended response questions |
| Classical Greek | AH | extended response questions investigation (4000 words) |
| Classical Studies | SG | extended response questions |
| Classical Studies | Int 1 | extended response questions |
| Classical Studies | Int 2 | extended response questions |
| Classical Studies | H | essay |
| Classical Studies | AH | essay dissertation (4000 words) |
| Computing | Int 2 | extended response questions |
| Computing | H | extended response questions |
| Computing | AH | extended response questions |
| Contemporary Social Studies | SG | report (250-1500 words: varies with level) |
| Drama | Int 1 | extended response questions |
| Drama | Int 2 | extended response questions |

| | | |
|-----------------------------|-------|---|
| Drama | H | essay |
| Drama | AH | essay |
| Early Education & Childcare | H | extended response |
| Economics | Int 2 | essay |
| Economics | H | essay |
| Economics | AH | essay dissertation (3500-4000 words) |
| English | SG | extended response questions folio |
| English | Int 1 | extended response questions essay |
| English | Int 2 | extended response questions essay |
| English | H | extended response questions essay |
| English | AH | essay dissertation (3500 – 4000 words) |
| ESOL | Int 2 | extended writing tasks |
| ESOL | H | extended writing tasks |
| Gaelic (Learners) | Int 2 | extended written response |
| Gaelic (Learners) | H | extended written response |
| Gaelic (Learners) | AH | extended written response essay |
| Gaidhlig | SG | extended written response |
| Gaidhlig | Int 1 | extended written response |
| Gaidhlig | Int 2 | extended written response |
| Gaidhlig | H | extended written response |
| Gaidhlig | AH | extended written response essay |
| Geography | SG | extended response questions |
| Geography | Int 1 | extended response questions |
| Geography | Int 2 | extended response questions essay |
| Geography | H | extended response questions essay |
| Geography | AH | extended response questions folio (3000 plus 1500 words) |
| Geology | H | extended response questions essay fieldwork report |
| History | SG | extended response questions |
| History | Int 1 | extended response questions |
| History | Int 2 | extended response questions essay |
| History | H | extended response questions essay |

| | | |
|---|-------|--|
| History | AH | essay dissertation (4000 words) |
| Home Economics: Fashion & Textile Technology | H | extended response questions |
| Home Economics: Health & Food Technology | H | extended response questions |
| Home Economics: Lifestyle & Consumer Technology | H | extended response questions |
| Hospitality: Food and Drink Service | H | extended response questions |
| Information Systems | Int 2 | extended response questions |
| Information Systems | H | extended response questions |
| Information Systems | AH | extended response questions |
| Latin | SG | written report (500-1000words) |
| Latin | Int 1 | extended response questions |
| Latin | Int 2 | extended response questions |
| Latin | H | extended response questions |
| Latin | AH | extended response questions essay investigation (4000 words) |
| Managing Environmental Resources | Int 2 | extended response questions |
| Managing Environmental Resources | H | extended response questions |
| Media Studies | Int 1 | extended response questions |
| Media Studies | Int 2 | extended response questions |
| Media Studies | H | essay |
| Media Studies | AH | essay dissertation (2500-3000 words) |
| Modern Languages | SG | folio |
| Modern Languages | Int 1 | restricted written report |
| Modern Languages | Int 2 | restricted written response |
| Modern Languages | H | directed writing |
| Modern Languages | AH | discursive writing folio (1500 words) |
| Modern Studies | SG | extended response questions |
| Modern Studies | Int 1 | extended response questions |
| Modern Studies | Int 2 | extended response questions |
| Modern Studies | H | extended response questions report |
| Modern Studies | AH | essay dissertation (4000-5000 words) |
| Personal & Social Education | Int 2 | extended response questions |
| Personal & Social Education | H | extended response questions |

| | | |
|----------------------------|-------|---|
| | | personal written statement |
| Physical Education | Int 1 | extended response questions |
| Physical Education | Int 2 | extended response questions |
| Physical Education | H | extended response questions |
| Physical Education | AH | project report (2500-3000 words) |
| Physics | AH | investigation (2000 -2500 words) |
| Politics | H | extended response questions essay |
| Product Design | Int 2 | extended response questions |
| Product Design | H | extended response questions |
| Product Design | AH | extended response questions |
| Psychology | Int 1 | extended response questions |
| Psychology | Int 2 | extended response questions |
| Psychology | H | extended response questions |
| RMPS | Int 2 | extended response questions |
| RMPS | H | extended response questions essay |
| RMPS | AH | essay dissertation (3500-5000 words) |
| Social & Vocational Skills | SG | extended response questions |
| Sociology | Int 2 | extended response questions essay |
| Sociology | H | extended response questions essay |
| Travel & Tourism | H | extended response questions |

Appendix 2: History Higher Paper 1 Specimen Marking Instructions

- 1 Each question is marked out of 20.
- 2 In Paper 1 candidates will be rewarded according to the quality of thought revealed in their answers. They will not be rewarded solely, or even mainly, for the quantity of knowledge conveyed. 'Quality of thought' should be taken as including the extent to which the candidate:

gives an answer which is relevant to the question and relates explicitly to the question's terms;
argues a case, when requested to do so;
makes the various distinctions required by the question;
responds to all the elements in the question;
where required, explains, analyses, discusses and assesses rather than simply describes or narrates;
answers with clarity and fluency and in language appropriate to historical writing at this level.

- 3 The following descriptions provide some additional guidance on the features of essays at grades C, B and A respectively. Clearly, many essays will exhibit some, though not all, of the features listed in any one category; others will be stronger in one area than in another. These characteristics do, however, provide a general indication of aspects to be expected in an essay at a particular grade.

C: 10 – 11 marks

a reasonable quantity of evidence relevant to the issue will have been presented, though the style may be largely narrative or descriptive;
some irrelevance is likely;
there will be basic analysis of the issue;
there will be a conclusion, although not particularly well structured.

B: 12 – 13 marks

there will be a more substantial body of relevant evidence;
the amount of irrelevance will be limited;
there will be some coherence to the argument, making positive use of the evidence presented to illustrate and develop appropriate points;
a conclusion will have been drawn, supported by some reference to the evidence.

A: 14 – 20 marks

there will be a considerable body of evidence, selected appropriately and used to illustrate and develop the analysis;
the line of argument will be well developed, clear and coherent throughout the essay;

there will be a fluent presentation of the conclusion, arising in a logical manner from the argument.

Issues to consider in marking an essay

Markers may find it useful to consider the following aspects when evaluating an essay. For the avoidance of doubt, these are guides to questions that should influence the view of the quality of an essay, not a checklist of questions that must be answered positively in order to award a pass or a particular grade.

- Structure Is the evidence organised appropriately by paragraph?
Is the structure essentially analytical, or can it be described more accurately as narrative or descriptive?
What is the quality of analysis contained in the development section?
- Introduction Does the essay have a recognisable introduction that indicates an understanding of the issue in the question?
Does the introduction place the issue in its broader historical context?
Does it indicate, where relevant, an awareness of a range of factors influencing a particular event or issue?
- Evidence Does the candidate communicate a good understanding of the historical evidence?
Is there sufficient evidence to address the issue effectively?
Is the evidence used in support of an argument, or is it merely presented?
Is the candidate aware of potential (or actual) differences in interpretation, making reference to alternative interpretations/historiography where appropriate?
- Conclusion Is there a recognisable conclusion?
If so, is it merely a repetition, without discussion, of points made earlier in the essay, or does it summarise the argument effectively?
Does it provide a clear answer to the issue in the question?
- Overall Taking all of the above into account, what mark should be awarded?

Awarding a mark

In allocating marks, it may be helpful to break down the process of decision into a number of stages, bearing in mind the questions above and the broad descriptions of typical features of answers at various levels of performance:

1. Does the essay contain sufficient of the characteristics described in the marking instructions to justify the award of a pass mark?
2. If so, does it have enough of the features of the higher band awards to take it above the C pass level?

3. Again, if so, does it match enough of the qualities of an A pass essay to justify that award?
4. Once the appropriate band has been identified, where within the range of marks available should the essay be placed? Does it just demonstrate enough of the relevant features to reach that band, or does it have additional qualities to take it higher up the range of marks, part or all of the way to the top mark available within the band?

In marking essays of high quality, it should be noted that the full range of marks is available to be awarded. It is important to bear in mind that most candidates will be sixteen or seventeen years old. Marks should reflect what it is reasonable to expect from a candidate of that age, and quality rewarded accordingly. An essay worthy of an 'A' grade should not, therefore, automatically receive 14 or 15 marks, but as high a mark as you consider it merits; full marks should not be reserved for the 'perfect' answer. In History no such thing exists anyway.

Appendix 3: Full category descriptors for AH English Specialist Study Dissertation

CATEGORY 1

MARKS: 35—40

Excellent – well aligned with a significant number of the published indicators of excellence.

Understanding

- ◆ A thorough exploration is made of the implications of the stated topic.
- ◆ Sustained insight is revealed into key elements, central concerns and significant details of the texts or of the linguistic or media field of study.

Analysis

- ◆ A full and satisfying range of critical/analytical comment is offered.
- ◆ Literary, linguistic or media concepts, techniques, forms, usages are handled with skill and precision.

Evaluation

- ◆ Perceptive and incisive judgements are made.
- ◆ Deployment of evidence from primary and, where appropriate, secondary sources is skilful and precise.

Expression

- ◆ Structure, style and language, including the use of appropriate critical/analytical terminology, are skilfully deployed to develop a pertinent and sharply focused argument.

CATEGORY 2

MARKS: 30—34

Still signs of excellence – but not quite so well aligned with (or aligned with fewer of) the published indicators of excellence.

Understanding

As for Category 1, but

the attempt made to explore the implications of the topic is not quite so thorough

- ◆ insight is not quite so well sustained

Analysis

As for Category 1, but

- ◆ the range of critical/analytical comment is not quite so full or satisfying
- ◆ relevant techniques, concepts, forms, usages are not handled with quite the same level of skill and precision

Evaluation

As for Category 1, but

- ◆ judgements made are not quite so perceptive or incisive
- ◆ deployment of evidence is not quite so skilful or precise

Expression

As for Category 1, but

- ◆ expression is not quite so skilfully deployed or argument quite so sharply focused.

CATEGORY 3

MARKS: 25—29

More than competent – in some significant ways beyond some of the published performance criteria.

Understanding

As for Category 4, but with glimmers of awareness of implications or thoroughness or insight.

Analysis

As for Category 4, but with glimmers of fullness or skill or precision of critical/analytical comment.

Evaluation

As for Category 4, but with glimmers of perceptiveness or incisiveness or skilful deployment of evidence.

Expression

As for Category 4, but with glimmers of skilful deployment of language in the development of argument.

CATEGORY 4

MARKS: 20—24

Competent – in overall quality firmly anchored to the published performance criteria.

Understanding

The dissertation takes a relevant and thoughtful approach to the stated topic and demonstrates secure understanding of key elements, central concerns and significant details of the texts or of the linguistic or media field of study.

Analysis

The dissertation makes relevant and thoughtful critical/analytical comment and demonstrates secure handling of literary, linguistic or media concepts, techniques, forms, usages.

Evaluation

Judgements made are relevant, thoughtful and securely based on detailed evidence drawn from primary and, where appropriate, secondary sources.

Expression

Structure, style and language, including the use of appropriate critical/analytical terminology, are consistently accurate and effective in developing a relevant argument.

CATEGORY 5

MARKS: 15—19

Less than competent – in some significant ways not quite achieving all of the published performance criteria.

Understanding

As for Category 4, but with some weakness in relevance or thoughtfulness or security of understanding of key elements, central concerns, significant details.

Analysis

As for Category 4, but with some weakness in relevance or thoughtfulness or accuracy or range of critical/analytical comment.

Evaluation

As for Category 4, but with some weakness in relevance or thoughtfulness or substantiation of judgements made.

Expression

As for Category 4, but with some weakness in accuracy or effectiveness of structure or style or language or critical/analytical terminology in the development of argument.

CATEGORY 6**MARKS: 00—14**

Incompetent – well below Advanced Higher level as required by the published performance criteria.

Understanding

The dissertation is deficient in relevance or thoughtfulness or security of understanding of key elements, central concerns, significant details.

Analysis

The dissertation is deficient in relevance or thoughtfulness or accuracy or range of critical/analytical comment.

Evaluation

The dissertation is deficient in relevance or thoughtfulness or substantiation of judgements made.

Expression

The dissertation is deficient in accuracy or effectiveness of structure or style or language or critical/analytical terminology in the development of argument.

Appendix 4: Advanced Higher Physical Education Project Report “Marking Criteria in Extended Grade Related Form”

| MARK RELATED CRITERIA | Marks |
|---|-----------------|
| 1. Rationale and Project Proposal | 12 marks |
| Presents an outline rationale and project proposal that considers the nature and demands of performance, issues affecting current performance and relevant underpinning knowledge that can inform performance development. | 0-4 |
| Presents a clear rationale and project proposal that takes account of the nature and demands of performance, issues affecting current performance and relevant underpinning knowledge that can inform performance development. | 5-8 |
| Presents a clear and well-structured rationale and project proposal that takes significant account of the nature and demands of performance, issues affecting current performance and relevant underpinning knowledge that can inform performance development. | 9-12 |
| 2. Research | 17 marks |
| Uses a limited range of literature and resources to research selected concepts and propositions and acquire relevant knowledge about performance and performance development | 0-5 |
| Uses a range of relevant literature and resources to research selected concepts and propositions and acquire relevant knowledge about performance and performance development | 6-11 |
| Uses a wide range of relevant literature and resources to research selected concepts and propositions and acquire relevant knowledge about performance and performance development | 12-17 |
| 3. Interpretation and Discussion | 17 marks |
| Exhibits partial understanding of broad and specific issues arising from research through presenting and interpreting information with generally shallow discussion. Some pertinent connections to personal needs and performance goals with some coherent thinking are evident. | 0-5 |
| Exhibits sound understanding of broad and specific issues arising from research through presenting and interpreting information with occasionally detailed discussion. This develops pertinent connections to personal needs and performance goals with some articulate thinking and clarity evident. | 6-11 |
| Exhibits comprehensive understanding of broad and specific issues arising from research through presenting and interpreting information thoroughly and accurately, with detailed discussion. This develops pertinent connections to personal needs and performance goals with articulating thinking, clarity and focus. | 12-17 |
| 4. Application to Performance | 12 marks |
| Can occasionally demonstrate how acquired knowledge was applied to personal development plans and programmes of work to optimise | 0-4 |

| | |
|--|----------|
| performance. | |
| Can demonstrate how acquired knowledge was applied to personal development plans and programmes of work to optimise performance. | 5-8 |
| Can consistently demonstrate how acquired knowledge was applied to personal development plans and programmes of work to optimise performance. | 9-12 |
| 5. Evaluation | 12 marks |
| Can occasionally show critical evaluation of work undertaken, discuss in broad terms process issues and findings, support judgements with evidence and make recommendations for future management of personal performance. | 0-4 |
| Can critically evaluate work undertaken and discuss the processes and findings involved, support judgements with evidence and make recommendations for the future management of personal performance. | 5-8 |
| Can critically evaluate all work undertaken, discuss processes issues and the full significance of findings; support judgements with substantiated evidence and make informed recommendations for the future management of personal performance. | 9-12 |