


<p>Guidelines</p> <p>for the Production of</p> <p>Self-Study Packs</p>	 <p>VIRTUAL</p> <p>DUTCH</p>
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

DESCRIPTION

The study packs are self-contained multimedia learning and teaching tools. They are interactive and can be used for independent study, for remedial learning or as part of a taught course. They are freely available on the Virtual Dutch website <<http://www.dutch.ac.uk/>>.

The packs cover topics concerning the culture, society, history, language and literature of the Low Countries. Individual packs are aimed at learners at beginners', intermediate and advanced levels.

Most packs are available in an English and a Dutch version. Most also combine text with graphics and sound. Each pack consists of a number of pages which can be navigated in a number of ways. The packs engage the learner by asking questions and providing the relevant answers via pop-up screens.

Students can usually work through a pack in approximately one to two hours. The packs' attractive design, their interactivity and their ease of navigation makes for enjoyable learning.

AIMS

The packs aim to familiarize students with a topic of limited scope. They seek to provide insight into the topic and its context, foster critical thought, develop analytical skills and expand the student's Dutch vocabulary.

STRUCTURE

The packs typically treat a topic by focussing on a short text and elucidating it from different angles. Not all the packs are uniform in this respect, and some cover a series of short texts or a set of closely related issues.

Vocabulary is explained by means of pop-up explanations and, if appropriate, translations. Other screens provide illustrations, analysis, background information, bibliographical references and weblinks. Questions and answers may come either as part of the discussion of particular aspects or in the form of a quiz.

PRODUCTION: OVERVIEW

The production of a study packs typically involves the following steps:

1. Planning
2. Gathering materials

3. Design
4. Writing
5. Copyright clearance
6. Delivery
7. Web design
8. Checking
9. Loading
10. Fine-tuning
11. Report

The main stakeholders are the author, the project leader and the web designer. The bulk of the work is done by the author. Planning (step 1) will normally involve the author and the project leader. The design of the webpages (step 7) and loading of the pack on the UCL website (step 9) is the job of the web designer. The author consults with the web designer in finalizing the materials (step 6) and checking the design and data as they will appear on the web (step 8).

PRODUCTION: STEPS

1. Initial planning (5 hours)

This phase aims to shape an initial idea into a workable formula for a study pack. In this phase the topic is discussed between *author* and *project leader* and the broad outline, level, structure and educational aims of the pack determined. The project leader will normally have secured funding and is in charge of finance.

These deliberations result in a written proposal which is formally approved by the project leader. Agreement is reached about working hours and payment and about deadlines and modes of delivery. A memorandum of agreement confirms these arrangements. A copy of this is deposited with the Departmental Administrator, who arranges for payment.

2. Gathering materials (8 hours)

The author collects documents, illustrations, weblinks and any other relevant materials. If the subject-matter is close to the author's particular area of expertise and teaching, this phase is straightforward.

3. Structural design (4 hours)

The author produces a visual map of the pack, showing the main elements and their interconnections (e.g. introduction, primary text, word explanations and translations, biographical data or timeline, quotations, stylistic analysis, historical context, illustrations and comments, self-correcting exercises, questions and answers, weblinks, bibliography, perhaps a glossary, etc.). The map is discussed with both the project leader and the web designer.

4. Writing (40 hours)

This is the main part of the author's job. Typically, study packs are not conceived as consisting of long discursive chapters following a linear development. Rather, they are written in screen-sized (or indeed smaller) portions which relate to one another horizontally. The pack as a whole will be a flexible, mosaic-like instrument, and users will navigate freely using a permanent on-screen

banner giving instant access to different parts of the pack. Its structure, and the interrelations between the parts, must be very clear.

The language needs to be simple, direct and lucid. Avoid long and complex sentences. Write bearing the learner's level in mind. Use pop-up screens to explain difficult terms, references or concepts. Explain the aim of each component of the pack. Create links to other parts of the pack, including the welcome page.

A pack consists of a substantial number of files, typically a few hundred. Word explanations and translations are provided in separate files, i.e. one file for each explanation and another for each translation, all connected by means of hyperlinks. Pop-up screens explaining e.g. parts of a picture (to allow users to run the mouse over a picture and read pop-up comments on its parts) need to be accompanied with written documentation explaining the idea.

The writing process needs to be checked regularly against the design and educational aims, to ensure clarity and user-friendliness. The project leader needs to be kept informed of progress.

5. Copyright Clearance (5 hours)

Because the study packs are freely available on the World WideWeb, written permission from the copyright holder must be obtained for longer quotations and all illustrations before they can be loaded. It is the responsibility of the author of the pack to obtain this permission and enter the relevant data in the acknowledgements page. If permission involves payment of fees, the project leader must be consulted.

6. Delivery (3 hours)

The completed pack is normally delivered as a collection of files. A printed list of files showing their groupings and interconnections is greatly appreciated by the web designer. Direct contact between author and web designer is desirable at this stage. If sound files are part of the pack, they may be produced by the author or with the help of UCL's Media Resources. This is discussed around this stage or earlier.

7. Web Design (25 hours)

This is done by Media Resources. They produce a quote for the cost of design and loading, and make financial arrangements with the project leader. The author can be consulted about progress as the pack's graphics are taking shape.

8. Checking (3 hours)

When pack has been gone through the web design phase, the author needs to proofread and carefully check each part to weed out errors, ensure that all texts and illustrations are as they should be and that all links work.

9. Loading (1 hour)

Once everything is in place, the pack is loaded by Media Resources in consultation with the Departmental Administrator.

10. Fine-tuning (3 hours)

Experience teaches that there are usually some small things that have been overlooked or turn out slightly different to expectations. Minor adjustments can be made in consultation with the Departmental Administrator, design issues are taken back to Media Resources.

11. Report (3 hours)

The final step is the author's written report about the project. This is given to the project leader who submits it, together with proof of payment, to the sponsor as a way of accounting for the money spent.

SCHEDULE

	Task	Agent	Others involved	Hours	Total hours
1	Initial planning	Author, project leader	Departmental administrator	5	5
2	Gathering materials	Author		10	15
3	Structural design	Author	Project leader, web designer	5	20
4	Writing	Author		50	70
5	Copyright clearance	Author	Project leader	5	75
6	Delivery	Author	Web designer	3	78
7	Web design	Web designer	Author	25	103
8	Checking	Author	Web designer	3	106
9	Loading	Web designer	Departmental administrator	1	107
10	Fine-tuning	Author	Web designer, Departmental administrator	4	111
11	Report	Author, project leader	Departmental administrator	3	114

Virtual Dutch <<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/>> is an inter-university teaching and learning initiative in Dutch Studies, involving four British universities: University College London (UCL), the University of Sheffield, the University of Cambridge and the University of Nottingham. Our aim is the advancement of Dutch Studies in the English-speaking world, especially through online learning and collaborative teaching.

