

Department of History

Statement on Assessment

On 4 January the government announced that all university teaching should move online until at least mid-February, and that students should remain where they are currently residing. The Department of History understands that this will limit student access to libraries and other resources, and so will have a significant impact on student learning, and in particular, on assessment. Our approach is designed to ensure that you are able, as far as possible, to complete your assessment to deadlines which have been carefully designed to prevent bunching and to enable you to receive feedback on one assignment before submitting the next. We are therefore introducing the following measures for assessments due in terms 2 and 3.

Sources

We encourage students to take advantage of the services offered by the University Library. The University Library moves to a fully mediated service on Wednesday 13 January and there will be no individual access to the main Library collections, study spaces or other facilities. The Library offers a [scan and deliver service; free postal loans](#) (for UK based staff and students) and a Click and Collect service. Online access to resources and services, including enquiries and support, will continue unchanged. Study spaces will be available in Rootes Grid, the BioMed Grid and the PG Hub. Opening hours for these facilities will be 08:00 – 22.00 Monday to Sunday, except for the BioMed Grid, which will open 10:00 - 18:00 Saturday and Sunday. The Library [information page](#) has more details. The key electronic sources for History may be found [here](#). There are [online resources](#) collected by the Royal Historical Society. The Institute of Historical Research has written a [guide to using online sources](#) for dissertation work. And the British Library offers a range of [online sources](#). In 2020, a number of academic publishers extended free access to electronic resources (including books) and we will use the student Teams channels to let you know if this policy is reintroduced.

Deadlines, Self-certification, Extensions and Mitigation

The University has introduced a 1 week blanket extension for all assignments due in before 1 February. There is a summary of all the mitigation measures introduced by the University [here](#).

The Department continues to offer students the ability to self-certify on two separate occasions in this academic year to obtain an extension of five working days. Further extensions are also offered for students with particular health or personal issues. Information on how to apply for self-certifications and extensions is in the [student handbook](#).

[The mitigating circumstances portal](#) (found on Tabula in the personal circumstances tab), allows submission of general mitigation and COVID-19 specific mitigation claims with an explanation of [evidence requirements](#) where it is possible for this to be provided. For

2020/21 the Department will continue to be sympathetic to claims where it has not been possible to obtain evidence and sufficient explanation has been provided.

COVID coversheet

The COVID-19 coversheet gives you an opportunity to explain how your assignment was affected by library closures and other academic factors. If your assignment(s) have been impacted by COVID-19 because you have lost access to relevant resources (for example, because of the closure of library and archive or because you lack suitable internet access while working from home), then please complete the COVID-19 coversheet and submit this with each affected assignment.

If you feel that your assignment has been impacted by illness, self-isolation, caring, bereavement, mental health, or any other non-academic factors relating to COVID-19, these will also be taken into account. To tell us about these experiences, please use the Mitigating Circumstances process, rather than the COVID-19 coversheet.

Amended marking criteria

If you include the COVID-19 Coversheet with your submission, markers will take any academic issues you include on the coversheet into account. The marking criteria has been amended to take the impact of COVID-19 into account (see below).

As is always the case with mitigating circumstances, individual markers do not take non-academic factors into account when marking. These will be addressed through the Mitigating Circumstances process.

The COVID coversheet and the amended marking criteria were used by the Department in the summer of 2020 and received very positive feedback from students and our external examiners.

Flexibility with word counts

If you were not able to access key resources, and therefore cannot analyse them in your assignment, it is acceptable to submit a shorter piece of work. If this is the case, use the COVID-19 Coversheet to indicate which sections you were unable to complete. Be as detailed as possible. In the assignment itself, it will be acceptable to explain what you had expected to find, and why the archival or other material would have been interesting or relevant to your overall project. This flexibility may be particularly relevant to pieces of work such as the **dissertation** but applies to all types of written assessment.

Summer Examinations

Unseen exams are being replaced by open book take-home assessments. The format is the same as that of unseen exams. These are assessments designed to mimic the established exam format as closely as possible but are not online exams.

You will have 7 calendar days to complete each paper, although we do not expect you to spend more than a few hours on each exam. You do not need to answer all the questions in one sitting, and if you wish you may consult your notes, etc., while you are completing the paper.

We will be using exactly the same marking criteria as we'd normally use for an unseen exam. To repeat, we will absolutely NOT be making this assessment any more harshly than we would an unseen exam!

The exam timetable with the release dates for each paper will be published at the beginning of Term 3.

For more information on the summer take-home assessments please see our [information page](#).

Seminar Participation

Tutors will make clear how seminar participation will be assessed to take account of the difficult circumstances of the pandemic. They may, for instance, choose to assess seminar participation through a short reflective, written piece.

Group Projects

Tutors will allow you the option to submit an individual piece if group work is not possible.

HI2E2 Historiography II: Recent and Emerging Trends in History Writing, 1990 to today

The weightings for assignments in this module have been altered so the first source analysis counts for less. This takes into account the challenging nature of the module and is a response to student feedback:

Oral participation/engagement: 10%

1500 word primary source analysis: 10%

3000 word primary source analysis: 80%

HI2E4 Research Project

The word count for the research project has been reduced to 3000 words which brings it in line with other second year assignments and takes account of the particular difficulties completing this assessment when access to the Library is more limited.

Dissertation

The window for the dissertation presentation will be extended for **one week**, from weeks 2-6. The extra week is particularly applicable for those whose plans have been disrupted by library and archive closures and should be discussed with your supervisor.

You should proceed on the assumption that archives and specialist libraries are unlikely to re-open in time for you to use them for dissertation research. Dissertation supervisors will help you modify the project accordingly. You are encouraged to use the COVID cover sheet to explain the impact of any difficulty in accessing materials.

Modifications to other assignments

If you have particular concerns about a specific assignment, please discuss these with your seminar tutors. Tutors will work with you to modify the assignments in line with the

resources available. You may be able to agree a more limited set of readings, or to change the title or scope of the assignment.

COVID-19 Amended History Marking Criteria

Highlighted elements will be relaxed to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic **where a completed COVID-19 Coversheet is submitted**. Words in **BLOCK CAPITALS** are additions to the usual marking criteria.

Written Work (essays, exams, dissertations)

First Class (70+)

- Persuasive and direct answer to the question, establishing the wider significance of the issues concerned.
- **Comprehensive coverage of the relevant material**; accuracy in the details.
- A direct and coherent argument, **well supported by relevant evidence**.
- Critical analysis of **SOME** relevant concepts, theoretical or historiographical perspectives or methodological issues.
- Fluent and engaging writing style; persuasive presentation and structuring of arguments.
- Work which, in addition, displays evidence of creativity, originality, sophistication and freshness of arguments will be awarded marks of 75+.

Upper Second (60-69)

- Direct answer to the question, establishing the wider significance of the issues concerned.
- **Adequate coverage of the relevant material**, accuracy in the details.
- **Skillful mobilisation of evidence** in relation to the argument being presented.
- Narrative and description taking second place to analysis.
- Competent manipulation of **SOME** relevant concepts, theoretical or historiographical perspectives or methodological issues.
- Fluent writing style; effective presentation and structuring of arguments.

Lower Second (50-59)

- Basically satisfactory answer to the question.
- **Limited coverage of relevant material**; some inaccuracy in the detail.
- **Some attempt to mobilise evidence** in relation to the argument being presented.
- Analysis taking second place to narrative and description.
- Limited understanding of **SOME** relevant concepts, theoretical or historiographical perspectives or methodological issues.

- Adequate writing style, presentation and structuring of arguments.

Third (40–49)

- Barely satisfactory answer to the question.
- Inadequate coverage of relevant material; major inaccuracies in the detail.
- No understanding of relevant concepts, theoretical or historiographical perspectives or methodological issues.
- Poor presentation and structuring of arguments.

Fail (less than 40)

One or more of the following:

- Serious misunderstanding of the question.
- Failure to provide any answer to the question.
- Failure to show knowledge of relevant material.
- Seriously muddled presentation and structuring of arguments.