

GCE

Art and Design

**A Student's Guide to the Dissertation
For Courses Starting
from September 2004**

A STUDENT'S GUIDE TO THE DISSERTATION

This set of general guidelines is intended to assist students in the process of selecting, researching, and writing a dissertation. For details of the dissertation study requirements and content please refer to the information about Assessment Unit A2 1 in the Advanced GCE Art and Design Specification amended version August 2002.

The maximum raw mark for this unit is 80. It is marked as an independent unit. Any practical unit may link with the Dissertation but it does not have to do so.

1 INTRODUCTION

All students entering for the Advanced GCE Art and Design examination are required to undertake Assessment Unit A2 1 the Dissertation Coursework. Although Assessment Unit A2/1 is part of the second year of the Advanced GCE course, it is advisable to commence work on the Dissertation during the AS year. The Dissertation will fall under the Enquiry About Results service. Candidates will be required to present for teacher assessment all preparatory work undertaken for the Dissertation. Preparatory work is for teacher assessment ONLY and is not sent to CCEA. Completed Dissertations must be sent to CCEA for external moderation by 1 March.

2 THE DISSERTATION

The Dissertation should take the form of:

- An illustrated essay consisting of 2000 to 4000 words presented in A4 format – this may be a visual record supported by related text of 2000 to 4000 words not necessarily continuous prose;

or

- A slide/tape presentation of between 12 and 20 minutes in length which should include a sound commentary on cassette and be accompanied by text in A4 format;

or

- A video tape presentation of approximately the same content, of between 12 and 20 minutes in length, including on VHS format and include an explanatory statement or text in A4 format or other multimedia tools. Dissertations in this format need to be sent to CCEA by 1 March on CD-Rom or DVD. If candidates take this route, please ensure:
 - the work will be viewable on a multimedia PC or Macintosh without additional software or plug-ins;
 - if additional software or plug-ins are required please inform CCEA in advance to agree availability.

3 KEY SKILLS

The work involved in the production of a Dissertation offers ample opportunity to demonstrate Key Skills competence in:

- Communication;
- Information Technology;
- Improving your own Learning and Performance;
- Problem Solving; and
- Working with Others.

As the guide progresses you will see more specific references to opportunities for development and generation of evidence of Key Skills. **The relevant Key Skills will be printed in bold.**

4 ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The Dissertation will account for **15% of the total marks** for this examination. The criteria against which your dissertation will be marked are detailed in the Specification (pages 30–34). You will be marked on your ability to:

- record observations and insights (AO1);

Your work, comprising the Dissertation and all the preparatory work, should include evidence of your ideas, your observations, your own experiences and your personal insights based on information which you have assembled from a variety of sources. For the Dissertation, it is likely that these will be recorded mostly in writing, but in this subject visual images are also very important.

- critically evaluate and show understanding (AO2);

Your work should show that you have analysed and evaluated critically the information which you have assembled. The information may comprise of images, objects, texts or direct knowledge which you may have acquired by talking with an artist, craftworker or designer. You should show in your work that you can place the subject of your dissertation within a general framework and that you have an understanding of the meaning and purpose of your chosen topic.

- develop ideas, identify and interpret relationships (AO3);

Your work should show how you have investigated and explored the links between different aspects of your chosen topic and how your ideas for the presentation of your dissertation have evolved. The information may be found in either the preparatory work or the final Dissertation.

- realise your intentions, articulating and explaining the work of others (AO4).

You should present a dissertation which is personal and well informed. It should be clear that it is your own work and based directly on your preparatory studies. The overall presentation of the dissertation should emphasise how the various aspects of the dissertation come together to make a coherent unit. In the dissertation, connections which might exist between the work of relevant artists, craftworkers and designers should be explored.

You will also be marked on the **quality** of your written communication.

5 SELECTING A TOPIC

5.1 Your **Problem Solving** and decision-making skills come into play in selecting the subject of your Dissertation. Within the Specification you have two main options, you can either:

- select an issue which is directly related to your Fine Art or Design practical work in one of your coursework units AS 1, AS 2, AS 3 or A2 2;

or

- choose to examine and analyse the work of an artist, craftsperson or designer.

5.2 Your decision must be personal; you cannot expect a teacher/tutor to make the choice for you. However you should consult with your teacher/tutor before you settle on a topic as the experience they have will be useful in determining whether you have a topic which is going to be suitable or is lacking intellectual challenge or one which is too ambitious. In selecting a topic you need to discuss responses to the following questions with your teacher/tutor.

- *What do you want to find out from your study?*
- *Do you have first hand access to relevant artefacts, information?*
- *Do you have access to a good source of high quality reference material?*
- *Is your selected topic new and novel or has the topic been covered many times before? If it has, can you be sure that you can bring a fresh approach?*

5.3 Begin with a broad subject area, read around the topic, discuss your interest with your teacher/tutor, do a literature search, look at art/craft/design works that may be appropriate.

If sourcing suitable material proves to be difficult, adapt or find a different topic early in the process.

5.4 You will find, perhaps, that it is better not to have a working title until you have your first or second draft completed. It is not necessary to decide on the title for your

dissertation too early in the process. It may be advisable to wait until the final form and content are decided before finalising the title. It may be that you discover a theme or element in your research that stands out above others. For example, you may start off by investigating the work of John Luke (1906–1975) and find that you are intrigued by the Zen quality of his work. Your title may end up as “Concentration, Wisdom, Stillness” – *an investigation into the life and work of John Luke (1906–1975)*.

- 5.5 You may also consider the possibility of giving a presentation to your fellow students and allow yourself to be interviewed by them. By explaining to others the reasons for selecting a topic or for following a particular path of enquiry, or selecting a particular means of presentation you should be able to clarify ideas, opinions and strategies in the development of the Dissertation. It is also a perfect opportunity to generate evidence for the assessment of **Communication** and perhaps **Information Technology** as Key Skills.
- 5.6 Before the in-depth research begins you should submit an outline to the teacher/tutor in which a broad map of the work is sketched out. Your teacher/tutor may set deadlines for the submission of these “work in progress” stages. Clearly you should meet these deadlines. The outline should set out the parameters and objectives of the study and should also contain a survey of literature and sources.
- 5.7 At this point you should also have made a decision about how you intend to present your dissertation, whether it will be in essay format, slide presentation or video.
- 5.8 If you have elected to study processes, traditions or techniques associated with your own work please ensure that the link is clearly established and communicated in the introduction of your dissertation. You should state clearly why you have decided upon a particular format and explain why you feel it is appropriate to the subject matter.
- 5.9 All these initial notes, plans, rough drafts and other material generated at this stage should be kept safely as they will be required for assessment.

6 MANAGING TIME

- 6.1 You will need to think carefully about the time you have available and consider it as an important resource. Gathering first hand information, for example, is more time consuming than simply consulting texts. You may need to arrange appointments/visits several weeks in advance.
- 6.2 In co-operation with your teacher/tutor and fellow students you may wish to draw up a **schedule of tasks and time targets**. Remember that the dissertation must be handed in at least two weeks before the 1 March deadline so that your teacher/tutor will have ample time to mark and report on your work. By engaging in such an activity you will have the opportunity to demonstrate the Key Skills of **Working with Others** and **Improving your own Learning and Performance**. Remember also that you will have time commitments to other areas of work and that a balance should be achieved. When completed, the Dissertation should reflect time, energy and initiative in the sourcing and gathering of information and relevant material.

7 RESEARCH

- 7.1** In Art and Design, first hand experience of observing relevant artefacts and/or processes is invaluable and should form a fundamental part of your research. There is a broad range of first hand and second hand sources available to you. These can include Museum and Gallery visits, lectures, interviews with relevant practitioners, books, articles in journals and periodicals, catalogues, newspaper items, the Internet, CD-Roms, extracts from film, television, radio and video.
- 7.2** A good dissertation should always be informed by reference to *authoritative* sources. These might be contemporary or of an historical nature.
- 7.3** You should keep a careful record of all sources as you consult them. This may mean recording the title, author, publisher, edition, date, page number of written material, the website address of a source accessed through the Internet, photographing or sketching during visits to the work of artists/designers/craftspeople.
- 7.4** If your work requires visits to Galleries, Museums, to the workplaces of artists/designers/crafts people or interviews with Keepers/Gallery owners/artists please ensure that you have negotiated a suitable time. Ensure also that you are well prepared for your visit with a clear set of objectives/questions which are clear and agreed in advance with those whose help you are seeking.
- 7.5** Devise a suitable system to keep all your notes and preparatory work in order. Databases can be useful but you will need a back up disc in case of technical problems. *All preparatory work should be presented for assessment in an A4 ring binder when the dissertation is submitted to your teacher.*

8 ANALYSIS AND FORMING JUDGEMENTS

- 8.1** Whichever format you use, your dissertation should reflect the fact that you have given careful thought to the material that you have assembled. ***You should demonstrate that you are able to understand and interpret your findings, identify, analyse and discuss important issues arising from your interpretation, relate your interpretation to the work of others in a wider context and can offer personal insights and opinions on the issues which have been raised.***
- 8.2** If you have chosen to undertake the study of an artist/designer/craftsperson, it is simply not enough to offer a narrative of a visit or the transcript of a recorded interview you have undertaken with the artist. Remember that you can gain a great deal of information about the work of an artist by examining at first hand as many of his/her original works as you can find. Remember too that artists, craftspeople and designers exist in a world supported by those who buy art works, are gallery owners, critics, auction house owners, art historians, pupils, teachers, family members or friends. They co-exist with others who engage with similar themes, materials and processes. The production of their work is within a cultural, economic and political context. You may find that talking to

carefully chosen and relevant people, or reading what they have written, is of use in building up a more complete picture.

- 8.3** It is important, however, that you should make clear what *your* observations, insights and ideas are and do not allow them to be confused with the thoughts of others. *Do not pass off as your own, the work or opinions of other people.* Please remember that your opinion is as important in this context as the writers, critics or art historians you have read or interviewed. You may disagree with them or concur with their opinions and, as you present your argument, all your opinions and comments should be supported by reference to works or factual information.

9 COMMUNICATION AND PRESENTATION

- 9.1** Structuring your analysis and argument well will depend largely on how you have researched and prepared your material.

In all forms of presentation you should make your intentions clear in your introduction.

- 9.2** If your dissertation is an essay or a visual presentation supported by text, it should either be hand written in clear, legible handwriting or word-processed with one and a half or double line spacing. It should be in A4 format, with 1 inch/2 cm margins. You should write on one side of the page only and each page should be numbered.

Use headings and sub-headings that will help to break up the text and make it more manageable. They will help structure your text and give those reading it a logical pathway through your argument.

Take care over spelling, punctuation, grammar and sentence construction. Ask a reliable person to proof read your work.

9.3 Illustrations

If you make reference to an illustration, the illustration should be on the same page or the opposite page and it should be labelled, numbered and listed in your list of illustrations at the end of the essay. For example:

Plate 1

David Crone, Demolished Building, 1979, oil on canvas, AIB Art Collection.

If you make specific reference to colour in the text, then make sure that the illustration is a coloured one. For practical reasons, where possible, use scanned images or colour photocopies, as photographic paper tends to be much too heavy for mounting on typing or printing paper and can sometimes cause the typing or printing paper to tear when pages are turned. Heavy card used to mount illustrations is also problematic so it is best to stick to the advice outlined above.

9.4 Covers

There has been a tendency for some Art and Design students to over-embellish Dissertation covers. Experience has shown that dissertation covers extending into three dimensions are more of a hindrance than a help during the assessment process. *The advice for this unit of the coursework is to keep the cover of the work you present simple and the dissertation easily transported.* It should be presented in a soft-backed folder. Remember that the marks you receive will be for the *content* and the overall presentation of the Dissertation.

10 ACKNOWLEDGING RESOURCES

- 10.1** All of the resources you have used should be acknowledged. There is no need to mention your teacher/tutor or school/college. However, you should acknowledge any technical assistance (eg use of a Video Editing Suite) that you have received.
- 10.2** The bibliography should be set out in alphabetical order according to the surname of the author, as follows:

SPARKE, P. *A Century of Design. Design Pioneers of the 20th Century*, London, Mitchell Beazley, 1999, ISBN 1 84000 2131.

SUDJIC, D. *Ron Arad*, London, Laurence King, 1999, ISBN 1 85669 1268.

TIPTON, G. "Safety Zone", *Circa*, No 71, Spring 1995.

Journals, magazines or periodicals should be acknowledged as an integral part of your bibliography. Book titles should be italicised or underlined.

Journals/periodicals/magazines should have their name underlined. In the example above the third source mentioned is an art magazine. If you have used the Internet as a resource please give the site address and the author of any article you may have consulted.

- 10.3** Short quotations should be put in inverted commas and larger quotations should be indented without inverted commas. Each should show a note of the source. Throughout the essay you may need to use footnotes, side notes or references to a list of notes which you can place at the end of the essay. Here is an example of both types of quotation as used in an article by Tom Duddy in an Art Education Supplement to CIRCA 89, Autumn 1999, p 22.

Short Quotations

The eighteenth-century German philosopher Immanuel Kant defined the fine arts as the product of original genius. He defined genius as "the talent of natural gift which gives the rule to art" [2]. There is, he declared, a complete contrast between genius and what he calls "the spirit of imitation", and since learning is nothing but imitation, "it follows that the greatest ability and teachableness . . . cannot avail for genius" [3]. Artistic skill, in other words, cannot be communicated – "it is imparted to every artist immediately

by the hand of nature” [4].

Long Quotations

According to Rawls, the achievement of excellence is always relative to the individual and therefore to her natural assets and particular situation:

Thus what is necessary is that there should be for each person at least one community of shared interests to which he belongs and where he finds his endeavours confirmed by his associates . . .

This democracy in judging each other’s aims is the foundation of self-respect in a well-ordered society [5].

What the founders of a just and democratic society would avoid on principle is any doctrine of elitism or perfectionism which would claim that the only legitimate social or cultural associations are those composed of highly gifted individuals.

References

[2] Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgement*, trans J H Bernard, London/New York: Hafner Press-Macmillan, 1951, p 150.

[3] Ibid, p 151.

[4] Ibid, p 152.

[5] John Rawls, *The Theory of Justice*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972, p 442.

10.4 If you are presenting a video or slide presentation ensure that your credits are comprehensive. A slide presentation must have an accompanying set of notes to explain the slide images. The accompanying A4 ring binder for these kinds of presentation should include:

- a bibliography;
- a comprehensive list of credits;

11 EXAMPLE OF THE CANDIDATE RECORD SHEET

GCE Advanced Examinations
CANDIDATE RECORD SHEET: Art and Design
Summer 200_

A2

Candidate number:

Number in Centre:



Centre name: _____ Centre number:

Component	2-dimensional or 3-dimensional	Comments based on assessment criteria	mark (maximum 80)
Assessment Unit: A2A Dissertation		GRADE	
Assessment Unit: A2B Fine Art or Design			
Externally Set Assignment A2C			

Teachers, centres and candidates should note that CCEA may use extracts from examination scripts/worksheets/material on an anonymous basis in educational presentations, materials and products.

Candidate
 I have produced this work without help apart from that indicated by the teacher either in the work or elsewhere.
 Signature: _____ (Candidate)

Teacher
 I confirm that this work has been done in accordance with the conditions required by CCEA and that a sufficient amount was done under direct supervision to allow me to authenticate it with confidence.
 Signature: _____ (Teacher)

Clarendon Dock, 29 Clarendon Road,
 Belfast BT1 3BG
 Tel: (028) 9026 1200, Fax: (028) 9026 1234

CC/EA/FORM/42/02

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