Archaeology Honours Dissertation

Single Honours: 40 credits, ARCH4002P. Joint Honours: 20 credits, ARCH4001P

1. Timetable (for current Senior Honours) ......................................................... 2
2. Aims and ILOs ................................................................................................. 2
3. What constitutes a good dissertation .............................................................. 2
4. Junior Honours: choosing a topic and planning ............................................. 3
5. Senior Honours: Research Proposal ............................................................... 4
6. Senior Honours: Dissertation talks ............................................................... 4
7. Format ............................................................................................................. 5
8. The student/supervisor relationship .............................................................. 8
9. Submission and assessment ......................................................................... 10
10. Useful reading .............................................................................................. 10

The undergraduate dissertation is a compulsory part of the Honours Degree course in Archaeology, having the value of two Honours courses (40 credits) for Single Honours students, or one Honours course for Joint Honours students (20 credits). Joint Honours students must undertake such independent coursework in one of the subjects of the joint degree.

The dissertation provides an opportunity to carry out a piece of first-hand research, in your own time, on a topic of your own choosing, and thus to demonstrate your mastery over a parcel of archaeological evidence. The detailed data or evidence for this first-hand research will be presented either in the main text or in an appendix, for example in the form of a catalogue or gazetteer giving full details of the work on which the discussion is based.

Your dissertation forms an important part of your degree assessment. A dissertation of high quality will increase the possibility of a good degree and may open the way to postgraduate research, and will certainly inform any references that your supervisor or other members of staff write for you.

For paperwork and further information, see the Honours Information moodle. Note that Richard Bapty, our subject librarian, can help with queries, research techniques, etc.

Dissertation convenor: Dr Susanna Harris (Susanna.Harris@glasgow.ac.uk)

Key to success
The dissertation is a long-term research project! So you need to plan it during your Junior Honours year and do the bulk of the research and/or fieldwork in the summer before you start Senior Honours.
1. **Timetable (for current Senior Honours)**

- **Summer 2017.** Do fieldwork, background reading, data collection.
- **6 Oct 2017** (at 9.00pm). Submit Research Proposal on the dissertation moodle (see below).
- **8 December 2017** (week after teaching in Semester 1 ends). Submit sample chapter and detailed outline to supervisor; give 10-minute presentation (plus 5 minutes questions).
- **22 March 2018:** last chance to submit draft chapters to your supervisor for feedback.
- **2 April 2018, 5.00pm** (beginning of 2nd week of Easter vacation): submit!

In addition, you will need to have regular meetings with your supervisor – at least one at the end of Junior Honours and two per semester during Senior Honours.

2. **Aims and ILOs**

**Aims**
This course will provide the opportunity to:

- develop an understanding of research skills and methodologies within the field of archaeology
- design, undertake and present a piece of independent archaeological research
- attain professional standards in the presentation of research materials

**Intended Learning Outcomes**
By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- identify the resources and support needed to carry out research on a chosen topic, and formulate a viable plan for its successful completion
- identify and summarise existing data and scholarship relating to their chosen topic
- research, compile and analyse relevant data for their chosen topic
- sustain a coherent and integrated argument throughout the dissertation, using illustrations and tables where appropriate
- cogently and clearly present the results of their research in an appropriate fashion that reveals close personal engagement with the subject
- critically assess both the subject area covered and the character of their own contribution to it

3. **What constitutes a good dissertation**

A dissertation is the end result of a long research process, and your final grade will reflect the quality of that process as well as of the final product itself. This is one of the key employability skills that you acquire in your Honours degree: it is widely applicable and valued by employers far beyond archaeology.

Specifically, a good dissertation will show evidence of the following; note that the examiners will explicitly use these criteria when evaluating and marking your dissertation:

- An ability to identify and develop a topic that is of an appropriate scope for a dissertation (in particular, that is achievable within the limits of time and word count)
- A successful engagement with the entire research process, from planning and project design to data collection and analysis to writing up and proof reading
• An ability to build up a relationship with a supervisor and to learn from feedback
• An ability to carry out first-hand research which shows good insight into the material or period being discussed and appropriately contextualises it
• Good initiative in developing the research, following up leads, pursuing references and gathering data
• A real familiarity and engagement with the material that constitutes the main data set
• An ability to sustain an argument across multiple chapters that is clear and persuasive
• Skill at laying out text, illustrations and other material (e.g. tables) so that they are clear and user-friendly
• Confident use of referencing, that is consistent and correct, and provides full support for your argument

4. Junior Honours: choosing a topic and planning

The basis of the Honours archaeology dissertation should be a piece of first-hand research. The scope of this is wide-ranging, and includes for example: a survey and analysis of the field monuments of a region; a programme of scientific work; a catalogue and interpretation of artefacts from some particular area or period; a theoretical approach to a particular topic; the study of a particular type of artefact; and the application of a particular model or technique to a body of archaeological data.

It is strongly recommended that you begin thinking about a dissertation topic early in your Junior Honours year, and carry out the bulk of the research and/or fieldwork in the summer before you start Senior Honours.

The Dissertation Convenor holds a workshop in Semester 2 for all Junior Honours students to discuss the selection of suitable topics. Although it is your responsibility to decide on a topic or project, staff members will provide advice on the scope of the topic and approaches to it (see student/supervisor responsibilities below). You can see a list of past dissertation topics on the Honours Information moodle. Once you have an idea, then speak to the Dissertation convenor or the staff member most relevant to your proposed area of research, to develop your idea into a dissertation proposal.

In consultation with relevant staff, usually the proposed supervisor(s), you should prepare a short (200 word maximum) statement by the end of May in your Junior Honours year. This should include the following information:

• Working title
• Overall aim. What is the general outcome expected? Why have you chosen this topic?
• The main objectives, i.e. several specific tasks that should be tackled and completed
• The (provisional) supervisor

This should be submitted by the end of May of the Junior Honours year to the Dissertation Convenor and your proposed supervisor. When the topic is approved, a supervisor or supervisors will be allocated as appropriate to the subject area, but within the constraints of staff availability. The responsibilities of both the supervisor and student are set out below.

If you are carrying out fieldwork in the course of your dissertation, you should discuss this with the Safety Officer (Dr Adrian Maldonado till Dec 2017; Dr Tessa Poller from Jan 2018) who will tell you whether/how you should prepare a risk assessment in advance of your fieldwork. See also the section on Fieldwork Safety in the Student Fieldwork Handbook.
Any research involving human subjects or human data which is not in the public domain (such as gathering data through interviews or questionnaires) must have ethical approval before the research starts, speak to your supervisor about this as soon as possible as this can be a lengthy process to get College of Arts approval. Further information and applications forms are here on the Arts Ethics website.

There are no funds available to support dissertation fieldwork, but it is possible to borrow equipment for fieldwork, provided it is not in use by another project. Contact the technician Gert Petersen for information about what is available. Then your supervisor will get a booking form from the J drive for you to fill in, and will need to approve your application. You can also apply for a Carnegie Trust Vacation Scholarship (deadline 15 March).

5. Senior Honours: Research Proposal

- Single Honours: this is worth 15% of the overall assessment; maximum of 1,500 words
- Joint Honours: this is worth 15% of the overall assessment; maximum of 1,000 words
- Due: 6 October 2017; submit on the Honours Information Moodle

The Research Proposal should elaborate and update the very basic plan submitted in May, and should include:

- Dissertation title
- Abstract of c. 150 words
- Overall aim
- Specific objectives (numbered)
- Methods
- The agreed supervisor(s)
- Outline: titles for each chapter, with a brief summary of the proposed chapter contents
- Preliminary bibliography of key works
- A summary of progress to date
- A timetable giving agreed times to meet with supervisor and specific dates when key milestones will be reached, including major research tasks (e.g. fieldwork, data collection, etc) and the writing of chapters

The purpose of this exercise is to ensure that you have a realistic topic and timetable, agreed with your supervisor. Teaching and guidance for this will be given in Orientation Week of your Senior Honours year. You will be expected to keep to the general topic proposed in the Project Design; only make any substantial changes after discussion with your supervisor. You will get credit in the mark for the final dissertation for demonstrating the success of your research design and project management.

6. Senior Honours: Dissertation talks

All Senior Honours students doing presentations will give a 10-minute progress report (normally using a PowerPoint Presentation) to a group of staff and other students in the week after the end of Semester 1 of the Senior Honours year (Fri 8 December 2017). Formative assessment will be provided but there will be no summative assessment, i.e. feedback will be given but not a grade. The presentation is compulsory and will help you consolidate work on the dissertation, inform others of the topic and get a range of valuable feedback. The timing should mean that significant progress has
been made on the dissertation so there is ample for you to talk about and time to benefit from feedback.

By the day of the dissertation talk, you also need to submit a detailed, up-to-date chapter outline and one substantial draft chapter to your supervisor.

### 7. Format

The maximum length of dissertations is **13,000 words** for Single Honours and **7,000 words** for Joint and Combined Honours. This applies to the main text, but does not include list of contents, list of figures, tables, bibliography, appendices or gazetteers. Bear in mind that you are being assessed on your ability to communicate your research within the set word count.

The text should be printed on one side of the paper, with 1.5 line spacing, and in a font and text size that is clear and legible. The page size should be A4, with adequate margins: not less than 4cm on the left side to allow for binding, and at least 1.5cm on the right. Make illustrations large enough to see the detail, and leave lots of white space round them. Dissertations should be paginated consecutively throughout and presented fully stitch bound or in a secure spiral, heat or clip binding. A word count should be included at the end of the text.

Dissertations should include the following elements, in this order:

1. **Title page** with the full title of the dissertation, the name of the author in full, student number, a statement that ‘This dissertation is submitted in part fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of M.A. (or B.Sc) with Honours in Archaeology at the University of Glasgow’ and the month and year of submission.
2. **Abstract**: a c. 200 word one-page abstract of the dissertation must be provided. Give title and author above the abstract.
3. **List of contents**: This should list and give the page numbers of all subsequent elements of the dissertation (including individual chapters).
4. **List of figures**: This should number and list all figures, including their captions (shortened if necessary) and page numbers.
5. **Preface or acknowledgements**: To acknowledge personal help (for example, in the preparation of illustrations or with visits to museums etc.) other than that provided in the ordinary way by your supervisor.
6. **Main text** in a sequence of chapters – see below
7. **References**
8. **Appendices** if any.

Each element of the dissertation should begin on a new page. The main page numbering normally runs from the beginning of the first chapter (i.e. the Introduction) to the end of the list of references. Front matter (i.e. everything up to no. 5 in the list above) can be numbered in lower case Roman numerals (i, ii, iii, iv, etc.). Photographs and diagrams should be called Figures and numbered sequentially (see below).

**Abstract**

The abstract must be a self-contained summary of the dissertation. It should include the main aim(s), methods, result(s) and conclusion(s). It should not normally contain any references or figures. It should not be used as an ‘introduction’. It should not exceed 1 page in length. The abstract comes first but it’s usually best to write it last.
Organisation
Any piece of academic writing needs to be coherently organised; as a general rule, the longer the
text, the more important and difficult this becomes. Since your dissertation is likely to be
considerably longer than any piece of writing you have undertaken so far, you need to consider the
problems of organisation it poses with particular care.

The first step should be to work out the overall structure of your text. This will enable you to identify
the main stages or elements of your argument, which can then form the topics of individual
chapters. These can themselves be divided into sub-sections if necessary.

The front matter consists of cover (an illustration looks good here), abstract, table of contents, list of
figures, list of tables (if appropriate) and acknowledgements (see above).

Chapter 1 will invariably be an introduction. In this it is absolutely essential to state clearly and
precisely what the dissertation aims to do: what topic you intend to elucidate, what question or
questions you intend to consider. The introduction should also briefly indicate how you propose to
deal with the issue or issues thus stated, how your argument is going to develop. An introduction
may also do other things: it may, for example, discuss the significance of the issue or issues raised,
and give some account of previous work.

The main chapters of the dissertation should, if possible, be roughly of the same length. It is
preferable to have several fairly substantial chapters divided into sub-sections rather than a large
number of excessively short chapters. Sub-sections should be numbered and should have short titles
(sub-headings).

Try to ensure that one point leads on naturally to the next.

Make the structure of your argument clear and explicit throughout. If, for example, you have a
chapter in which you deal with two main points, A and B, and A involves consideration of two
subsidiary matters, A1 and A2, indicate clearly where discussion of A2 ends and that of B begins. Use
subheadings and ‘signposts’ (e.g. ‘The next issue to be considered is...’).

Your case study chapters or data chapters are likely to make up a substantial proportion of your
dissertation. You will need to show that you have engaged closely with a significant body of
archaeological information, and demonstrate skill and familiarity in discussing it. It is possible to
have one chapter describing the material and another analysing or interpreting it, but in general it is
best to integrate description and interpretation. Bald description rarely gives you very much credit.

You will certainly need a conclusion to summarise your argument, explain what you have achieved,
evaluate how well you have been able to answer the research question(s), and discuss the wider
significance of your research.

References
Much of what is written in a dissertation will be based on published research and interpretations of
other people. Where any of this work is directly quoted or specifically referred to, the sources must
be properly acknowledged by the use of references. The procedures for doing this are the same as
those applied in all forms of written work, and are explained in the Referencing webpage of the
Archaeology website.

If you are considering doing a Masters or any further research, it may well be worth investing in
‘Endnote’ reference management software; see the links on that same referencing webpage.
You must not use footnotes for your dissertation, on the principle that if something is worth discussing, it should be in the main text.

Figures
There are few archaeological topics which will not benefit from the provision of figures, (e.g. sketches, maps, plans, drawings, diagrams, photographs). If your dissertation topic involves the study of archaeological artefacts, both drawings and photographs are likely to be indispensable. If you are investigating a particular area, a locality map showing site or artefact locations is essential, while diagrams or graphs are the simplest way to present statistical data. However, there is no value in producing figures if they appear as an ‘afterthought’ and are not closely tied in with the textual material: figures provide the evidence for supporting your argument.

All figures must therefore have a short explanatory caption, including figure numbers and (for illustrations you have taken from elsewhere) the reference. It is easiest to number figures in separate sequences for each chapter; so Chapter 2 will have Fig. 2.1, Fig. 2.2, Fig. 2.3, etc. If you have a lot of figures, it would be worth using Word’s automatic caption facility. You will also need a list of figures at the beginning of the dissertation (again, Word can do this automatically). Use ‘Figure’ for all illustrations; it is hard to find them if they are in separate sequences of Figures, Plates, Maps, etc.

Unless there is a large number of figures, when they might be presented as a separate volume, they should be placed at the relevant point in the body of the text. Pages with figures should be included in the overall pagination of the dissertation, and numbered in the same way as pages of the text. Fold-out figures might be included as long as they conform, folded-up, to the A4 size and bound in with the main text. Figures must not be presented loose or in rolls.

Clear and neat presentation of maps and figures is essential. Computer drawing packages are also recommended for producing versatile figures with a professional finish. Advice is available on all aspects of illustrations from the Drawing Office Technician, Lorraine McEwan.

Style
Clarity and precision of expression are essential. Always ask yourself: 'Does this say exactly what I mean; do I mean exactly what this says?' You will always get credit for clarity of explanation and the use of plain (though not colloquial) language.

Quotations
If you need to discuss the precise form of words used by an author, it is possible to use a quotation. These are normally used for primary literary sources, but can also be used for a modern author whose views you wish to discuss in some detail. Don’t put in quotations just to support your argument, though: you should express your argument in your own words, and put in the reference to support your case (and to avoid plagiarism).

Short quotations (up to two lines of print) should normally be run on with the line of your text and enclosed in quotation marks. Longer quotations should be separated out from the preceding and following lines of text, with an indented left-hand margin and reduced line spacing (i.e. 1). They should not be enclosed in quotation marks, and should end with a full-stop or its equivalent.

It is quite legitimate to omit words from a passage quoted, provided that this does not result in misrepresentation of the original. All omissions within quotations, whatever their length, should be indicated by three dots. For example, the preceding sentence might be quoted thus: "omissions ... should be indicated by three dots."
Interpolations in quotations should be avoided; if unavoidable to clarify meaning, they should be enclosed in square brackets [like this].

If you borrow someone else's words, you are in effect quoting them, and should therefore present them as a referenced quotation. Deliberate failure to do so constitutes the most obvious form of plagiarism. See the ‘Assessment’ handbook for how to avoid plagiarism.

**Production and corrections**

Once the text is completed, you should allow at least two weeks for converting your manuscript into a finished product ready for submission. It is inevitable that typing errors will occur and it is therefore essential that you allow sufficient time before the final printing to check through and make all necessary corrections. You will find it helpful if you get someone else to check it also. Remember to keep back-up copies of your work on additional storage media in case of or failure of computer, memory sticks, internet, etc. You must also allow time for dealing with figures and checking references.

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**8. The student/supervisor relationship**

Each student will have a main supervisor who will help by monitoring progress and giving advice. It is helpful to establish ground-rules early in the dissertation process, particularly with regards to the frequency and nature of meetings, levels of support required, and the submission and return of drafts. Additional supervision or support may be provided from within or external to Archaeology. In past Exam Boards, external examiners have noted that students clearly lost marks because they had not consulted their supervisors adequately or made use of their feedback.

**The supervisor’s responsibilities**

- To help define a suitable and workable project that will fulfil dissertation requirements
- To provide details of a limited number of references and databases as starting material
- To meet with the student at least twice per semester for progress reports and discussion. Further time given in support e.g. field/laboratory supervision is voluntary.

The supervisor has specific responsibilities regarding the reading and return of draft material that you should take note of:

- Supervisors can provide valuable comments on work at an early stage, e.g. on draft chapters and draft figures.
- Supervisors can comment on a final draft but need not read or comment on inadequately prepared material – these will be returned to the student with an explanation of why they are inadequate.
- The supervisor can make strategic suggestions for the modification of content and structure. Note that the supervisor will not normally read any more than a single draft of any chapter.
- The supervisor will try to ensure that the presentation attains at least a minimal acceptable standard. Note that this will not include detailed proof reading.
- All written drafts will normally be returned to the student within 7 working days of receiving them.

Supervisors will also advise on the procedures for obtaining ethical approval if necessary. Such approval must be obtained before, interviewing people or using a questionnaire. [http://www.gla.ac.uk/colleges/arts/research/ethics/](http://www.gla.ac.uk/colleges/arts/research/ethics/)
The student’s responsibilities

- To regularly consult your supervisor (and other relevant staff members) to discuss ideas, and meet up at least **twice** per semester (though more can be very beneficial). Please note that it is your responsibility to make contact with your supervisor, and to give them work in a timely fashion.
- To undertake all field work and research in a timely and professional manner
- To offer draft material for comment by the supervisor, but not later than 10 days before the final submission deadline. (‘Draft’ means essentially complete, with all (or most) figures, and preferably proof-read)
- To present the results in the form of a written dissertation according to the guidelines in the Honours Dissertation Handbook.

In addition to these general responsibilities, these further guidelines will make life easier for you, your supervisor and anybody else helping you:

- Make appointments with your supervisor to give your supervisor time to prepare for your meetings. It might be necessary for the supervisor to organise laboratory work or site visits on your behalf and time will be needed to do this.
- You should be prepared to modify your plans during the timespan of your dissertation work: it should be organised around your other coursework rather than at its expense.
- You should not be over-ambitious in planning your dissertation. You can plan your work as a “pilot study” in the sense that your limited study could be designed to test the feasibility of a larger-scale effort. Some topics might be rather open-ended initially; this gives you more flexibility, but you must decide on definite objectives.

You should feel free to seek the help of anyone with the necessary knowledge or expertise (e.g. museum curators, library staff, the NMRS or other experts outside Archaeology). Be professional about this: appointments must be made well in advance and kept. Use such interaction time efficiently: be well prepared; for example, before discussing your results, e-mail your questions or concerns to the person. If you are unable to attend or want the appointment changed, then it is imperative that the person or institution be warned well in advance for organisational reasons, as well as out of common courtesy. Failure to do so reflects badly on you and the University.

If you are working on material provided by another organisation, such as a museum or government body, you should ensure that you fulfil their regulations for the handling of that material. Failure to do so could jeopardise any future working relationship with that organisation for other students or staff of Archaeology.

Finally, wherever outside help has been obtained, that person should be kept informed of the progress of the research and appropriately acknowledged in the dissertation. It is usually appropriate to give them a copy (or PDF) of the finished dissertation. If any change or alteration is made so that, for example, the information or outside help is no longer required then the person must be informed as soon as possible. This is your responsibility and it should not be assumed that we will keep others informed of your progress.
9. Submission and assessment

The dissertation is to be handed in by 5.00pm on the Monday of the second week of the Easter vacation of the Senior Honours year (Monday 2nd April 2018). Please use the specific Declaration of Originality Form (DOOF) for dissertations; you’ll find it on the Honours Information moodle and on the Information for Current Students webpage. Please put it loose in the hard copy of your dissertation. Note that by signing this form you allow the School of Humanities to retain a copy of your dissertation in perpetuity (please contact the Dissertation Convenor if you have any queries).

Please submit ONE hard copy of your dissertation (at the Reception Desk in the Humanities Office in 1 University Gardens) AND a digital copy in PDF format (not Word, Open Office, or RTF) in the Dissertation section of the Honours Dissertation Moodle.

Late submission will be penalised in the standard way: two secondary bands per day for up to five days; after that, a zero mark will be awarded. Students are required to attain at least Grade D3 in the dissertation if they are to be awarded an Honours degree (see the Code of Assessment for details).

You should bear in mind the length of time involved in the production process. This will include inserting illustrations and captions, table of contents, list of figures, general formatting, checking the bibliography and careful proof reading. Make sure that you have allowed sufficient time prior to submission.

You are only required to submit one copy of the dissertation and this will be retained. If your dissertation is based on the collections of a specific museum, it is a basic courtesy to provide a copy to the institution involved, though some contribution towards the additional reproduction costs may be available from that institution. If there are any problems in relation to this, please discuss it with your supervisor in advance.

See section 2 (‘What constitutes a good dissertation’) for the criteria used by the markers.

You will receive detailed written feedback and comments made by the examiners from your supervisor. This will be emailed to your university email address by your supervisor after the exam board.

10. Useful reading

Search for ‘undergraduate dissertation’ in the library catalogue and have a browse. These two are certainly worth looking at:
