

DISSERTATION POLICY

Principles governing use of Undergraduate Dissertations at the University

1 Introduction

- 1.1 It is not a University requirement that an undergraduate three year Honours Degree must contain a Dissertation unit; although there is an expectation that there will be an element of final work at level 6 showing the accumulation of student achievement across the three year programme. This can be one or more units from a variety of credit values and types, for example: dissertation, extended essay, major project, combined dissertation or equivalent.
- 1.2 It is expected that courses will focus on academic inclusivity to ensure that assessment is accessible to the entire student body, particularly in light of the practical nature of the courses and the large number of dyslexic students. The need for alternative assessment tasks should be avoided wherever possible through development of an inclusive curriculum.
- 1.3 This policy refers exclusively to those courses which include a Dissertation or Combined Dissertation/Critical Reflection at Level 6.

2 Unit Descriptors

- 2.1 Standard unit descriptors have been developed for use in all courses that include a unit entitled 'Dissertation' and 'Combined Dissertation/Critical Reflection'.
- 2.2 In undergraduate programmes, these titles are exclusively for the use of 30 credit units at Level 6, using the standard University descriptors at Appendix 1 and Appendix 2.
- 2.3 These unit descriptors may not be amended. However, supplement unit handbooks should describe particular features of the dissertation for particular courses (for example, more tailored bibliographies).

3 Delivery and Assessment

- 3.1 For the majority of courses, the delivery pattern, within the confines of the unit descriptor, is the responsibility of the Course Leader as indicated in the Course Structure Diagram. However, where Dissertations and Combined Dissertations/Critical Reflections are delivered by a centralised contextual theory team there will be a common delivery schedule and hand-in date.
- 3.2 Dissertations follow the University's Policy for Internal Verification. A sample must be moderated following first marking (at least ten, with a square root of the total number marked if there are more than 100 submissions).

- 3.3 Dissertations follow the University's Assessment Feedback Policy. Written feedback, on the University template, must be provided within eight weeks of the submission.

Appendix 1

UNIT TITLE	Dissertation
Unit Code	TBC
Location	Cross-University
Level	6
Duration	15 Weeks
Credit Value	30
Total Learning Hours for Unit	300
DATE FIRST APPROVED	
DATE OF THIS VERSION	

CONTENT

This unit consists of a substantial period of sustained, individually negotiated research on a subject that is likely to be related to the contextual and/ or theoretical concerns of your discipline or chosen area of practice, towards the provision of structured written argument .

The unit enables you to engage with a range of research skills, and develop an identified methodological approach, appropriate to your chosen subject area. In devising and effecting a written response to such research, you will be expected to reflect upon and articulate a clear and sustained argument that conforms to academic conventions and demonstrates an understanding of the subject area through selected, managed, and detailed analysis and evaluation.

AIMS

The aims of this unit are:

- A1 To enable you to undertake focused and sustained research into an individually negotiated subject area (subject to approval by your tutor).
- A2 To provide an opportunity for you to demonstrate an understanding of the historical, theoretical or critical concerns of your subject area through interpretation, reflection, analysis and evaluation.
- A3 To enable you to produce a clear and sustained written argument, supported by appropriate evidence, that conforms to academic conventions.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

On satisfactory completion of the unit you will be able to:

- LO1 Demonstrate an application of appropriate research methods in the identification and understanding of broad contexts and specific practices.
- LO2 Demonstrate abilities of interpretation, reflection, analysis and evaluation of relevant research.
- LO3 Provide clear and sustained written argument presented according to academic conventions.

INDICATIVE TEACHING & LEARNING METHODS

No. of hours of scheduled activity	10
No. of hours of independent activity	290
No. of hours of placement activity	0
<u>This will comprise:</u>	
Activities drawn from Lectures, tutorials, seminars and independent study.	

Table A1 - Assessment Components

Assessment Component List all separate components	Weighting (%)	Typical Indicative Assessment tasks Where the component comprises more than one assessment task	Assessment Type For each component double click in the box to see options. The options equate to the assessment types in table A2	Word Count Approx word count where applicable
Dissertation	100%	Dissertation as articulated in the unit handbook	Dissertation	8000

Table A2 –Categories for Assessment

Assessment Type	% of assessment	Category
Written exam		Written
Set exercise (under exam conditions but not testing practical skills)		Written
Written assignment, including essay		Coursework
Report		Coursework
Dissertation	100%	Coursework
Portfolio		Coursework
Project output (other than dissertation)		Coursework
Set exercise (not under exam conditions, e.g. critiques)		Coursework
Oral assessment and presentation		Practical
Practical skills assessment (including production of an artefact)		Practical
Set exercise testing practical skills		Practical

Table A3 – Summary Table A2 data

Assessment Category	Total % for Unit
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Written	
Coursework	100%
Practical	

Table A4 - ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

NB: There should be at least one criteria against each learning outcome for the unit

CRITERION	MAPS TO LEARNING OUTCOME
Application of research methods towards understanding and appreciation of broad contexts and specific practices.	LO1
Interpretation, reflection, analysis and evaluation.	LO2
Provision of clear and sustained argument presented according to academic conventions.	LO3

READING LISTS¹

Recommended

Fairburn, Gavin & Winch, Christopher. (1996). *Reading, Writing and Reasoning: A Guide for Students* Buckingham: Open University Press

Greetham B. (2009). *How to Write Your Undergraduate Dissertation* (Palgrave Study Guides) London: Palgrave MacMillan

Walliman, Nicholas. (2004). *Your Undergraduate Dissertation: The Essential Guide for Success* London: Sage

¹ Reading Lists should be in accordance with the Reading Lists policy as issued by Library & Student Services. This policy also forms part of Annex 5 of the Quality Assurance Handbook.

Appendix 2

UNIT TITLE	Combined Dissertation/ Critical Reflection
Unit Code	TBC
Location	Cross-University
Level	6
Duration	22 Weeks
Credit Value	30
Total Learning Hours for Unit	300
DATE FIRST APPROVED	
DATE OF THIS VERSION	

CONTENT

This unit consists of two periods of sustained, individually negotiated research on subjects which are likely to be related to the contextual and/ or theoretical concerns of your chosen areas of practice, towards the provision of structured argument.

In the first, you will undertake a Dissertation, by engaging with research appropriate to your chosen subject area. In devising and effecting a response to such research, you will be expected to reflect upon and articulate a clear argument that conforms to academic conventions and demonstrates an understanding of the subject through selected and managed analysis and evaluation.

In the second, you will undertake an individually negotiated project of critical research and reflection that provides a contextual framework for, and analysis of, your own practice and/ or visual interests.

AIMS

The aims of this unit are:

- A1 To enable you to undertake focused and sustained research into individually negotiated subject areas (subject to approval by your tutor)..
- A2 To provide an opportunity for you to demonstrate an understanding of the historical, theoretical or critical concerns of your subject areas through interpretation, reflection, analysis and evaluation.
- A3 To enable you to resolve a clear and sustained line of enquiry supported by appropriate academic conventions

LEARNING OUTCOMES

On satisfactory completion of the unit you will be able to:

- LO1 Demonstrate an application of appropriate research methods in the identification and understanding of broad contexts and specific practices.
- LO2 Demonstrate abilities of interpretation, reflection, analysis and evaluation of relevant research.

LO3 Provide structured and coherent resolution of clear and sustained research according to appropriate academic conventions

INDICATIVE TEACHING & LEARNING METHODS

No. of hours of scheduled activity	10
No. of hours of independent activity	290
No. of hours of placement activity	0
<p><u>This will comprise:</u> Activities drawn from Lectures, tutorials, seminars and independent study</p>	

ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS

Table A1- Assessment Components

Assessment Component List all separate components	Weigh-ting (%)	Typical Indicative Assessment tasks Where the component comprises more than one assessment task	Assessment Type For each component double click in the box to see options. The options equate to the assessment types in table A2	Word Count Approx word count where applicable
Dissertation	60	Dissertation as articulated in the unit handbook	Dissertation	5000
Project Output	40	Project output as articulated in the unit handbook	Project output	3000

Table A2 –Categories for Assessment

Assessment Type	% of assessment	Category
Written exam		Written
Set exercise (under exam conditions but not testing practical skills)		Written
Written assignment, including essay		Coursework
Report		Coursework
Dissertation	60	Coursework
Portfolio		Coursework
Project output (other than dissertation)	40	Coursework
Set exercise (not under exam conditions, e.g. critiques)		Coursework
Oral assessment and presentation		Practical

Practical skills assessment (including production of an artefact)		Practical
Set exercise testing practical skills		Practical

Table A3 – Summary Table A2 data

Assessment Category	Total % for Unit
Written	
Coursework	100%
Practical	

Table A4 - ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

NB: There should be at least one criteria against each learning outcome for the unit

CRITERION	MAPS TO LEARNING OUTCOME
Application of research methods towards understanding and appreciation of broad contexts and specific practices.	LO1
Interpretation, reflection, analysis and evaluation.	LO2
Provision of structured and coherent resolution according to appropriate academic conventions	LO3

READING LISTS²

Recommended

Fairburn, Gavin & Winch, Christopher. (1996). *Reading, Writing and Reasoning: A Guide for Students* Buckingham: Open University Press

Greetham B. (2009). *How to Write Your Undergraduate Dissertation* (Palgrave Study Guides) London: Palgrave MacMillan

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