

Swansea Metropolitan University
School of Digital Media

**Guidelines on Dissertation
Structure, Presentation, and
Referencing**

**SWANSEA INSTITUTE OF HIGHER EDUCATION
SCHOOL OF DIGITAL MEDIA**

**FINAL YEAR DISSERTATIONS
GENERAL GUIDELINES**

Introduction

The dissertation is the most substantial piece of written work you will complete on your course. It gives you the opportunity to examine, in some detail, a topic of your choice, in relation to your Third Year Major Project and subject to agreement with your supervisor. In order to complete the dissertation you will have to:

- a) define a topic
- b) identify the appropriate source material and carry out the necessary research
- c) formulate key questions and evaluate and discuss your material
- d) organise your material logically in order to produce a coherent discussion
- e) present, reference and illustrate your text appropriately to a high standard

Depending on your agreed choice of topic, different types of source material and methods of carrying out the research may be suitable. For example, you may wish to use interviews, visits, statistical analysis (properly carried out), practical investigations or personal records. In some cases, creative work of your own (e.g. poems, print, photographs, designs) or a critical discussion of your own studio practice may be appropriate. But whatever your approach, your written discussion must be grounded in library-based reading and research. Books, articles etc. are the most usual source of information and ideas. What we are looking for is a personal and critical evaluation of the relevant literature or other source material and the ability to synthesize and interpret. A good dissertation usually contains an argument (thesis) which is supported by the evidence presented.

Defining a topic

This is one of the most difficult parts of a dissertation and you need to start thinking about it early, the sooner the better. Your choice of topic is quite likely to emerge from your practical project work or your Contextual Studies classes. Some connection with the theory, processes and products of Digital Media is essential but the most important thing is that the topic should interest

you personally. Having said that, some words of warning are needed – a dissertation is **not** the place to solve personal dilemmas about the direction of your project work; nor is it the place to tackle huge issues such as 'Photography and Death' or 'The Effect of New Technology in Art'. It is not generally a good idea to discuss the life and work of one digital artist, film director, designer, etc. This has probably already been done and if not, involves more extensive primary research than you have time for. Similarly a dissertation is **not** the best place to bring to public attention the work of a friend, neighbour or relative about whom nothing has been written, however original this may be.

Whatever you have in mind, it is essential to discuss your ideas with the Dissertation Supervisor at an early stage. The scale of your topic must be manageable and it is vitally important that the resources for it are both available and accessible. The Dissertation Supervisor will be able to advise you on ways of focussing your subject and on the availability of source material for it. Ideally the topic should be associated with some fairly accessible contextual reading. Once your topic has been agreed with the Supervisor, you should complete, sign and submit the **dissertation proposal form**. The completed form should identify your area of study as precisely as possible, indicate your aims, suggest appropriate literature on the subject and be approximately 200 words. It should be returned to your Supervisor by mid-October.

Supervision

Early on, you will be assigned a Supervisor who will help you with the definition of your topic (see above), the identification of appropriate reading material and planning the structure of your argument. She/he will oversee the development of your work to its conclusion. It is **essential** to discuss problems and progress regularly and to ask him/her to look at drafts of your work before the final submission. **However, although supervisors will give guidance on all aspects of the dissertation, they are not there to write it for you.**

Research Methods

A) Using library resources

Much of your research will be carried out in libraries. From the start you will have to read generally around the subject area which interests you, in order to define a topic and find the most recent literature on your subject. It is essential to familiarise yourself with the Institute library and its on-line resources, such as: the Art Index, the Humanities Index, Athens (password needed from the library), the British Library Catalogue or other on-line university library catalogues (ARLIS/UK). There is also an Inter Library Loan system which enables you to get hold of books which are not available locally (this service cost £1 per book or article for the first 5 loans and £5 for each

subsequent loan in Swansea Institute Library. You may find it worth trying the service at the Swansea Public Library).

A word of warning about the use of the worldwide web: excessive use of web sources is not encouraged. It tends to produce a weak dissertation. All web sources must be properly referenced and listed in your Bibliography. (See References and Bibliography section.)

B) Making notes and keeping references

You will find it best to make notes on your reading or observations. Note-taking, especially in synopsis form, helps the brain to assimilate and memorise and can stimulate ideas! Alternatively photocopy as you go along.

The most important thing to remember is to keep full bibliographical references for everything you read or photocopy as follows:

- 1 author or editor**
- 2 title of book or journal article (in the case of an article, also title of journal, volume number, date and page numbers)**
- 3 date and place of publication**

If possible, keep all your bibliographical references listed in alphabetical order by author on a database or on cards as well. (This will save you a lot of time when you are completing your bibliography at the end).

C) Other research methods

Researching your chosen topic may involve you in visits to, and correspondence with, galleries, museums, archives, arts organisations, studios, businesses, buildings, schools, local authorities or whatever, or it may involve you in experiments and practical investigations of your own. Such 'primary research' (as opposed to 'secondary research' amongst published books) may prove extremely interesting and enjoyable.

Your own direct observations and analysis of things you have looked at e.g. films, interactive media, T.V.ads, etc – will always enhance your discussion. However, interviews, questionnaires, statistical surveys and the like, though they can be very rewarding, should be used with caution. You cannot depend on them alone for your source material. They need very careful planning and sometimes yield disappointingly little information. Use them only to illustrate and reinforce a discussion based on reading. If you are using interviews or questionnaires, you must be well prepared and absolutely clear about what you are trying to achieve. Remember someone is doing you a favour. Questions for interviews and questionnaires must be carefully focussed, and formulated in advance. The outcomes should be cited or discussed where appropriate in your argument but not quoted verbatim at great length. If you quote great chunks, you are merely substituting the interviewee's or correspondent's words and ideas for your own.

In the case of questionnaires and data analysis, the format, sample-size, distribution etc, is usually given as an appendix, not in the main text. The transcript of an interview can be given as an appendix if appropriate; otherwise a precise reference (date, place, availability of recording) is sufficient.

Length and Structure

Your dissertation should be approximately 8000 words long ($\pm 10\%$), exclusive of references, bibliography, list of illustrations, etc. Dissertations, which are substantially below or above this word limit, may be heavily penalised.

It is vital to organise your material in a clear and systematic way, and this is something you should be thinking about and discussing with your Supervisor from an early stage.

The most common structure for a dissertation is as follows:

1. **Title Page:**
Full title, your name, the statement '**Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of BA in.....**
Swansea Institute of Higher Education' and date of presentation.
2. **Certificate of Authenticity:**
See attached sheet
3. **Table of Contents:**
Chapter numbers and titles, numbers of first pages. Include a word count here.
4. **List of Illustrations:**
Fig. or page number, artist, designer, etc. **title or description of work** (in italics), date, location (if appropriate).
In most cases it is not necessary to cite the sources of your illustrations.
5. **Statement of Research:**
Not more than one A4 side (1-200 words) which describes the topic, aims and objectives of your dissertation concisely.
6. **Introduction:**
Here you will introduce the issues you are going to explore or indicate the focus of your research. It is a good idea, especially if the dissertation relates to your project work, to tell the reader here, in quite a personal way, what gave you your interest in this particular topic. This could be something to do with your project work background, a work experience, travel, friends, film or whatever.

It is sometimes also appropriate here to give a brief critical review of the literature which you have found on your topic, pointing out what are the most up to date approaches, which books and articles you found particularly interesting and useful and where and why there are gaps and difficulties in finding written sources.

It is sometimes easiest to write the introduction last.

7. Chapters:

There is no right way to structure a dissertation, but two or three chapters is usual, depending on material and length of introduction and conclusion. It may help to use subheadings and subsections to organise your material but do make sure that the connections between the subsections are apparent and that the overall structure of the argument remains clear.

8. Conclusion:

Depending on the approach you have taken you will probably **either** give a brief statement about what you have learned from your research **or** consider **whether or not** the argument you presented in the introduction has been supported by your findings. In some cases, it may be helpful to set the opinions of one 'authority' against another and show why you favour one rather than the other.

9. References:

These may be listed at the end of each chapter, or given as footnotes at the bottom of each page. (See References section)

10. Bibliography:

If extensive and varied, this may be broken down into Books, Articles, Websites, Other Sources. (See Bibliography section)

11. Illustrations:

These come right at the end of your dissertation, or may be placed in the text. Each one should be numbered and labelled as in your List of illustrations (4 above). (See also Presentation)

Writing – some common problems

Plagiarism and pastiche

Plagiarism is the word-for word copying of passages from books, articles, websites, dissertations, etc. without acknowledgement, or passing off other people's ideas and arguments as one's own. It is a serious offence (defined as Unfair Practice) which may lead to disciplinary proceedings by the University of Wales.

Pastiche is the transcription, with only slight alterations, of passages of text written by others, passing them off as your own. It can be very easily recognised. Try to rephrase everything you read in your own words and reorganise your material to fit YOUR argument. (Note-taking is helpful here.)

Quotations

These should be used sparingly and should usually be brief. They should not give information or views from basic textbooks, but should be used to illustrate or support a point you have made, or to introduce another person's interesting or unusual viewpoint.

Quotations under three lines long should be kept within the text, in single (' ... ') or double ("...") inverted commas (be consistent!).

Longer quotations should be indented and single spaced with no inverted commas. Put foreign words and phrases and all book and image titles in *italics*.

Paragraphs

Paragraphs are a device to help the reader follow the key stages of an argument clearly. Each paragraph should make and discuss one particular point and should be linked to the paragraphs before and after in some way so that there is a logical development of the argument. Paragraphs should not be too long (rambling and confused) or too short (disjointed). Not less than 4/5 lines and not more than 20/25 lines is a rough rule of thumb.

Personalising

There is no reason to avoid using the first person in your dissertation.

Sometimes, where a personal anecdote or viewpoint or piece of work is being described, it is particularly appropriate.

However, 'I' should not appear too often.

Since your dissertation will not simply express your own personal point of view but should present an argument based on reading, evidence and examples, 'I fell', 'I believe', 'in my opinion' etc are often inappropriate and should be avoided.

Apostrophes

- 1) There are no apostrophes in plural forms: book/books, mug/mugs.
- 2) Apostrophes are used to signify ownership – e.g. John's pen, the dog's bone – where the word is singular.
 - It is also used where the plural does not end in an 's' – e.g. "the children's bedroom".
 - Where the word is plural and does end in an 's' – e.g. "the students' dissertations", the apostrophe comes right at the end.
 - If "it" owns something there is no apostrophe – e.g. "its collar is loose", "its pages are torn".
- 3) "It's" is an abbreviation of "it is" and should not appear in a dissertation at all. Neither should other abbreviated verb forms such as didn't, wasn't, couldn't.

Literature References

To avoid potential UNFAIR PRACTICE allegations, especially with respect to PLAGIARISM, it is important to recognise sources of information used in the production of work submitted for assessment purposes. References or citations are included briefly in the body of the work and fully documented at the end, as per the following guidelines.

Citations are generally treated according to the "Harvard System." In the body of the text, they are cited by naming the author (or authors connected by "and" if two or with *et al.*, replacing all names after the first if more than three) and indicating the year of publication. Enclose the cite in parentheses if referring to indirectly, or enclose the year of publication in parentheses if referring to directly, e.g. "(Jones, 1988)" or "(Smith *et al.*, 1989);" "according to Jones (1988)," "from data prepared by Smith *et al.* (1989)." Papers cited should be grouped together in a list headed "References" (not Bibliography) alphabetically arranged by first authors' surnames but unnumbered, at the end of the body of the paper. There, all authors' names and initials are required followed by the date (year) of publication and the full title of the paper. Then follows the full title of the periodical, italic, then the volume and issue number in Arabic numerals, and finally the page spread. For books, the title is given in italic, and then the bare name of the publisher proceeded by the place (city and state or country) of publication. The list of references to journal articles and books, should be in the following basic format:

Giammona, C.P, 1988. Sea surveys. *In*: Finkl, C.W, Jnr. (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Field and General Geology*. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, pp. 747-764.

McCave, I.N., 1987. Fine sediment sources and sinks around the East Anglian coast (UK). *Journal Geological Society London*, 144, 149-152.

Thieke, R.J. and Harris, P.S., 1993. Application of longshore transport statistics to the evaluation of sand transfer alternatives at inlets. *Journal of Coastal Research*, Special Issue No. 18, pp. 111- 124.

Kundu, PK, 1990. *Fluid Dynamics*. New York: Academic, 638p.

Mehta, A.J. and Montague, C.L., 1991. *A Brief Review of Flow Circulation in the Vicinity of Natural and Jettied Inlets: Tentative Observations on Implications for Larval Transport at Oregon Inlet, North Carolina*. Gainesville, Florida: Oceanographic Engineering Department, University of Florida, Report UFLICOELIMP91 / 03, 74p.

Check the accuracy of your references scrupulously. Common mistakes include incorrect dates, titles, and author names in reference lists; or one year

of publication or spelling of the author's name in the reference list and another in the text citation. Examples of variations on the basic citation formula follow.

Direct Quote

In text

'Although nature begins with the cause and ends with the experience, we must follow the exact opposite course, namely begin with the experience and by the means of it investigate the cause.'

(Leonardo da Vinci, 1512: 1)

If the exact words are used from the source of information, it must be indented as above, single-spaced and blocked and include the page number of the publication from which the quotation was obtained. The full citation is subsequently included in the Reference list at the end. Otherwise, information from the sources used must be paraphrased.

Single-Author Paper in a Journal:

Dickinson, W.R., 2000. Hydro-isostatic and tectonic influences on emergent Holocene paleoshorelines in the Mariana Islands, western Pacific Ocean. *Journal of Coastal Research*, 16(3), 735-746.

Two-Authored Paper in a Journal:

Lidz, B.H. and Hallock, P., 2000. Sedimentary petrology of a declining reef ecosystem, Florida Reef Tract (U.S.A.). *Journal of Coastal Research*, 16(3), 675-697.

Multi-Authored Paper in a Journal:

Martinez, J.O.; Gonzalez, J.L.; Pilkey, O.H., and Neal, W.J., 2000. Barrier island evolution on the subsiding central Pacific Coast, Colombia, S.A. *Journal of Coastal Research*, 16(3), 663-674.

Paper in a Proceedings Volume with No Editor:

Butenko, J and Barbot, J.P., 1980. Geological hazards related to offshore drilling and construction in the Oronoco River Delta of Venezuela. *Offshore Technology Conference* (Houston, Texas), Paper 3395, pp. 323-329.

Uda, T. and Hashimoto, H., 1982. Description of beach changes using an empirical predictive model of beach profile changes. *Proceedings of the 18th Conference of Coastal Engineering* (Cape Town, South Africa, ASCE), pp. 1405-1418.

Goda, Y., 1970. The observed joint distribution of periods and heights of sea waves. *Proceedings of the 16th International Conference on Coastal Engineering* (Sydney, New South Wales, Australia), pp. 227-246.

Book: Commercial Publisher

Coleman, J.M., 1981. *Deltas: Processes of Deposition and Models for Exploration*. Boston, Massachusetts: International Human Resources Development Corporation, 121p.

Roberts, N., 1989. *The Holocene, an Environmental History*. Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell, 316p.

Government Publisher

Fisk, H.N., 1944. *Geological Investigations of the Alluvial Valley of the Lower Mississippi River*. Vicksburg, Mississippi: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Mississippi River Commission, 78p.

University Press

Diaz, H.F. and Markgraf, V., (eds.), 1992. *El Niño Historical and Paleoclimatic Aspects of the Southern Oscillation*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 321p.

Chapter in an Edited Book:

Colin, C. and Bourles, B., 1992. Western boundary currents in front of French Guiana. In: Prost, M.T. (ed.), *Évolution des littoraux de Guyane et de la zone Caribe méridionale pendant le Quaternaire*. Paris, France: Editions de l'ORSTOM Institute Française de Recherche Scientifique pour la Développement en Coopération, pp. 73-91.

Miscellaneous Reports With an Author:

McKee, E.D., 1989. Sedimentary Structures and Textures of Río Orinoco channel Sands, Venezuela and Colombia. *U.S. Geological Survey Water-Supply Paper W2326-B*, pp. B1-B23.

Mehta, A.J. and Montague, C.L., 1991. A Brief Review of Flow Circulation in The Vicinity of Natural and Jettied Inlets: Tentative Observations on Implications for Larval Transport at Oregon Inlet, NC. Gainesville, Florida: University of Florida, Department of Coastal and Oceanographic Engineering, *Report UFICOELIMP91/03*, 74p.

Vann, J.H., 1969. Landforms, Vegetation, and Sea Level Change along the Coast of South America. Buffalo, New York: State University College at Buffalo, *Technical Report No. 3*, 128p.

Farrow, D.R.G.; Arnold, F.D.; Lombardi, M.L.; Main, M.B., and Eichelberger, P.D., 1986. *The National Coastal Pollutant Discharge Inventory: Estimates for Long Island Sound*. Rockville, Maryland: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, 40p.

With No Specified Author:

McClelland Engineering Staff, 1979. Interpretation and Assessment of Shallow Geologic and Geotechnical Conditions. Caracas, Venezuela: McClelland Engineering, Inc., *Orinoco Regional Survey Areas, Offshore Orinoco Delta, Venezuela*, Volume 1, 109p.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Staff, 1994. The Long Island Sound Study: Summary of the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan. Washington, DC: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Publication, *EPA 842-S-94-001*, 62p.

Theses and Dissertations:

Worthy, M.C., 1980. Littoral Zone Processes at Old Woman Creek Estuary of Lake Erie. Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University, Master's thesis, 198p.

Arens, S.M., 1996. Aeolian Processes in the Dutch Foredunes. Amsterdam, The Netherlands: University of Amsterdam, Ph.D. thesis, 150p.

Special Issues of a Journal:

Warne, A.G. and Stanley, D.J., 1995. Sea-level change as a critical factor in development of basin margin sequences: new evidence from late Quaternary record. In: Finkl, C.W. (ed.), *Holocene Cycles: Climate, Sea Levels, and Sedimentation*. Journal of Coastal Research Special Issue No. 17, pp. 231-240. [N.B. Special issues can also be treated like a book because they are discrete and unrelated to each other in a series. The issue should be specified.]

Maps or Charts:

Beltran, C., 1993. *Mapa neotectónico de Venezuela*. Caracas, Venezuela: FUNVISIS Departamento de Ciencias de la Tierra, scale 1:2,000,000, 1 sheet.

Newspapers:

Christy, J., 2001. The future outlook is fine. *The Times*, 20/2/01.

Internet Sources:

Pearce, F., 2000. *About Global Warming: The Greenhouse Effect*. New Scientist. <http://www.newscientist.com/nsplus/imsight/global/faq.html>. 3p.

No specified author:

World Tourism Organisation, 2001. *Leading the World's Largest Industry*. <http://www.world-tourism.org/aboutwto.html>. Date accessed 15/5/05.

Climate Change, 2001. *Evolution of Coastal Adaptation Options. Working Group II: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability*. www.grida.no/climate/ipcc_tar/wg2/300.htm. Date accessed 26/12/04.

or

Anon, 2005. *Beaufort Scales (Wind Speed)*. www.unc.edu.1rowlett/units/scales/beaufort.html. Date accessed 1/12/04.

NOTE:

With Newspaper and Internet sources, it is important that judgement is made with respect to reliability of referenced information. Websites hosted, for example, by government organisations are more reliable than unknown sources - anyone can publish on the net without necessarily validating information. Similarly, traditional broadsheet newspapers are more reliable than tabloids. Undoubtedly, the most reliable sources of information are refereed journals.

Bibliography

Your bibliography should list all the books, articles and web sites you have read and any other sources you may have used in researching your dissertation, including all those you have cited as references. It should not contain books, articles, etc. which were not consulted!

In the Bibliography all sources should be listed alphabetically by author's surname. Page numbers must be given for all articles or chapters that form part of a book.

e.g.

Clark, T. *Art and Propaganda in the Twentieth Century* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1997)

Dimmock, G. 'Children of the Mills: Re-Reading Lewis Hine's Child-Labour Photographs', *Oxford Art Journal* 16, No.2 (1993), pp.37-54.

Fernie, E. *Art History and its Methods* (London: Phaidon, 1995).

We would expect it to contain at least 12 and possibly 20 or more items. If your bibliography is very extensive and your sources varied it may be broken down under separate headings: **Books, Articles, Web Sites, Other Sources.**

Web Sites

Websites should be listed as for References. Websites should not constitute more than 35% of your source material.

Other Sources

These may include a whole range of material: films, videos, reviews, newspaper articles, reports, unpublished lectures and conference proceedings, letters and diaries, replies to questionnaires, e-mails and interviews. They should be described clearly, giving author, title, date and media/place if possible, again in alphabetical order by author's name.

In the case of interviews, a transcript or recording should be available to the examiner, but not necessarily enclosed with the dissertation. Consult your Supervisor about what to do with videos, films etc. which you have made or used.

Presentation

Do try to leave plenty of time for the final stage of word-processing – especially if you do not have access to a reliable P.C. Proof-reading (get your Supervisor or someone else to read it too), checking references, ordering and numbering pages, illustrations etc. take a long time to sort out. It is very disappointing when careless mistakes, muddled references, sloppy spelling and grammar mar a good text.

Most computers have spell and grammar checks. Learn to use them. The presentation of your dissertation, including the referencing and bibliography should be of as high a quality as possible, always bearing in mind that beautiful presentation can't compensate for an inadequate text.

- 1) Dissertations must be printed on one side of A4 paper in double spacing, with a 2.5cm margin at each side. Pages must be numbered,
- 2) You must ask permission if you wish to submit your dissertation in another format.
- 3) All titles of books, periodicals, paintings, films, etc. referred to in your text should be *italicised* or underlined.
- 4) All pages should be numbered consecutively.
- 5) Include a word count on your "Table of Contents" page.
- 6) Illustrations may be placed in the text or at the end. You may use pasted photographs (though these tend to be bulky), photocopies, or best of all, though expensive, colour photocopies or digital images. Each one should be numbered and labelled as in your List of Illustrations.
- 7) Typefaces such as Times Roman, Geneva, Helvetica or Arial are recommended. Type size should be 10 or 12 point.
- 8) You are required to submit two copies of your dissertation. One copy will be bound in the Institute, at the Faculty's expense and will be retained by the Faculty. The second copy should be bound by you and will be returned to you after assessment. There is no need to bind the dissertation expensively unless you particularly want to. A clear plastic folder with ring binding, available at stationers, is fine.

Assessment Criteria

General Criteria

1. We do take into account the subject choice. Some subjects are more accessible to research, others are extremely difficult.
2. in each case we look carefully, to see how you have researched the subject (sources can vary enormously); and how thoroughly you have researched it.
3. We look at the way you have organised your material and structured your dissertation as a whole (e.g. appropriate use of chapter headings).
4. We consider its presentation (including grammar and spelling) that you have accurately displayed your sources and references etc; and that any visual material is displayed well.

In addition to the above general factors, there are specific criteria which would be used to place your work in the appropriate mark-band.

1st Class (70% or above)

A first class dissertation will be outstanding in its content and presentation. It will satisfy several, or all, of the criteria listed below:-

1. There is an impressive range of reading in evidence.
2. The argument is clear, often original, and sustained throughout.
3. Writing is well structured and detailed without repetition or irrelevance.
4. Arguments may be complex and open-ended.
5. A clear personal view is visible and well supported by appropriate evidence.
6. Shows a good knowledge and understanding of areas of current research in the field.
7. There is evaluation of divergent points of view, demonstrating critical engagement with the topic.
8. Demonstrates close and systematic visual analysis.
9. There is an understanding of both visual processes and their cultural functions.
10. The response is stylish and absorbing.
11. Communication skills are effective and impressive.
12. Referencing and layout of Bibliography are impeccable.
13. Presentation is excellent.

Upper 2nd Class (2:1) (60-69%)

1. There is evidence of thorough background reading.
2. The argument is clear and sustained throughout.
3. Writing is well structured, without repetition or irrelevance.
4. There is evidence of critical awareness.
5. There are personal responses supported by evidence.
6. There is an awareness of areas of research in the field.
7. Divergent points of view are represented and evaluated.
8. There is capable visual analysis based on clear and precise descriptive writing.
9. An understanding of visual processes in a cultural context is in evidence.

10. Communication is clear and effective.
11. Referencing and layout of Bibliography are accurate.
12. Presentation is very good.

Lower 2nd Class (2:2) (50-59%)

1. There is evidence of appropriate reading.
2. The argument is mainly clear but may sometimes lose its direction, or become repetitive.
3. Structure demonstrates a modest competence in handling a range of material.
4. The approach remains mostly descriptive.
5. There are a few personal responses, but these are not always fully supported by evidence.
6. There is sometimes too much dependence on the comments and judgements of a few source writers.
7. There is some visual analysis and understanding of visual processes.
8. A good start lapses into being repetitive or inconclusive.
9. The topic is understood but an inadequate number of aspects are covered.
10. Communication skills are adequate, but there may be patches of poor expression.
11. Referencing and layout of Bibliography may contain errors, or some referencing may be missing.
12. Presentation is adequate.

3rd Class (40-49%)

1. The range of reading is narrow.
2. The argument is not always clear and contains some irrelevance.
3. Structure and organisation of material are weak.
4. The response is primarily descriptive and may lack depth.
5. There is little personal response, or it is over-personalised with a tendency to sweeping statements and generalisations.
6. Sources are obvious and pedestrian, and are reproduced uncritically.
7. There is little visual or textual analysis or evaluation.
8. There may be factual errors, or concepts are not understood.
9. The important aspects of the topic are not covered.
10. Communication skills are limited and there are problems with sentence construction and spelling.
11. Referencing and layout of Bibliography are poor and/or references are missing.
12. Presentation has areas of weakness.

Fail (below 40%)

1. Reading is insufficient or not appropriate.
2. Argument lacks coherence and/or is irrelevant.
3. Organisation is poor.
4. Personal input is minimal, or there is personal opinion without supporting evidence.
5. There may be over-dependence on source material.
6. There is very little or no visual or textual analysis or evaluation.

7. The topic may be understood.
8. There may be very little written.
9. Communication skills are consistently weak.
10. Referencing and Bibliography are inadequate in all respects.
11. Presentation is poor

Poor/Severe Fail (below 30%)

1. Reading is inadequate.
2. There is no argument and much is irrelevant.
3. Organisation is chaotic.
4. Comments and observations are not supported by evidence.
5. There is an excessive dependence on source material.
6. The topic is not understood.
7. There is very little written.
8. There are no references or extremely poor referencing and layout of Bibliography.
9. Presentation is very poor.

School of Digital Media Guidelines adapted from Faculty of Art and Design
Final Year Dissertations General Guidelines and "Literature References" by
Dr. Mike Philips, School of Built and Natural Environment.

