Policy and protocol for remote and online assessments

Assessment principles

1. Most assessments and examinations at Birkbeck, University of London (the College) will continue to be conducted online and remotely in the 2024-25 academic year to meet the needs of our diverse student body. In-person examinations will be permitted where a strong case has been put forward for doing so. For example, an in-person examination might be required to meet the learning outcomes of the module (e.g. if it contains practical elements such as laboratory work) or it might be required to meet Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) requirements. Faculties and schools can request in-person examinations by submitting a case to the Examinations and Assessment Office for consideration by the Academic Registrars' Team (or their nominee).

2. 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.'

Online and remote assessments

3. Online or remote assessments should be provided on the College Moodle for the majority of examinations in the 2024-25 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.

Design, format and approval of assessments

4. 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 17 for further guidance on instructions for candidates:
   a) Module and programme teams must take account of the needs of students with protected characteristics in assessment design and [Wellbeing Services](#) can assist with this. Considering inclusive assessment design should also contribute to reducing the need for individual reasonable adjustments, enhancing student experience and performance and decreasing applications for mitigating circumstances and

preventing subsequent appeals. In instances where inclusive practices, design and anticipated adjustments do not meet the needs of individual students with disabilities, there remains a legal obligation to provide reasonable adjustments. Wellbeing Services will use its professional expertise and judgement to determine if further adjustments are required to meet the needs of a specific student. Responsible staff members must implement reasonable adjustments identified by Wellbeing Services unless it is agreed that there is justifiable cause to consider the adjustment(s) unreasonable. In this instance any alternative reasonable adjustments will be explored (exceptions may arise for PSRB regulated programmes).

b) All online and remote assessments should be set up in the College Moodle. The Turnitin and Moodle Assignment (with or without embedded Turnitin) activities are available in the College Moodle for file submissions. The Moodle Quiz and other tools (e.g. Panopto video assignments) may be options for some faculties 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 the College Moodle. The term 'examination' should be included in the assessment name of your remote or online assessment. Turnitin is available to use. Faculties will need to decide how they are using this functionality and communicate this to all staff members.

c) If a new assessment method, not previously used at the College is proposed, faculties and schools should contact Wellbeing Services to explore implications for students with disabilities. Schools should ensure that any reasonable adjustments outlined in a Study Support Plan (SSP) are applied for students on their modules. Where a faculty or school has questions about the reasonable adjustment, they can contact Wellbeing Services. If an individual student indicates that their current SSP may not meet their needs, then they should be signposted to [Wellbeing Services](#) (Mental Health Advisory or Disability and Dyslexia Services as appropriate).

d) 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](#).

e) The College's Policy on [Supervision of Dissertations for Taught students](#) must be disseminated by faculties/schools to all academic colleagues involved in supervision of dissertations.

Assessment scheduling and setting timeframes

5. As follows:

   a) The Examinations and Assessment Office will contact faculties 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 faculty's plan, 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 faculty may be contacted to discuss some alternative solutions.

   b) Faculties 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 Examinations 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 faculty for amendment.

   c) Faculties 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. Faculties 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 faculties and students most effectively.

   d) Faculties 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. Faculties with three-term learning exams should ensure that no student is set more than one assessment in each 24-hour period. 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, the time a student is expected to work on the examination should 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.

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 an SSP. In cases where shorter timescales are required, faculties 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 faculties or schools 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.

Publication of the assessment timetable

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

Student support prior to and during assessments

7. Faculties 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.

8. Faculties must take steps to familiarise students with the type of assessment they will be required to take for a module. This is especially important when bearing in mind that some school leavers since the outset of the pandemic, 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.

9. Faculties 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 faculties to be available online an hour in advance of assessments being released and submitted, to deal with any technical or submission related queries. Faculties 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.

10. Please note that if there is a system or network outage or the assignment submission tool does not work, the 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 school. Students should not be advised to send their assessments direct to the school or faculty. This is to protect the anonymous assessment process.

Support for faculties

11. The Digital Education Team provides guidance on remote assessment in its Teaching Online Course in the College 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).

12. Wellbeing Services can be contacted for guidance about reasonable adjustments. They must be contacted if there are concerns about the ability to implement a reasonable adjustment for valid reasons, such as PSRB requirements. This should usually be raised at least 6 weeks in advance of the affected assessment or on confirmation or amendment of an SSP and earlier where possible. In these instances, Wellbeing Services will work with the school to assess the reasonableness of the adjustment and where appropriate, will explore alternative options.

13. The Examinations and Assessment Office can be contacted for advice on scheduling of examinations at examinations@bbk.ac.uk

14. The Quality Team, within Academic Standards and Quality (ASQ) 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.

Academic integrity and misconduct

15. 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. Faculties should ensure a clear communication to students that we will treat any instance of an alleged academic misconduct seriously and take appropriate action against any student who is found to have contravened the [Academic Integrity and Misconduct 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 Academic Integrity and Misconduct policy and the plagiarism statement.

16. 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 students about developing trust to avoid misconduct 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 who have paid for an assignment.

    c) letting students know that an oral examination ('viva voce' in the Academic Integrity and Misconduct policy) might be required if there is doubt that the student has completed the examination themselves.

    d) ensuring that your assessment design minimises potential misconduct: 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.

Instructions for candidates

17. 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) Requests 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, faculties might suggest that a 24-hour take home paper should take approximately 3 hours to complete.

c) A reminder about the College's Academic Integrity and Misconduct 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 +44 (0)20 3926 3456.

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 Turnitin Draft Coach 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.

Responsibilities

18. Faculties 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:

a. that prior to the start of each academic year, faculties with PSRB accredited programmes ensure that they have a clear understanding of the regulating bodies' current requirements with regards assessment approaches

b. this should be taken into consideration when reviewing and developing assessments

c. that design, timeframe and scheduling of the assessment are inclusive.

d. that students who disclose a disability are signposted to <u>Wellbeing Services</u> and the <u>Study Support Plan</u>, in a timely manner.

e. that reasonable adjustments indicated in SSPs are implemented.

f. that Wellbeing Services are contacted where there are concerns about the appropriateness of a particular reasonable adjustment, arising from course specific needs e.g. PSRB requirements. This should usually be raised at least 6 weeks in advance of the affected assessment or on confirmation or amendment of an SSP and earlier where possible.

g. that the information about their planned assessments is uploaded to SharePoint by the deadline specified by the Examinations and Assessment Office.

h. 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.

i. candidates understand the format of the remote or online assessment in advance.

j. that the College templates for the answer book and instructions are used.

k. that the instructions to candidates are clear and easily navigable for students.

l. 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 two weeks prior to the assessment start date.

m. that the assessment is set up correctly in Moodle to ensure candidate anonymity.

n. Candidates are advised of a contact point in the school to whom they can direct queries should they have any concerns about the proposed assessment arrangements.

19. The Examinations and Assessment Office is responsible for ensuring:
    a. the collation and publication of the examination schedule

b. exams constraints document distributed to faculties in early January 2025

c. faculties to return constraints document to Examinations Office by 26 January 2025

d. draft timetable sent to faculties on 7 February 2025

e. faculties to respond to queries on the draft timetable by 14 February 2025.

f. final timetable published to students on 21 February 2025.

g. that the assessments are uploaded to SharePoint by faculties and prepared in accordance with this protocol document.

Created: December 2021
Latest update: July 2023
Date of next review: 2024 - 2025 academic year
Owner: Head of Education and Student Experience
SLT owner: DVC Education and Student Experience
Committee oversight: Education Committee for Academic Board

Appendix 1: Student Academic Integrity Statement for online and 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 Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy sets out the consequences of committing misconduct 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 misconduct 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 misconduct to be included in the question paper
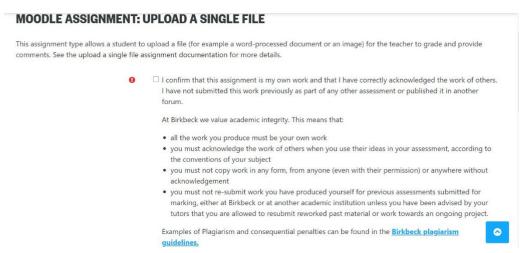
Exam guidelines has a small section on exam irregularities, on the exam timetable page of MyBirkbeck.

Exam irregularities

a. 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.

Appendix 3 – Plagiarism statement on Moodle/Turnitin

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.

The College values academic integrity. This means that:

a. All the work you produce must be your own work.

b. You must acknowledge the work of others when you use their ideas in your assessment, according to the conventions of your subject.

c. You must not copy work in any form, from anyone (even with their permission) or anywhere without acknowledgement.

d. You must not resubmit work you have produced yourself for previous assessments submitted for marking, either at the College 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.

e. 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

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.

Italicised text provides guidance for faculties or indicates where further information should be added. The italicised text should be deleted before it is uploaded to Moodle.

Skip to exam questions.

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.

Faculty: *Enter faculty name*

School: *Enter school 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-** *Faculties 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. [View further information on](https://) [using your mobile device for online assessment]().

3. **Word limit-** The word limit is *X* words. (*If the assessment has several sections or questions then the school 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 and 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 2024/25. 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 school *(you should identify when staff will be available to answer queries [e.g. by phone and/or email for the first two hours of the exam window] and what type of queries can be asked):*
   a. *Email: xxx@bbk.ac.uk*
      Phone: xxxxxxx (if applicable)
   b. For technical queries specifically relating to the following issues, please contact ITS:

- Logging into Moodle
- Scanning handwritten work
- Submitting assessments

c. For exam assistance, contact [Exam Support](#) or 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.

8. **Academic integrity and misconduct-** the College values academic integrity. This means that:
   a. All the work you produce must be your own work.
   b. You must acknowledge the work of others when you use their ideas in your assessment, according to the conventions of your subject.
   c. You must not copy work in any form, from anyone (even with their permission) or anywhere without acknowledgement.
   d. You must not resubmit work you have produced yourself for previous assessments submitted for marking, either at the College or at another academic institution.
   e. You must not knowingly assist another student to plagiarise, for example, by willingly giving them your own work to copy from.
   f. You must not submit work for assessment that has been generated by a chatbot or AI tool- this would be academic misconduct, as with any other form of contract cheating or plagiarism, because the words and ideas generated are not your own. Further to this, the words and ideas generated by the chatbot or AI tool, would make use of other human authors' ideas without referencing them, which is plagiarism.

   If we suspect you have copied work in any form, you may be accused of plagiarism, which is academic misconduct (see the Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy).

   Examples of plagiarism:
   a. Copying and collusion
   b. Purchasing ready-made assessments
   c. Self-plagiarism, i.e. submitting the same piece of work for assessment twice
   d. Paraphrasing without acknowledgement
   e. Inadequate paraphrasing
   f. 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 plagiarise, you must work through the:

- Birkbeck plagiarism guidelines
- faculty/school resources on appropriate citing/referencing. Learning development staff in your faculty/school will tell you where these are.

Note: If you are worried about plagiarising or cannot find the faculty/school resources on plagiarism, please contact the subject specific tutors in your faculty/school.

You should not use Turnitin Draft Coach 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)*

   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.

10. **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.

11. **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 or other technical problems. It also enables you to send an email of your work to yourself, as detailed in the general guidelines above.

12. **Submission of hand-written work scanned using a mobile phone-** If you do not have access to a computer or your school 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.

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.

Start your answer here: