How to Produce a Guide

Candidates are required to produce guides for AS portfolio units 5 and 6.

The following information is provided as guidance but should not be considered definitive – it is expected that candidates producing guides of an AS standard may not follow the exact format described in this section.

WHAT IS A GUIDE?

A guide is something which can be handed to the intended recipient(s) to be used as an information giving and problem-solving resource. It should contain information which is relevant to the recipient(s), fit for purpose and be presented in a manner which allows ease of access to information.

A guide therefore needs to be:

- concise;
- understandable;
- precise;
- logically structured;
- attractive;
- aimed at the reader.

Before producing the guide…

It is important to consider WHO you are aiming the guide towards and WHY.

Key questions for candidates to ask themselves:

- Who wants the guide?
- Why do they want it?
- What are they going to do with it?
- What do they want it to cover? (Refer to the amplification section of the unit specification.)

Planning

It is important to start off by mind-mapping what you have been asked to do:

- Write down the purpose of the guide in the middle of a piece of A4 paper.
- Write down the key ideas/phrases that link to the purpose of the guide.
- Group pieces of information under the key ideas, connecting them by links.
- Review the plan, adding or deleting points where necessary.

- Check that you have done what the task requires.
- Look for a simple structure which is also attractive to users, and order the key ideas. These will each make up a section of your guide (it is recommended that candidates structure the guide using the assessment objective tasks from the banner of the unit assessment evidence grid).

Research

- Be aware of WHO will be using the guide.
- What format/layout will be most beneficial to this group?
- Research what this group needs to know.
- Check existing knowledge, i.e. what you know already, and what you need to find out.
- Order the notes and group together points based on your original plan.
- Check that you have done what the banner requires.

WRITING THE REPORT

Structure

There is no set/recommended structure for a guide. However, candidates must be aware that a guide is something which can be used by the intended individual(s); therefore, it should be in a format which makes information easily accessible and in a language which would be suitable for the user. We would recommend:

- an introduction;
- contents page;
- main text divided into small, easily accessed/read sub-sections (each sub-section using the AO1, AO2, AO3, AO4 strands)*;
- sources of additional information;
- FAQs (optional).

Introduction

This sets the scene and should include the following:

- What is the objective/purpose of the guide?
- Who is the guide suitable for?
- What resources are available?
- Which sources were used?
- Limitations (for A2 level only).
- Structure of the guide.

Contents page

A comprehensive list of what is included in the guide and where the information can be found.

Main text

This is the body of the guide, covering AO1 through to AO4. It consists of the information candidates are providing for the user, and how it will benefit the user. It should not include opinions, conclusions or recommendations.

References

These should list bibliographical details of all the materials mentioned in the text, or extracts quoted. We recommend the British Standard or Harvard method of referencing.

Bibliography

Includes bibliographical details of all the materials mentioned in the references, plus other materials used but not referred to in the main body of the guide. This is not always necessary, particularly if the Harvard referencing system is used.

Glossary (optional)

Only useful if the guide uses a lot of technical vocabulary to give definitions or acronyms.

STYLE AND STRUCTURE
- Match the style to the reader – the key is to make the guide concise and appealing.
- **Sentences** – Keep them short, no longer than 25 words.
- **Paragraphs** – Keep the number of paragraphs down – guides should be 'easy on the eye' and avoid the use of continuous, bulky text as far as possible. Bullet points should support paragraphs as they are easier to access. Paragraphs should concentrate on one theme; the first sentence should summarise the topic of the paragraph, paragraphs should be connected with link words so that they carry the reader along.
- **Illustrations** – A useful tool in a guide as they can impart visually what is often difficult to convey verbally.
- **Summary** – Summarise each section of the guide with one or two sentences to form a short conclusion.
- **Writing order** – Main body, introduction, then (glossary, references, bibliography, contents – in no particular order), summary and cover page.

After Writing the Guide

Check the guide for:

- Completeness.
- Accuracy.
- Layout.
- Spelling (proof read manually, not just spell-check).
- Numbering of sections.
- Page numbering.
- Illustrations.
- Check the guide follows the plan (if applicable), and addresses the requirements of the assessment evidence grid.