

ASNC Tripos, Part I and Part II

GUIDELINES FOR THE PRESENTATION OF DISSERTATIONS (revised June 2011)

In Part I a dissertation may be substituted for one of the six examination-papers which a candidate is usually expected to offer. In Part II a dissertation is a compulsory element alongside four examination-papers. The official regulations state that a dissertation should show ‘evidence of reading, of judgment and criticism, and of power of exposition, but not necessarily of original research’. The length of the dissertation (**including** footnotes, but **excluding** the bibliography) must be between 7,000 and 10,000 words, in the case of a Part I dissertation, and between 9,000 and 12,000 words, in the case of a Part II dissertation. Any passage or text quoted in the dissertation will count towards the word limit; translation of the same text will not be counted towards the word limit. Should you wish to quote a substantial amount (in excess of 1,000 words), you should consult your dissertation supervisor. The amount of work involved should be approximately equivalent to the total preparation for a Tripos paper.

Part I and Part II

The dissertations will be assessed and marked according to the standards which prevail in the whole examination. Inevitably, therefore, more will be expected of you in Part II than in Part I. If you wish to develop in your Part II dissertation a subject which you previously treated in a Part I dissertation, you will be required to hand in a copy of the Part I submission together with that for Part II. No repetition of material is permitted. It is best to avoid citing a Part I dissertation in a Part II dissertation. If you must cite your Part I dissertation in order to avoid repeating relevant material, you **must not** provide your name in the references or the bibliography (examination candidates must remain anonymous).

Choosing your subject

You will first need to discuss your ideas about a topic with your Director of Studies and perhaps also with the relevant specialist in the Department. Not all subjects are necessarily appropriate or achievable for this purpose. The topic must fall within the terms of reference of ASNC (not borrowed) Tripos papers. Once you have defined an approximate topic, return Form 1 (countersigned by your Director of Studies) to the Departmental Secretary so that an appropriate supervisor can be appointed. You are advised to keep the title fairly general in the first instance; it may be possible to refine the title at a later date, or to introduce a more specific sub-title.

The Dissertation Supervisor

It is the principal function of the Dissertation Supervisor to give you broad, strategic guidance as to how you approach the topic. As the work proceeds, you should refer from time to time to the supervisor so that both of you can be satisfied that the dissertation is developing in a coherent fashion. The supervisor will also be able to offer instruction on how to lay out footnotes and what to put in them, and on the adequacy of your bibliography.

Please bear in mind that supervisors are not likely to be accessible in the Easter vacation, and that it is important, therefore, to ensure that you have got all the advice you need before the end of the Lent Term.

Timetable

The dissertation must be submitted at the beginning of Full Easter Term in which you take Tripos (Wednesday 25 April 2012). You would be **very unwise** to leave the writing until the Easter vacation. The bulk of the work should be done in the Long Vacation preceding the academic year in which the examination is being taken. If you do not have access to research-facilities near your home, consult your Director of Studies about spending part of the vacation in Cambridge. Formal approval of the precise title must be sought from the Head of Department before the division of the Michaelmas Term on Form 2: this application (using the form downloaded from the student Intranet pages) must be accompanied by a 500-word summary. You must submit a draft of the dissertation to your supervisor by the end of week 2 in Lent term (1 February 2012). Your supervisor is under no obligation to look at the draft if it is submitted at a later stage.

Presentation of typescripts

Since a dissertation can be written at leisure, the examiners set a high value on clarity and care in presentation, precision of argument, accuracy of detail, and correctness of reference. It is important, therefore, to allow time for careful writing up and, after typing, for careful checking and correction of the typed version. You should check quotations and references to ensure that no errors have crept in. The finished work will need a title-page and, if you have sectionalised the text, a contents-list. The dissertation must be word-processed in *one-and-a-half-* or *double-spaced* typescript.

Word-count

In fairness to all candidates, the specified (lower and upper) word-limits for dissertations must be treated with respect. Since it is assumed that all dissertations will be word-processed, probably using a version of Microsoft Word, the word-count should be made electronically, using the tool provided within the software.

The word-count **includes**:
main text
footnotes
text quoted in the main text or in the footnotes

The word-count **does not include**:
title page and declaration page
list of contents
any translation of quoted text
short captions under images
bibliography

Title

It is expected that the wording of the title which you submit on Form 2 by the division (middle) of the Michaelmas Term will remain unchanged. If you wish to request a change to the wording of your title, **you should make a case to your Dissertation Supervisor** as soon as you realise that the direction of your dissertation has changed significantly. This cannot be later than the date of the submission of the draft dissertation. Formal approval for a change of title must be given by the Chair of Examiners by the division (middle) of the Lent Term.

Quotation and paraphrase

All borrowing of the ideas of others must be acknowledged. Plagiarism (extended quotation or paraphrase of secondary sources, without acknowledgment) is not allowed and will, on detection, attract a severe penalty. For a clear definition of the different types of plagiarism see Appendix 1 (pp. 5–6)

Footnotes and Bibliography

Specific reference to your sources of information, whether primary or secondary, should appear in footnotes. Notes should appear either at the foot of each relevant page or be gathered as endnotes after the body of the text but before the bibliography. References should be complete (that is, with the specific page-references to the scholarly work being cited and — in reference to primary source-material — with specific reference to book/chapter/page/line, as appropriate, of the edited text). Reference should be in a consistent short-title form, for example:

Lapidge, 'The Hermeneutic Style', p. 94.

Brooks, *The Early History*, p. 49.

These conventions are simply and quickly learned; they must become second nature. Full bibliographical details of the publications cited should be reserved for the bibliography.

Your dissertation should conclude with a bibliography of the work on which you have drawn when writing your dissertation. You are required to present this in a professional form. You have the option of following one of the following stylesheets:

the MLA (Modern Language Association) stylesheet;

the MHRA (Modern Humanities Research Association) stylesheet;

the ASNC stylesheet.

The first two of these are available from booksellers. The third, developed from the stylesheet used for Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England (CSASE) and updated to include examples from the other ASNC subject areas, is available on the departmental website.

Compiling a bibliography can be a very time-consuming operation (do not expect to be able to do it the evening before you submit your dissertation!): you would be well advised to keep a full record of your bibliographical references as you do the research and writing.

Appendices

Some dissertation topics may be best tackled by presenting a body of data alongside the dissertation itself. It is only justified if the data is not readily available elsewhere. It can be submitted as an appendix and does not count towards the word-count. Do not automatically assume that an appendix will be acceptable; **you should make a case to your Dissertation Supervisor** as soon as you realise the structure of the dissertation may require a substantial amount of supporting data. Formal approval for an appendix must be given by the Chair of Examiners by the division (middle) of the Lent Term. Please note that it should only contain the data with brief notes and it should not contain discussion of material which properly belongs in the body of the dissertation; examiners are not required to read it and assessment of it will not be taken into account in arriving at the mark for the dissertation. In other words, it should not be a dumping-ground for over-length sections of the dissertation.

Submitting the dissertation

Two copies of the dissertation should be brought to the ASNC Departmental Office at 9 West Road **before 4 p.m.** on the first Wednesday of Full Easter Term; and you must obtain a receipt from the Departmental Secretary. Please note that late submission of your

dissertation will have to be reported to the Chairman of Examiners, and may incur a penalty. The copies should not be bound but clipped with a paper-clip and packed in a large envelope with your candidate number clearly marked. The dissertation will not be accepted if presented later (consult your Tutor, if you are late) or if it does not contain the following items (templates for both are available on the student Intranet pages):

1. A title-page, on which the title, as submitted on Form 2 in the Michaelmas Term, and your candidate number are printed clearly. **Do not** put your name on the title-page.
2. A declaration (unsigned) that the dissertation submitted is the candidate's own work; that it does not contain material which he/she has already used for a comparable purpose; that it gives full references to sources used; and that it falls within the prescribed word count.

Dissertations and examinations

Just as you may not use the same material more than once in your written examinations, so there should not be any significant duplication of material between what is in your dissertation and what you write in the exams.

Viva voce examination

The examiners have power to examine orally a candidate who has submitted a dissertation, both on the dissertation itself and, according to the official regulations, 'on the field of knowledge within which it falls'.

TIMETABLE: RECAPITULATION OF MAIN POINTS

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| End of first year: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• discuss possible topics with Director of Studies;• advise the Departmental Secretary of your approximate topic by returning Form 1 countersigned by your Director of Studies;• make contact with your Dissertation Supervisor. |
| Long Vacation: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• use this period to do the bulk of the research and to start writing. |
| Michaelmas Term: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• send Form 2 to the Departmental Office by the division (middle) of term. |
| Lent Term: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• submit a full draft (including the Draft Submission form which is available on the student intranet) to your Dissertation Supervisor by 1 February 2012 (end of Week 2) (this does not need to be bound). |
| Easter Full Term (24 April 2012): | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• submit two copies of the dissertation to the Departmental Office before 4 p.m.;• remember the necessary attachments; obtain a receipt (Form 3). |