

# ASSESSMENT & COURSEWORK POLICY

Reviewed 2 September 2020

## Our focus

Bilborough Sixth Form College caters for students aged 16 to 19 years old, wanting to study A-levels and BTECs in an academic, supportive and sociable environment. Ours is also an environment fully equipped for learning. The College believes that it is important for students to know the progress they are making in their learning and assessment can take a variety of forms. In addition, the coursework feedback rules set out by exam boards and JCQ vary with the type of qualification.

### **BTEC/ CTEC/ A Level / Level 3 Diploma / GCSE / Level 3 Maths Studies**

Opportunities for assessment that both gauge progress and provide meaningful feedback for improvement are an essential part of classroom practice. Assessment opportunities help subject teachers and tutors to track and monitor students' progress. Feedback from subject teachers will inform tutor reviews and enable tutors to build up a picture of how students are progressing, enabling tutors to discuss and evaluate subject targets with students.

The goal is for students to be able to **evaluate** and **manage** their own progress and negotiate effective actions for improvement with their teachers. All students need regular feedback on their performance in order to achieve this goal, regardless of the type of course they follow.

This Policy recommends that teachers set and provide DIRT (Dedicated improvement and reflection time) for a minimum of two pieces of work per half term. It is good practice for students to have **weekly** homework tasks in an accessible format.

Where more than one teacher teaches a subject then they should standardise/consult/ meet / discuss each other's marking. A record of such meetings should be kept.

Where a teacher is the sole teacher of a subject then they should seek contact with other centres to standardise/consult/ meet / discuss marking of the assessment. Where this is not possible then training by the relevant exam board should be considered as a priority for that teacher.

## **Meeting Student Needs**

In order to support staff in meeting the needs of students the College has the following expectations:

- All subjects identify two opportunities for feedback and reflection every half-term e.g. assessment of key knowledge and skills based on a piece of work with peer marking and feedback provided in the lesson. In subjects where coursework and project work dominate it is anticipated that tasks are tailored to the individual student's development rather than detailed criteria-based feedback.
- Assessment for linear courses includes opportunities to re-visit prior topics to assess knowledge and skills over time, and the length of assessments is increased over time to build towards the expectations of final exams/external assessments.

- It is important that students are provided with regular, detailed and specific advice and guidance on how to improve their progress grade by meeting their targets
- Feedback from formal assessment should be given to students within 2 working weeks.
- Students should be encouraged to share their assessment feedback with their tutor via target sheets.

### **College Approaches**

Although we recognise that not all examination boards offer coursework opportunities, Bilborough College adopts the belief that the benefits of coursework afforded to students, as part of their studies, allow:

1. The development of independent learning skills
2. Students to have autonomy in selecting their subject matter and methods of investigation
3. Students to develop confidence when they are setting the agenda
4. An opportunity for the development of strong staff student relationships
5. Clear opportunities for students to raise their levels of achievement.

All assessments involve trade-offs, the time spent assessing students is time not spent on other things. Assessments allow teachers to make inferences about students understanding. To make these inferences, an assessment should be large enough to be representative of the construct being assessed. Factors such as writing speed, language used etc should not contribute to the inference made.

**Because coursework/assignments form an important and integral component of all types of level 3 courses, there is a need to standardise college practice.**

**The requirement by the examination boards to standardise means that non-negotiable internal deadlines have to be set prior to standardisation.**

#### **Guidance**

In view of the importance of coursework, as stated above, it is essential for the guidance of all concerned to have a clear policy on the administration of coursework. There is specific guidance for BTEC courses within a separate BTEC quality policy and in Pearson's guidance documentation.

Students and parents need to be informed at an early stage that these internal deadlines are non-negotiable. This requires Course Leaders and Lead IVs to publish submission dates within subject overview documentation and accessible calendar dates online (MS Teams). These dates should be submitted to the Exams Officer, published on the college Virtual Learning Environment (Moodle/MS Teams) and potentially on display in classrooms.

#### **Extension of time for Learning Support Students**

The college recognises that for timed examinations some students receive an additional time allowance. Coursework, because of its nature as an extended piece of work requiring time management skills, is not considered to justify automatic time extensions as sufficient support and assistance is available to students to enable them to complete the work within the set timescales. However, BTEC students and those studying courses such as Level 3 Criminology may be able to request adjustments to be made for an assignment or negotiate support over a period of time with their teacher and with the advice of Learning Support. Teachers, Course Leaders and Lead IVs are expected to make reasonable adjustments to deadlines or methods of assessment to accommodate the specific learning needs of their students.

#### **Central Collection of A Level Coursework**

To relieve Course Leaders of making subjective decisions and to make the process more open and objective, the college policy is to provide a central collection point for all A Level coursework. Students will be informed of a collection point for coursework when the handing in dates are published on the Subject Overviews and MS Teams calendars.

The collection point administrator will ask students to sign to confirm that work has been handed in (electronic time stamp and signature if collected online). The Course Leader will collect student coursework from the designated collection point, within 72 hours, and will sign to confirm the receipt of the students' coursework.

Students are expected to hand in any work they have undertaken by the submission date, even if the work has not been fully completed, in whatever state it has reached by the deadline. If work is not submitted, the student will be charged the examination entry fee as if they had failed to attend the examination. There are specific guidelines from Pearson relating to completion of paperwork and authenticity.

### **Central Collection of A Level Computer Science Coursework**

Students will be informed of the electronic collection of the coursework to their teacher and the handing in dates are published on the Subject Overviews and through Moodle / MS Teams.

At the time of electronic collection students will be asked to sign to confirm that the work has been submitted electronically.

Students are expected to hand in any work they have undertaken by the submission date, even if the work has not been fully completed, in whatever state it has reached by the deadline. If work is not submitted, the student will be charged the examination entry fee as if they had failed to attend the examination.

### **Late Submission for a Final Coursework Deadline**

When there is a legitimate need for extensions to internal final deadlines, for example hospitalisation, family emergencies, serious illness, family bereavement, or other issues that can be shown to have delayed the submission of work, requests must be made to the Coursework Panel for a formal extension.

Applications should be made as soon as the student is aware that the issue will have an impact. Ideally, this will be at least two weeks before the final deadline, but we recognise that sometimes problems occur in the final weeks and therefore coursework extension forms can be submitted right up to the day of deadline. Even if incomplete, a copy of the work in progress should be handed in on deadline day (where possible) in case an extension is not ultimately granted.

If a student requests an extension, the course leader should issue an extension form and state on the form whether or not they support the extension and the recommended timeframe of the extension (default one-week extension).

Extension forms will be completed electronically and will be available through the VLE and MS Teams Course pages. Completed forms will be completed electronically and submitted to the course leader by the student. The course leader will save and securely share with the Director of Curriculum and Quality and the Director of Teaching, Learning and Assessment.

The form will then be considered by the coursework panel. Individual teachers do not have the authority to grant or to deny coursework extensions, only to give their reasons for supporting or not supporting an application. Teachers, tutors and other managers should avoid giving students an indication of the likely outcome of the decision before one has been made. Students should be

advised to continue working on their coursework so that they have not wasted any of the time available to complete the coursework. Students should not assume that the extension will be granted, or that it will be the length of time they might request. Students will be required to submit work on the deadline to show current progress.

The panel is currently made up of the Director of Curriculum and Quality, the Director of Teaching, Learning and Assessment, the Head of BTEC and Heads of Faculty (they must not be a current teacher of the student requesting the extension), who will consider each application and the circumstances surrounding the request, including comments from the subject staff, to ensure that each request is treated in a fair way.

The panel will aim to meet within 5 working days of a fully completed request for an extension. When appropriate, students may be interviewed by the panel or asked for further information (this may be done remotely through Teams). The Coursework Panel will adjudicate on the request and a Director should be involved in any decisions made.

Student Form to complete (Coursework extension form) :

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=bhK2dQTZx0CheM3jW8ljX8pH0DkjcOpCs22KPzoda2tUMINYRUIGNDZLMzA2UE1LRkFURUhDUTk4OC4u>

Course Leaders to complete (Coursework extension form):

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=bhK2dQTZx0CheM3jW8ljX8pH0DkjcOpCs22KPzoda2tUQTM3MUFRNes0Tk9YRTNDQUVaVEhURjA2WS4u>

### **Appeals against decisions regarding extensions for late submission**

Any appeals against the decision of the Coursework Panel regarding late submissions will be heard and resolved by the Principal.

### **Release of A Level Coursework Marks and appeals**

Bilborough College is committed to following the latest guidelines from the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) regarding centre assessed work. As such the college will ensure that the following procedures are in place for any centre-assessed marks.

- i. Candidates will be informed of the marks awarded for coursework at least 3 weeks in advance of the date by which the college is required to send the marks to the appropriate exam board. Only final internally moderated marks will be released.
- ii. Candidates will be made aware that these marks are subject to external moderation by the exam board and may still change.
- iii. In instances where an anticipated mark has been given to a student which is later amended by the examination board it will be the responsibility of the Course Leader to provide an explanation for any discrepancy if requested by either the student or those with legal responsibility for the student.
- iv. On receiving their internally moderated marks, candidates will be advised that they may request materials (a copy of their work, mark schemes, exam board guidance) to assist them in considering whether to request a review of the centre's marking. Should these be requested they will be made available promptly.
- v. If a candidate wishes to appeal a mark, it will be carried out by an assessor who has no previous involvement in the assessment of the candidate and who has no personal interest in the outcome of the review (We will use the Midlands consortium of colleges to find suitable assessors). The reviewer will judge whether the candidate's mark is consistent with the standard set by the centre.

- vi. The candidate will be informed in writing of the review of the centre's marking.

### **BTEC feedback**

**During teaching-** Feedback can be given using teachers own professional judgement in relation to the learners including how to improve their work

**During assessment** – Teachers can provide encouragement and general support such as confirmation of deadlines and clarification of the assignment brief. Teachers must not comment on specific achievement or criteria since learners are expected to work independently

**Following assessment** – Teachers can comment on what has been achieved and why and provide general feedback on how well the learner has performed. Teachers can comment on what has not been achieved and why but cannot include feedback on how to improve this.

**The College has an expectation that staff will recognise this policy as a supportive document and will abide by its contents.**