

Policy and Protocol for Remote and Online Assessments 2021-22 academic year

1. Assessment Principles

Academic Board approved assessment principles for remote assessment on 30 March 2020 in response to the outbreak of Covid-19. The College introduced this protocol document in April 2020 with approved updates in January 2021 and December 2021. To ensure a resilient and viable response to the ongoing pandemic, the College has committed to continuing to provide the majority of its assessments online or remotely during the 2021-22 year. Departments have been permitted to request in-person examinations by submitting a case to the Examinations and Assessment Office for approval/rejection by the Academic Registrar.

In accordance with the [College's Terms of Reference for Sub-Boards of Examiners](#), a Sub-Board of Examiners is: *'responsible for the setting of assessments, including examination papers, and to ensure that regulations and policies relating to assessment have been followed correctly.'*

2. Online and Remote Assessments

Online or remote assessments should be provided **on Birkbeck Moodle** for the majority of examinations in the 2021-22 academic year. For the purposes of this document:

- **online assessment** is any assessment that takes place entirely online where an internet connection is required to undertake the assessment, such as an online multiple-choice quiz (MCQ).
- a **remote assessment** such as an open book/take home examination does not require a candidate to remain online to take the assessment. The candidate downloads the paper, types or handwrites their responses and then accesses the internet again to upload the paper by the final deadline.

3. Design, Format and Approval of Assessments

- a) The format of assessments and their instructions must be designed carefully to ensure that they are clear, inclusive and easily navigable for students. See section (8) for further guidance on instructions for candidates. Module and Programme teams must take account of the [Inclusive Curriculum Guidance](#) and the needs of students with protected characteristics in assessment design. The [Digital Education Team \(email\)](#) can provide assistance with this. Considering inclusive assessment design should also contribute to reducing the need for individual reasonable adjustments, decreasing applications for mitigating circumstances and preventing subsequent appeals.
- a) All Online assessments should be set up in Birkbeck Moodle. The Turnitin and Moodle Assignment (with or without embedded Turnitin) activities are available in Birkbeck Moodle for file submissions. The Moodle Quiz and other tools (e.g. Panopto video assignments) may be options for some departments to use. Colleagues should speak to their Senior Digital Education Partner or Digital Education Consultants if they have any questions. Guidance on remote assessment is provided in the [Teaching Online Module](#) in Birkbeck Moodle. The term "examination" should be included in the assessment name of your remote assessment. Turnitin is available to

use. Departments will need to decide how they are using this functionality and communicate this to all staff members.

- b) Departments should ensure that where students on their modules have a Study Support Plan (SSP) they have checked the suitability of reasonable adjustments with the [Wellbeing Service \(email\)](#) who will liaise with the relevant [Disability/Mental Health Advisor \(email\)](#).
- c) Online and remote assessments must be approved by the external examiners in accordance with the requirements of the [College Policy and Guidance on the Role of External Examiners for taught degrees](#).
- d) The College has a policy on dissertations ([Policy on Supervision of Dissertations for Taught Students](#)). Departments must ensure that this has been provided to all academic colleagues who are supervising dissertations.

4. Assessment Scheduling and Setting Timeframes

- a) The Examinations and Assessment Office will contact departments to ask them to complete a template which will provide details of their online and remote assessment plans. It is essential for the College to obtain an accurate picture of every department's plans so that it can ensure that we have the necessary staffing capacity in place to support these centrally. This information will also be used to risk-assess the potential impact on IT systems and support staff where we identify clustering of deadlines over the busiest periods. In cases where timetabling arrangements have the potential for an adverse impact on the student experience then a department may be contacted to discuss some alternative solutions.
- b) Departments should upload a copy of each remote assessment, including the answer book and instructions document, to the [Remote and Online Assessments Papers repository](#) at **least two weeks** prior to the assessment start date. The Exams and Assessment Office will check each remote assessment for typographical and structural errors to ensure that the assessment is easy to use and understand. Any issues will be fed back to the relevant department for amendment.
- c) Departments should ensure that students do not have more than one assessment set in each 24-hour period. This will require coordination at programme level to accommodate different student choices. Departments should also plan the spread of assessments over an assessment period carefully to avoid bunching where possible. Start times and submission deadlines should also be spread across the working day (between 10am and 5pm) to ensure that ITS can support departments and students most effectively.
- d) Departments with remote and online assessments in the main summer and resit exam periods should ensure that no student is set more than one assessment in each 24-hour period. Departments with three-term learning exams should ensure that no student is set more than one assessment in each 24hour period where possible. However, where this is not logistically possible due to limited exam slots, an alternative arrangement may be agreed in consultation with the Examinations and Assessment Office.
- e) 48 hours is recommended for open book exams. The word limits for answers should be as short as possible within the context of being able to demonstrate learning outcomes. Our students may face many challenges as they attempt to combine work, study and/or caring responsibilities from home which may not be

possible in any one 24-hour period. At a practical level a 48-hour window reflects challenging circumstances and is likely to support those with disabilities without a need for further adjustments or those studying in different time zones. However, this must be made clear in the instructions given to candidates. For example, where students are given 48 hours to complete a take-home exam, it should be made clear that the exam should actually only take 3 hours, and therefore 3 hours 45 minutes for a student allocated 15 minutes per hour additional time on their SSP. Arrangements must be checked with the [Wellbeing Service \(email\)](#), who will contact the Disability or Mental Health Advisor) to agree whether the assessment is inclusive and, if not, identify appropriate adjustments.

- f) Some technical or scientific alternative assessments may offer shorter timescales, but students must receive at least one month's notice of the time slots with longer time slots offered to students who are entitled to extra time in exams based on a Study Support Plan (SSP). Please contact the [Wellbeing Service \(email\)](#) to ensure that appropriate extra time is allocated. In cases where shorter timescales are required, departments should facilitate the assessment process so that candidates have a choice of more than one timeslot for completion of an assessment. This is particularly important for international students studying in different time zones or where working parents are juggling childcare. Where departments wish to offer shorter timescales for assessment, please provide a clear rationale to the Examinations and Assessments Office in advance of the scheduled assessment and details of what mitigation has been put in place to ensure that students, particularly those with an SSP, are treated with equity.

5. Publication of the assessment timetable

- a. The assessment timetable will be published by the Examinations and Assessment Office. Following this, departments should notify candidates of the schedule, format and deadlines of their remote/online assessments as soon as possible.

6. Student support prior to and during assessments

- a) Departments should ensure that their staff (teaching staff, L&D tutors and administrators) receive notification of the assessment formats and timetable so that they can provide support to students and respond to their queries effectively.
- b) Departments **must** take steps to familiarise students with the type of assessment they will be required to take for a module. This is especially important bearing in mind that some school leavers over the last two years will not have sat traditional examinations. It is also important in cases where a new format of assessment is planned. Good practice might include provision of example papers, an opportunity to try out the examination format, a demonstration of how the assessment will work or an assessment briefing held during a teaching session so that there is an opportunity for them to ask questions in advance.
- c) Departments must consider who will be the contact points both in advance of the release of the assessment and during it in cases where candidates need to query a potential error with the assessment (e.g. misprint or missing information). It is good practice for staff in departments to be available online an hour in advance of assessments being released and submitted to deal with any technical or submission related queries. Departments should also arrange for academic staff members to be contactable following the release of an assessment in case a query arises about a potential error with the assessment.

- d) Please note that if there is a system or network outage or the assignment submission tool does not work, IT Service Desk will have in place a college-wide backup process. This will be shared if required by the IT Service desk which will allow students to send their submissions to the Examinations and Assessment Office. The Examinations and Assessment Office will then arrange for the assessment to be sent to the relevant department. **Students should not be advised to send their assessments direct to the department. This is to protect the anonymous assessment process.**

7. Support for Academic Departments

- a) The **Digital Education Team** provides guidance on remote assessment in its [Teaching Online Course](#) in Birkbeck Moodle. Please see the [Guidance on Remote Assessment](#) tile. Any further queries relating to this can be directed to the [Digital Education Team \(email\)](#). The Digital Education Team also provides daily drop-in sessions from Monday to Friday on weekdays (see the teaching online course link above for details).
- b) The **Wellbeing Services** can be contacted to discuss the suitability of assessment arrangements for students with Study Support Plans – contact [Wellbeing Service \(email\)](#) in the first instance.
- c) The [Examinations and Assessment Office](#) can be contacted for advice on scheduling of examinations at examinations@bbk.ac.uk
- d) The Academic Standards and Quality (ASQ) team in Registry Services can be contacted at [Academic Standards and Quality \(email\)](#) for advice on mitigating circumstances or the operation of Sub Boards of Examiners. Revised guidance for Mitigating Circumstances in the context of Covid-19 has been developed for staff and students: [Covid-19 Staff Mitigating Circumstances Guidance](#) and [Covid-19 Student Mitigating Circumstances Guidance](#).

8. Assessment Offences

The College has a duty to maintain academic standards by ensuring the fairness and integrity of all aspects of its assessment processes. Students are expected to complete their assessments with integrity. Departments should ensure a clear communication to students that we will treat any instance of an alleged assessment offence seriously and take appropriate action against any student who is found to have contravened the College's [Assessment Offences Policy](#). There is further information on the Programme Moodle area under the Assessment and Feedback tile that students can be referred to with a link to the policy and further sources of information. You can also refer students to the [Assessment Offences Quick Guide](#) and the plagiarism statement.

An academic integrity/honour statement **must** be included on all examination papers in which students are asked to declare that the work is their own. Please see Appendix 1 for College-wide statements to be included on question papers and answer sheets plus the academic integrity/honour statement to discuss with your students.

Good practice includes:

- a) talking to your students about developing trust to avoid offences when we deliver remote or online assessments;
- b) warning students of the consequence of using essay mills or collusion. There are examples of essay mills blackmailing students having paid for an assignment.

- c) letting students know that an oral examination ('viva voce' in the Assessment Offences Policy) might be required if there is doubt that the student has completed the examination themselves.
- d) ensuring that your assessment design minimises potential offences: revise titles/assessment briefs to minimise copying or resubmitting answers made by previous cohorts.

These are examples of deterrents and for more technical interventions please contact your Digital Education Consultant for advice.

9. Instructions for Candidates

Instructions for completion of the online or remote assessment must be communicated clearly for candidates when the assessment is released on Moodle. Instructions should cover:

- a) Request for students to identify their submissions by their candidate number and not their name to ensure anonymity.
- b) Word limits, deadline and expectations for how long the assessment should take. For example, departments might suggest that a 24 hour take home paper should take approximately 3 hours to complete.
- c) A reminder about the College's Assessment Offences Policy.
- d) Clear guidance on how to submit the assessment online.
- e) Who to contact in the event of IT difficulties. Live telephone support can be accessed from [020 3926 3456](tel:02039263456).
- f) Who to contact should they have queries about the assessment itself.
- g) A reminder that if they are prevented from submitting the assessment online by the deadline then they can complete a mitigating circumstance [claim via ASK](#) to explain the reasons for this.
- h) A reminder that students should not use Studiosity or contact Learning Development Advisors while they are completing the assessment and that they should complete the assessment on their own.
- i) An example answer book and instructions document can be found below. A separate template document is also available for you to amend and use.

10. Responsibilities

Academic Departments are 'responsible for the setting of assessments, including examination papers, and to ensure that regulations and policies relating to assessment have been followed correctly' (see [terms of reference for sub-boards](#)). For online/remote assessments, this means ensuring:

- that that design, timeframe and scheduling of the assessment are inclusive and that arrangements for students with Study Support Plans have been discussed and agreed with the Wellbeing Service.
- that the information about their planned assessments is uploaded to SharePoint by the deadline specified by the Examinations and Assessment Office.
- that students are notified of the schedule, format and deadlines of their remote/online assessments as soon as possible following the publication of the schedule by the Examination and Assessment Office.
- Candidates understand the format of the remote or online assessment in advance.
- that the Birkbeck templates for the answer book and instructions are used.
- that the instructions to candidates are clear and easily navigable for students.
- A copy of each online or remote assessment, including the answer book and instructions document, is uploaded to the Assessments SharePoint site (managed by the

Examinations and Assessments Office) at least 2 weeks prior to the assessment start date.

- that the assessment is set up correctly in Moodle to ensure candidate anonymity.
- Candidates are advised of a contact point in the department to whom they can direct queries should they have any concerns about the proposed assessment arrangements.

The **Examinations and Assessment Office** is responsible for ensuring:

- the collation and publication of the examination schedule.
- Exams constraints document distributed to departments in early January 2022
- Departments to return constraints document to Examinations Office by 28 January 2022.
- Draft timetable sent to departments on 9 February 2022
- Departments to respond to queries on the draft timetable by 16 February 2022
- Final timetable published to students on 23 February 2022
- that the assessments are uploaded to SharePoint by departments and prepared in accordance with this protocol document.

Education Committee
16th December 2021

Appendix 1: Student Academic Integrity Statement for Remote Assessments

The College places great trust in students undertaking online and remote assessments and considers we have a joint responsibility to support academic standards and to ensure your qualification retains its value over time.

When you registered as a student you agreed to abide by the College's regulations and policies, which are accessible online via your Programme Moodle Handbook and the College website. These documents contain references to, and penalties for, unfair practices such as collusion, plagiarism, fabrication or falsification. The College's [Assessment Offences Policy](#) sets out the consequences of committing an offence and the penalties that might be applied.

By submitting your assessment as instructed, you confirm that:

1. You have not impersonated, or allowed yourself to be impersonated by, any person for the purposes of this assessment.
2. This assessment is your original work and no part of it has been copied from any other source except where due acknowledgement is made.
3. You have not previously submitted this work for any other module/programme.
4. You give permission for your assessment response to be reproduced, communicated, compared and archived for plagiarism detection, benchmarking or educational purposes.
5. You understand that plagiarism is the presentation of the work, idea or creation of another person or organisation as though it is your own. It is a form of cheating and is a very serious academic offence that may lead to disciplinary action.
6. You understand that this assessment is undertaken without invigilation, and that you have not communicated with and will not communicate with anyone concerning this assessment before the deadline for submission unless it is expressly permitted by the assessment instructions.
7. No part of this assessment has been produced for, or communicated to, you by any other person, unless it is expressly permitted by the assessment instructions.
8. You understand that you are studying towards a University of London qualification and that this award may ultimately be revoked (this means you will lose it), if in the future, an investigation uncovers deliberate academic misconduct.

Appendix 2 – Statement on Assessment Offences to be included in the question paper

[Exam guidelines — Birkbeck, University of London \(bbk.ac.uk\)](#) has a small section on exam irregularities on the exam timetable page of My BBK.

Exam Irregularities

- If you are suspected of cheating, attempting to cheat or of assisting someone else to cheat, the facts will be reported to the Examinations and Assessment Office and may be reported to your examiners. If you are found cheating, you may be disqualified from the examination and excluded from all future examinations of the University and/or the College. [Find out more about assessment offences.](#)

Appendix 3 – Plagiarism Statement on Moodle/Turnitin.

MOODLE ASSIGNMENT: UPLOAD A SINGLE FILE

This assignment type allows a student to upload a file (for example a word-processed document or an image) for the teacher to grade and provide comments. See the upload a single file assignment documentation for more details.

- I confirm that this assignment is my own work and that I have correctly acknowledged the work of others. I have not submitted this work previously as part of any other assessment or published it in another forum.

At Birkbeck we value academic integrity. This means that:

- all the work you produce must be your own work
- you must acknowledge the work of others when you use their ideas in your assessment, according to the conventions of your subject
- you must not copy work in any form, from anyone (even with their permission) or anywhere without acknowledgement
- you must not re-submit work you have produced yourself for previous assessments submitted for marking, either at Birkbeck or at another academic institution unless you have been advised by your tutors that you are allowed to resubmit reworked past material or work towards an ongoing project.

Examples of Plagiarism and consequential penalties can be found in the [Birkbeck plagiarism guidelines](#).

Text:

I can confirm that this assignment is my own work and that I have correctly acknowledged the work of others. I have not submitted this work previously as part of any other assessment or published it in any other forum.

At Birkbeck we value academic integrity. This means that:

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- You must not copy work in any form, from anyone (even with their permission) or anywhere without acknowledgement.
- You must not re-submit work you have produced yourself for previous assessments submitted for marking, either at Birkbeck or at another academic institution unless you have been advised by your tutors that you are allowed to resubmit reworked past material or work towards an ongoing project.
- You must not knowingly assist another student to plagiarise, for example, by willingly giving them your own work to copy from.

Examples of Plagiarism and consequential penalties can be found in the [Birkbeck plagiarism guidelines](#).

Appendix 4 – Exam Paper and Answer Book with Instructions for Remote Assessment Candidates



Exam Paper and Answer Book with Instructions for Remote Assessment Candidates

Please read this document fully and carefully. It contains important information on how to complete your exam and how to submit it correctly. Contact details are provided if you have queries with the exam or technical problems when trying to submit it.

Green text provides guidance for departments or indicates where further information should be added. The green text should be deleted before it is uploaded to Moodle.

The exam questions start [here](#).

Student and Assessment Details

Candidate Number: (replace this text with your candidate number).

Your candidate number is comprised of the letter 'U' followed by 6 numbers, e.g. U870065, and can be found on your exam timetable on [My Birkbeck](#).

School: Enter school name

Department: Enter department name

Module Title: Enter module title

Module Code: Enter module code

Credit Value: Enter credit value

Instructions for candidates

1. Candidate Number

Please complete page 1 of this document with your candidate number, not your name or student number. Your candidate number is a 6-digit number preceded by the letter 'U', e.g. U870065, and can be found on your exam timetable on [My Birkbeck](#). This ensures anonymity in the marking process. Please read all the following instructions carefully before starting the assessment.

2. Assessment Format and Word Limits

Departments to enter specific information about the type of assessment (e.g. open book/take home test or online assessment).

Candidates can type or write their assessments by hand. Where answers are handwritten, these must be legible for the examiners. Candidates can scan handwritten documents using a scanner or their phone's camera or an app such as Microsoft Lens. This is also a useful way to draw and capture mathematical workings, drawings or graphs for insertion into the assessment document. Assessments can also be dictated using speech to text on your mobile phone. You can find further information on using your mobile device for online assessment [here](#).

3. Word Limit

The word limit is X words. (If the assessment has several sections or questions then the department should ensure that the word limit for each section is specified).

The examiners will be expecting answers similar to those produced under examination conditions, not long essays. Full references and bibliographies are not therefore expected, unless specified in the assessment instructions. *Amend as necessary if candidates are expected to include referencing.*

4. Assessment Window

This assessment was released at time on date. The window for completion of this assessment is X hours. The assessment is expected to take X hours (or more if identified in a Study Support Plan).

5. Deadline

The deadline for submission of this assessment is X time on Y date 2022. A deadline during the working day (10am to 4pm) is recommended to ensure that staff members are available to support IT or any other issues which may occur in the lead up to the submission deadline.

6. Contacts

For general queries relating to your assessment please contact your department. You should identify when staff will be available to answer queries (e.g. by phone and/or email for the first 2 hours of the exam window) and what type of queries can be asked.

Email: xxx@bbk.ac.uk

Phone: xxxxxxxx (if applicable)

For technical queries specifically relating to the following issues please contact ITS.

- Logging into Moodle
- Scanning handwritten work
- Submitting assessments

Email: [Exam Support](#)

Phone: 020 3926 3456

7. Mitigating Circumstances

If you are unable to complete and submit the assessment or consider that you have performed poorly as a result of mitigating circumstances, you should complete a Mitigating Circumstances Claim via [ASK](#) to explain the reasons for this within 14 days of the assessment deadline. Specific guidance has also been developed for students: [COVID-19 mitigating circumstances guidance for students](#).

8. Academic Integrity and Assessment Offences

At Birkbeck we value academic integrity. This means that:

- All the work you produce **must be your own work**.
- You must acknowledge the work of others when you use their ideas in your assessment, according to the conventions of your subject.
- You must not copy work in any form, from anyone (even with their permission) or anywhere without acknowledgement.
- You must not re-submit work you have produced yourself for previous assessments submitted for marking, either at Birkbeck or at another academic institution.
- You must not knowingly assist another student to plagiarise, for example, by willingly giving them your own work to copy from.

If we suspect you have copied work in any form, you may be accused of plagiarism, which is an assessment offence (see the [Birkbeck Assessment Offences Policy](#)).

Examples of plagiarism

- Copying and collusion
- Purchasing ready-made assessments
- Self-plagiarism, i.e. submitting the same piece of work for assessment twice
- Paraphrasing without acknowledgement
- Inadequate paraphrasing
- Inaccurate or incomplete citing and referencing.

The last three examples are often done unintentionally and are the most common examples of student plagiarism. See the [Birkbeck plagiarism guidelines](#) for further details.

Guidance and resources

As it is easy to unintentionally plagiarize, you must work through the:

- [Birkbeck plagiarism guidelines](#)
- School/Departmental resources on appropriate citing/referencing. Learning development staff in your School/Department will tell you where these are.

Note: If you are worried about plagiarising or cannot find the School/Departmental resources on plagiarism, please contact the subject [specific tutors in your School/Department](#).

You should not use Studiosity or contact Learning Development Advisors while you are completing the assessment. You should complete the assessment on your own.

9. **Submission of the Assessment** (Delete any sections that are not applicable for this assignment)

In order to accommodate the online submission of work, additional time has been factored into all assessments, so any time limits are designed to be greater than the time expected to complete the work. Please bear this in mind when reading the following guidance.

It is strongly recommended that you begin submitting early to ensure you have sufficient time for your work to upload before the deadline and allowing for technical or bandwidth issues.

When submitting your work, it is advisable to also email a copy of the submission to yourself so that you have timestamped evidence of your work at time of submission in the case of any technical issues.

9.1 **Submission of word-processed files via Turnitin**

When submitting word-processed files, make sure to save your work in an accepted filetype to avoid submission problems. Accepted filetypes include: Microsoft Word® (.doc/.docx), Rich text format (.rtf), Plain text (.txt), WordPerfect® (.wpd). Portable document files (.pdf) are accepted provided they are scannable (i.e. created in a word processor rather than images of text). Only a single file may be submitted to a Turnitin assignment.

9.2 **Submission of assessment via Moodle quiz**

When submitting work via Moodle quiz, it is advised that you type your answers to any questions where the answer is of a significant length in a word processor and then paste your answers into the quiz. This will ensure that you do not lose any of your work in the case of connection problem or other technical problems. It also enables you to send an email of your work to yourself as detailed in the general guidelines above.

9.3 **Submission of hand-written work scanned using a mobile phone**

If you do not have access to a computer or your department has specified that your exam should be hand-written, you will need to ensure that your work is scanned and combined into a single file. You can find guidance on how to scan your work into a single file and how to add hand-drawn images to word processed files in section 1 of the Moodle page [Learning Online](#).

2021/22



Assessment Questions

Assessment Instructions

Enter the details of the assessment here, outlining the numbers of questions, how many should be answered and any other instructions relating to the assessment.

Questions

Enter the assessment questions here.

2021/22



Start your answer here