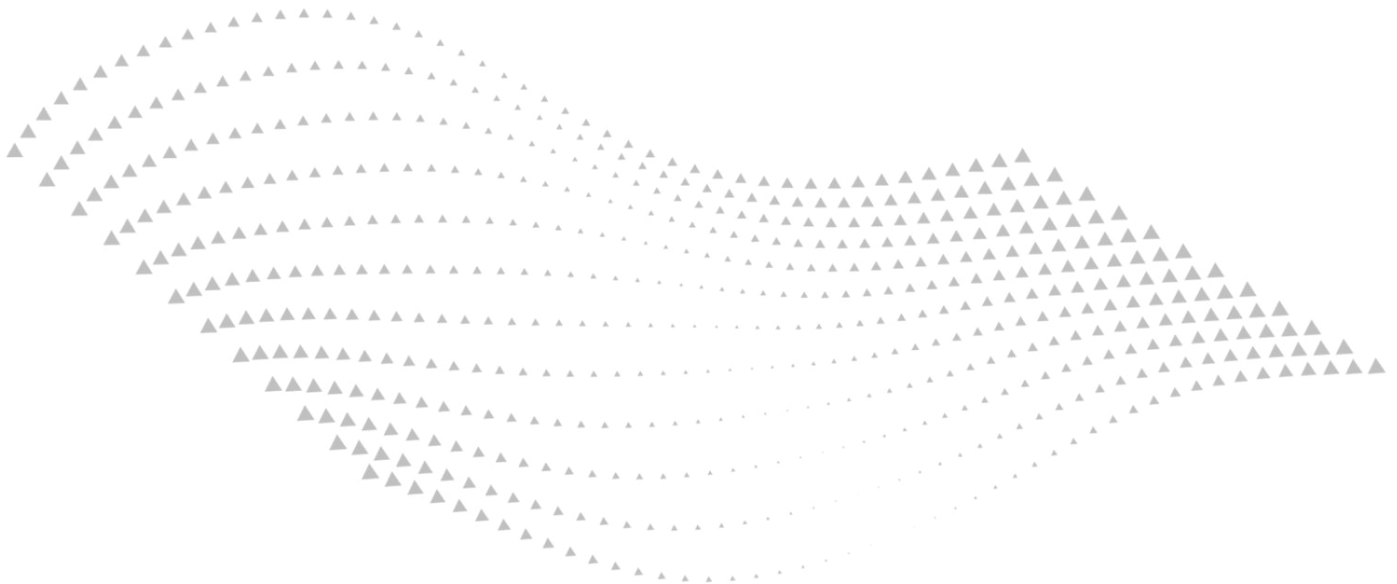


# **BIMM UNIVERSITY**

A university  
for the creative  
industries

## **Higher Education Assessment Staff Handbook**



Policy and Guidance for Course Teams  
2024

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## Introduction

This handbook is for all faculty involved in the assessment of students. It outlines BIMM University policy and procedure for setting and marking student work (including calibration and internal and external moderation) as well as the processes and procedures for providing effective and developmental feedback and how to deal with issues such as specific learning difficulties.

This handbook applies to all BIMM University awards. However, the broad principles outlined here also apply to courses delivered in partnership with other awarding bodies.

The Head of School (reporting to the Dean of Faculty) is accountable for maintaining faculty standards within each campus and ensuring faculty know their roles and responsibilities. Course Leaders (reporting to the Head of School) are accountable for ensuring that all faculty involved in assessing their students are familiar with BIMM University policy and their responsibilities as outlined in this handbook.

Broadly, there are two types of assessment on BIMM University courses as follows:

1. **Coursework** – assessments that are submitted online through the university's Canvas VLE.
2. **Face-to-face** – practical assessments include performances, demonstrations, presentations, and other activities that are assessed in person.

In addition, we have:

1. **Formative assessment** – ungraded assessments designed to support student learning by allowing them to receive feedback on the skills and knowledge they are developing.
2. **Summative assessments are graded assessments** designed to evaluate student learning at the end of a module and provide feedback on what they have done well and what they might improve in the future.

## Faculty Roles in the Process of Assessing Student Work

### Dean of Faculty/Director of Postgraduate Studies

Responsible for the assurance of academic assessment standards across the Faculty.

### Head of School

Responsible for assuring academic assessment standards within their subject at a BIMM University campus.

### Course Leader

Responsible for the assurance of academic assessment standards for their course.

### Teaching Faculty

Responsible for assuring academic assessment standards for the modules they mark or moderate.

## **BIMM University Higher Education Strategy**

Our Higher Education Strategy 2022-2027 states that:

*Assessment will be fair, relevant, authentic, collaborative, diverse, inclusive and accessible.*

In addition, the [UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#) requires us to:

- Ensure that the academic standards for our qualifications are consistent with the UK [Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications \(FHEQ\)](#).
- Ensure that students who are awarded our qualifications can achieve academic standards beyond the level of a pass and that our academic standards are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK Higher Education Institutions.
- Ensure that our assessment and classification processes are reliable, fair and transparent.

To achieve these aims, we set the aims and outcomes for our modules and courses at a level that meets the requirements of the FHEQ, and we test the alignment of assessment and outcomes against the framework through the [course approval process](#).

However, we also need to ensure that the standards we set are understood by students and staff and used consistently, and this requires us to develop a shared understanding of the principles of assessment and how we recognise when these standards are met in our student's work.

## **Part One: BIMM University Assessment Procedures**

### **The Module Specification sets out:**

- The Learning Outcomes for the module and each assessment – these are statements that describe what students need to be able to do to pass the module.
- A description of what the assessment entails, the week it is due in each semester/trimester, how to submit/present/attend the assessment and any required elements or sub-components.
- The format of the assessment (we call this an assessment mode) and re-assessment (the Retrieval assessment in case the student fails their first attempt).
- The assessment criteria (Assessment Fields against which students are assessed for each assessment).
- If a module has more than one summative (graded) assessment, each assessment will have a percentage weighting that indicates the assessment's relative size and/or importance. These weightings must combine to be 100% and will be used to calculate the final module mark. For example, if Assessment 1 is 30% and Assessment 2 is 70%, a single grade will be assigned to each assessment. If Assessment 1 is assigned a mark of 55% and Assessment 2 a mark of 68% and both assignment marks combined in their weighted proportion, they produce a module mark of 64.1 %, which would be rounded to make a final module grade of 64%. However, markers do not need to perform these calculations as the Assessment Team conducts them before submission to the Assessment Board.

### **Student Information and Expectations:**

- Students will be informed via the Module Specifications on the VLE of the arrangements for learning and teaching, the module content, and the assessment and re-assessment requirements at the start of each academic year.
- Students must make themselves available during the entire academic year, which may include Retrieval periods (dates available [here](#)) if they have to retrieve any fails. Therefore, students should not make any holiday plans during these times until marks have been confirmed by the Assessment Boards, after which they will normally be given at least two weeks' notice of any Retrievals required.
- All assessments that contribute towards the classification of an award (typically Levels 5, 6 and 7) shall also be subject to External Examiner External Moderation unless weighted at 30% or less of the overall module mark.
- Students must adhere to published dates and deadlines for all assessments. Students who cannot participate in an assessment on the specified date due to medical or other reasons beyond their control should be referred to the [Exceptional Circumstances Policy](#).
- All material submitted for assessment must be the student's work (excluding where group work specifically forms part of the assignment); see our [Academic Integrity Policy](#).
- In addition, all quotations from other persons' or organisations' published or

unpublished work must be attributed appropriately, both at the relevant point in the text and in the bibliography or reference list. Study skills resources are available for students [here](#).

- If a student submits a recording, composition or lyrics not in English, a translation of the lyrics must also be provided for marking and moderation.
- Where a module is no longer taught, related assessment(s) will typically be offered for one year after the discontinuation date. However, Assessment Boards may provide alternative forms of assessment beyond that date if required.
- Reasonable adjustments for students may be made on the advice of Student Life on an individual basis to compensate for a disability or unforeseen circumstances, provided this does not compromise the achievement of the Learning Outcomes. See our [Exceptional Circumstances Policy](#).
- Where a faculty member suspects a student of breaching our policy on academic integrity, an investigation will follow the university's [Academic Integrity Policy](#).
- If there is any personal interest, involvement or relationship between a marker and a student, the marker should not mark the student's work and should declare the interest to the relevant Course Leader.

## **Assessment Information Schedule & Timetable**

- Course Leaders are responsible for ensuring that their students receive complete, accurate, and timely module information and that students are aware of their responsibility to make themselves available for assessment throughout the academic year.
- Course Leaders will ensure that students are informed of the arrangements and requirements for assessment at the start of each semester/trimester.
- Course Leaders will likewise ensure that the course assessment timetable is fit for purpose, appropriately resourced/staffed and made available to students, detailing the dates, times, and venues of all practical assessments and submissions for modules on their course.
- The complete assessment timetable will be published to students at least two weeks before the first assessment.
- Course Leaders will ensure that students are aware of the university's Academic Assessment Regulations for [undergraduate](#) and [postgraduate](#) courses as appropriate and the policies for [Exceptional Circumstances](#) and [Academic Integrity](#).
- In particular, students should be made aware of any penalties for late submission of assessments, the importance of academic integrity and their right to [appeal](#) marks under certain circumstances.
- Teaching teams should emphasise the importance to students of keeping a record of the dates, times, and venues of their assessments, including Retrievals, checking the details of their timetables and flagging any possible clashes or omissions with their Course Leader.

## Examples of Modes of Assessment

Assessments are tasks that students are required to complete and submit for grading, which contribute in whole or in part to module marks and course-level awards. Examples may include:

- **Practical:** A performance, educational or professional practice-based assessment.
- **Oral:** An individual or group presentation, discussion, marketing/sales pitch, performance or teaching exercise.
- **Portfolio:** Normally, a series of creative tasks or artefacts collated as part of one assessment.
- **Artefact:** A piece of work, such as a visual, audio, software, composition, design or artistic output.
- **Text-based:** A report, essay, review, analysis, case study, creative or professional written brief, research proposal or project report.
- **Online assessment:** multiple choice questionnaire/quiz, test or online task.

## Coursework Submission Requirements

Unless otherwise specified in the Module Specification Assessment Brief, coursework submissions should conform to the following guidelines:

- All coursework that draws on external sources (text or otherwise) should include a reference list and be correctly referenced using the university's Harvard Referencing Guide, available [here](#).
- Electronic data files should be checked to ensure they are in the correct format and meet file size requirements, as detailed in the relevant Module Specification Assessment Brief.
- When students submit a file, they will be asked to confirm that they wish to upload it and must affirm that the work is theirs.
- It is the student's responsibility to check that they are submitting the correct file, in a valid format, within any specified file size limits, by the deadline and to the correct submission point published on Canvas.
- If a student does submit a file which fails to meet the requirements listed above and the deadline has not yet passed, the file may be re-submitted.
- If the deadline has passed and a resubmission has been made, the original file submitted will be marked. This may result in a low or fail mark, depending on what was submitted (including all required assessment elements) and when and whether the Marker can open it.
- To avoid loss, students should back up all digitally stored work (we recommend doing this at least twice on different media).
- In addition, text-based submissions should follow the following guidelines:
  - A cover sheet containing the student number, the module name, the



assessment number/title and the word count.

- A4 page size, submitted in a format permitted by Canvas.
  - 11 or 12-point type in a clear font, such as Arial, Calibri or Tahoma.
  - Each page must include the student number in the header and a page number in the footer.
- All text-based work is expected to be readable, clearly expressed, and correctly spelt with good grammar(a UK spelling/grammar checker and/or proofreader are advised).

## **Coursework Size Limits and Marking**

The purpose of an assessment size limit is to give all students across the university a clear indication of the maximum size of a piece of assessed work, the amount of work expected and how they should allocate time to one piece of assessed work in relation to others. Working to set limits is an academic requirement at university and a practical skill required within the creative industries.

### **Setting a Limit**

Our policy is that assessment briefs must include an assessment size or time limit as appropriate, and it will be made clear if any required elements of the assessment are within or outside this limit.

### **Work Outside of the Limits**

There is no prescribed penalty for exceeding the assessment limits. However, students should be aware that staff are allocated a certain amount of time to mark each assessment and are under no obligation to assess work that exceeds the limits set. Faculty will use their discretion, but work that is considerably over-length will be disregarded, and work that is substantially under-length is unlikely to address the brief fully. Therefore, in both cases, students are likely to lose marks. Moreover, if working to a strict limit is a critical element of the brief, markers will always deduct marks if the work is too long or too short.

## Oral and Practical Assessments

Oral and practical assessments shall be conducted by faculty from the subject area. Students may only bring authorised materials to oral or practical assessments. The possession or use of unauthorised materials may infringe on the university's [Academic Integrity Policy](#).

The recording by students of oral or practical assessments is not allowed, but such assessments will be recorded by faculty for Internal and External Moderation. Students may ask permission to view recordings if they are retrieving a failed assessment or to copy specific recordings from performance-based assessments as part of their showreel, and the Head of School will process any such requests. Video material for showreels will only be released once the module has been marked and passed.

All face-to-face/in-person assessments will be supervised by the faculty member. Any incidents or abnormalities during an assessment will be recorded and reported to the Course Leader.

Students must arrive in good time for practical and oral assessments and are advised to be there 15 minutes before the assessment commences. The assessor(s) will be able to allow late arrivals to undertake the assessment if the assessment schedule allows it. However, if a late student cannot be accommodated, and if the student arrives very late (30 minutes or more), they will be considered to have missed the assessment submission opportunity, and a zero mark will be recorded. In addition, students can present evidence to mitigate late arrival for consideration by the Mitigating Evidence Committee.

## Part Two: Academic Standards

Following the Higher Education and Research Act (2017) and the subsequent establishment of the Office for Students (OfS), there has been an increasing focus on the consistency of Higher Education academic standards across the university sector, and work on this has been facilitated through the Degree Standards Project running from 2016 to 2021 facilitated by Advance HE.<sup>1</sup>

Firstly, clarifying what we mean by 'academic standards' is essential. To do this, we will draw on the approach increasingly used in the literature on quality assurance and external moderation, as well as the structure of the [UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#), which separates expectations about academic standards from expectations about academic quality.

According to this accepted definition, academic standards are an 'output' measure demonstrated in what students produce in their practical assessments, performances, text-based work, demonstration of practical skills, etc. In other words, standards are not situated in quality processes, documentation or grading criteria we use but in our students' work.

Current practice within the sector is to mark student work against written criteria and then moderate markers' judgments by sampling their work. However, this approach has unintended consequences, including a tendency to level student achievement and arguably does not ensure equity for students but rather justification and accountability for institutions and regulators.<sup>2</sup>

### Measurement of Judgement?

There are two ways to conceptualise the job of assessing student work:

#### 1. Measurement:

- Standards are objective and measured against precise criteria against which performance can be measured.
- The assessor is objective.
- Assessors' values play no part in assessment.
- Student context (background) is irrelevant.
- Measurements are reliable measures of achievement.
- Assessors design assessment.

#### 2. Judgement:

- Standards are normative, consensual and measured against broad criteria.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/degree-standards-project>

<sup>2</sup> Bloxham, S., et al. (2015). "What's the point of moderation? A discussion of the purposes achieved through contemporary moderation practices." *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education* 41(4): 638-653.

- Performance is assessed with reference to these criteria.
- The assessor interprets the extent to which performance relates to the criteria.
- Value positions are embedded in the criteria as norms.
- Assessors may consider student and institutional contexts.
- Assessments are judgments of the extent to which achievements relate to expectations.
- Tasks are selected by students to suit their strengths and interests and may be co-designed by students and assessors.

In the creative arts, we favour judgment over measurements (which may be more appropriate in subjects like science and mathematics). Moreover, BIMM University's Assessment Rubric is also designed to align with the above principles.

### **Norm-referenced Assessment**

- Norm-referenced assessment implies a frame of reference against the performance of students in a cohort: it uses a statistical model to distribute grades in line with statistically 'normal' distribution: <https://towardsdatascience.com/do-my-data-follow-a-normal-distribution-fb411ae7d832>
- Although this method may work well where numbers are large (e.g., GCSEs and A-Levels) – small cohorts produce deviations that make grading to a curve inequitable.
- Normal distribution referenced assessment also allows regulatory bodies to adjust 'norms' to meet particular aims.

We do not use norm-referenced assessment on BIMM University Higher Education courses.

### **Criterion-referenced Assessment**

Criterion-referenced assessment implies a frame of reference fixed against a set of criteria used to judge the artefact/activity being assessed: the validity of this method relies on the precision with which criteria are used and consistently applied. Criterion-referenced assessment can, in theory, assess a broader range of outputs but is also more open to interpretation as it relies on a shared understanding of how to apply the criteria.

BIMM University uses criterion-referenced assessment based on a common university-wide Assessment Rubric.

## Validity and Reliability in Assessment

The validity and reliability of assessment methods are considered the two most important characteristics of a well-designed assessment procedure.

### Validity:

- Does the assessment deal with what we think we are assessing?
- Are we considering judgements of past or future performance rather than what is in front of us?

### Reliability:

- Do assessors agree on grading?
- Is the student's performance replicable or a one-off?

## Variability in Assessment Judgments

It is generally accepted that individual assessors may interpret tasks and criteria differently. It is also likely that grading will vary between subjects and disciplines, but this is considered to be acceptable if standards within subjects and disciplines are consistent.

Moreover, recent research indicates that university staff often learn to apply standards 'on the job' without formal training, make comparative rather than analytic judgments, ignore or cherry-pick grading criteria or combine the use of criteria with norm referencing/tacit knowledge.

Even highly experienced staff can produce very different grades for the same work.<sup>3</sup> As Bloxham et al. point out:

*Repeated studies over many years demonstrate considerable inconsistency in academics' judgements about student performance and variation in the meaning they accord to written standards.*<sup>4</sup>

The research evidence also shows that three key factors produce this variation in the application of standards:

1. **People** – the differences in individuals' experience, beliefs, expertise, and habits.
2. **Tools** – the information and processes used to guide and quality assure assessment.
3. **Tasks** – the nature of assessment methods in higher education.

There is also broad agreement that setting standards within marking teams is most effective when opportunities are provided to socially construct standards (through the process of pre-marking calibration as described by Sadler<sup>5</sup>) within subject disciplines. We should also seek

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<sup>3</sup> Bloxham, S., et al. (2011). "Mark my words: the role of assessment criteria in UK higher education grading practices." *Studies in Higher Education* 36(6): 655-670.

<sup>4</sup> Bloxham, S. Reimann, N and Rust, C. Calibration Synthesis Report. Advance HE 2018: <https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/system/files/downloads/Calibration%20synthesis%20report.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Royce Sadler, D. (2013). "The futility of attempting to codify academic achievement standards." *Higher Education* 67(3): 273-288.

to do this with our students by discussing how assessment works, what it is for and how we do it.

Within BIMM University, we have already begun introducing opportunities to calibrate across marking teams at the module level and the existing cross-campus moderation process. These changes have also been driven by feedback from our external examiners, who have noticed variability in grading between campus teams delivering the same module.

## **Unconscious Bias**

It is essential to recognise that everyone has unconscious bias. Therefore, it is critical to minimise the impact of unconscious bias in assessment and feedback processes by interrogating any potential areas in which it may have a bearing on marking practice.

## **The BIMM University Assessment Rubric**

A rubric is a tool that allows us to standardise the grading process, making it more efficient, saving time for faculty and providing students with effective feedback that promotes their learning. Rubrics feature appropriate criteria and describe those criteria across a range of performance levels.

The BIMM University Assessment Rubric recognises the need to adopt an assessment approach appropriate to the creative arts. Accordingly, the design of our rubric draws on the use of six specific Assessment Fields:

- ***Investigation;***
- ***Knowledge;***
- ***Development;***
- ***Communication;***
- ***Production;***
- ***Technical.***

These six Assessment Fields measure achievement based on the quality of evidence in student work.

Furthermore, we use these fields selectively against each specific assessment task, making them applicable to different assessments across our provision (most assessments will be marked using three to four fields). Marks will be awarded holistically so that each assessment is given a single mark using the categorical marking scheme and the rubric to make a grading judgment. Where there is more than one assessment on a module, marks are then combined by weighting to provide a module mark as outlined in part one.

Assessment teams will upload the rubric for each module assessment directly to Canvas. Module marking teams will use the Assessment Rubric to evaluate student work. By calibrating their marking, they will establish a shared understanding of the required academic standard in the work they mark. Course teams may also produce written guidance that articulates the kind of evidence they expect within each categorical grading band using the

Assessment Rubric template and share this with their students and the exemplars used in calibration.



The Universities Assessment Rubric provides staff and students with expectations against which all assessed work will be judged. The rubric is aligned against the UK Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)<sup>6</sup> and good practice in the creative arts and industries. Markers will grade using the appropriate (undergraduate or postgraduate) categorical marking scheme reproduced below and provide feedback through Canvas against the Assessment Rubric. This will ensure that marks are awarded transparently and consistently.

<sup>6</sup> [https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/the-frameworks-for-higher-education-qualifications-of-uk-degree-awarding-bodies-2024.pdf?sfvrsn=3562b281\\_11](https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/the-frameworks-for-higher-education-qualifications-of-uk-degree-awarding-bodies-2024.pdf?sfvrsn=3562b281_11)

**Level 4 Rubric:**

Grade	Pass						Marginal Fail	Fail
Assessment Fields:								
<b>Investigation/ contextualisation</b> Informed through the exploration and evaluation of relevant ideas and perspectives	Exceptional evidence	Outstanding evidence	Excellent evidence	Very good evidence	Good evidence	Satisfactory evidence	Insufficient evidence	Little or no evidence
<b>Knowledge/ideas</b> Through assimilation and comprehension of relevant information	Exceptional evidence	Outstanding evidence	Excellent evidence	Very good evidence	Good evidence	Satisfactory evidence	Insufficient evidence	Little or no evidence
<b>Development/Process</b> Realisation through reflective practice experimentation and evaluation	Exceptional evidence	Outstanding evidence	Excellent evidence	Very good evidence	Good evidence	Satisfactory evidence	Insufficient evidence	Little or no evidence
<b>Communication/ articulation</b> Of relevant ideas and their evaluation and interpretation	Exceptional evidence	Outstanding evidence	Excellent evidence	Very good evidence	Good evidence	Satisfactory evidence	Insufficient evidence	Little or no evidence
<b>Production/realisation</b> Selection of appropriate approaches to achieve desired outcomes	Exceptional evidence	Outstanding evidence	Excellent evidence	Very good evidence	Good evidence	Satisfactory evidence	Insufficient evidence	Little or no evidence
<b>Technical/technique</b> The quality of the technical aspects of the product.	Exceptional evidence	Outstanding evidence	Excellent evidence	Very good evidence	Good evidence	Satisfactory evidence	Insufficient evidence	Little or no evidence



**Level 5 Rubric:**

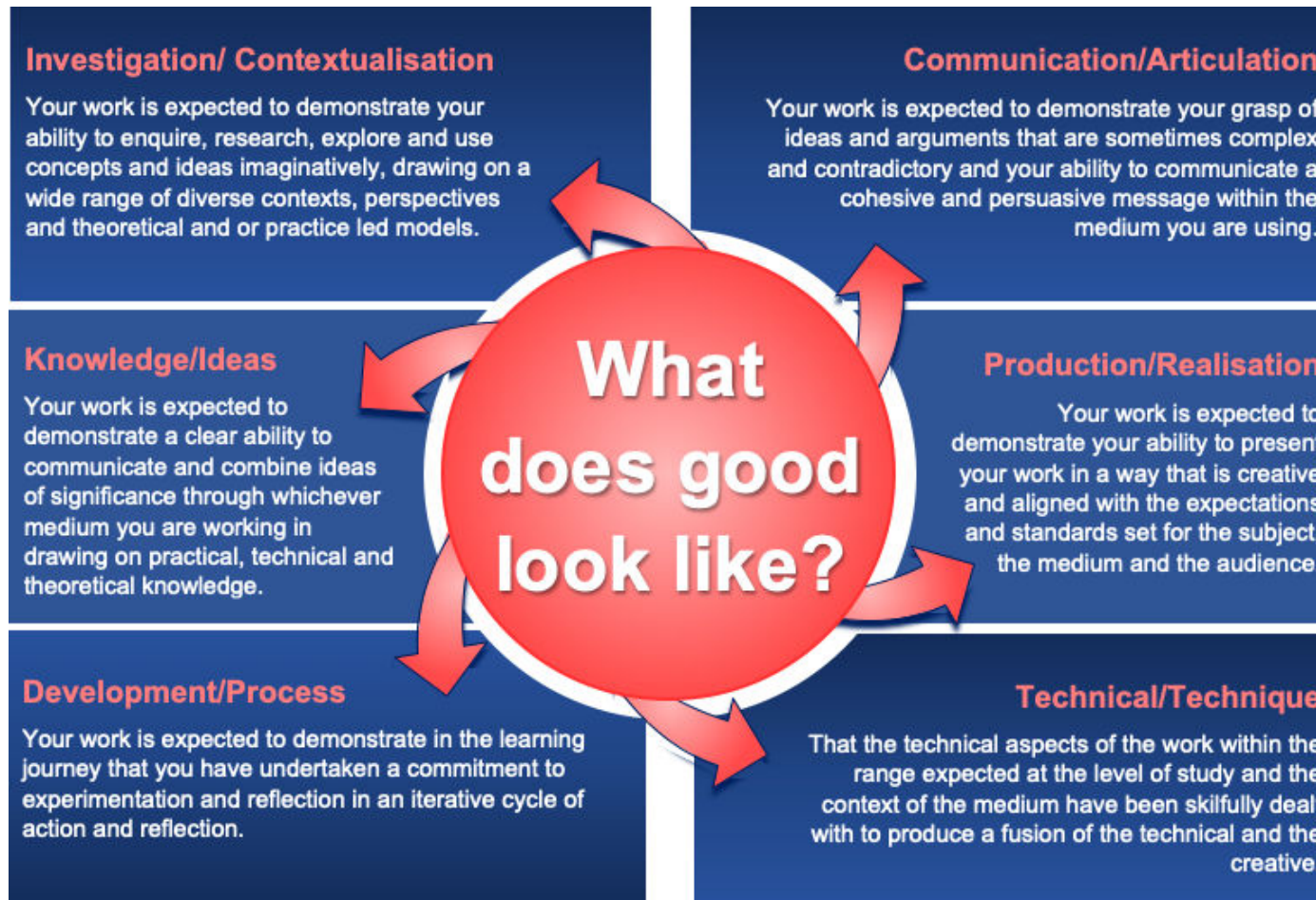
Grade Assessment Fields:	90, 95, 100	80, 85	72, 75	62, 65, 68	52, 55, 58	42, 45, 48	30, 35, 38	0, 5, 10, 20
<b>Investigation/ contextualisation</b> Informed through the critical exploration of relevant ideas, approaches and perspectives	Exceptional evidence	Outstanding evidence	Excellent evidence	Very good evidence	Good evidence	Satisfactory evidence	Insufficient evidence	Little or no evidence
<b>Knowledge/ideas</b> Through comprehension and analysis of relevant practical, technical and theoretical information	Exceptional evidence	Outstanding evidence	Excellent evidence	Very good evidence	Good evidence	Satisfactory evidence	Insufficient evidence	Little or no evidence
<b>Development/Process</b> Realisation through practice, experimentation, risk-taking, evaluation, reflection and problem-solving	Exceptional evidence	Outstanding evidence	Excellent evidence	Very good evidence	Good evidence	Satisfactory evidence	Insufficient evidence	Little or no evidence
<b>Communication/ articulation</b> Of ideas, arguments and intentions	Exceptional evidence	Outstanding evidence	Excellent evidence	Very good evidence	Good evidence	Satisfactory evidence	Insufficient evidence	Little or no evidence
<b>Production/realisation</b> Through the selection and application of effective methods to deliver high-quality outputs	Exceptional evidence	Outstanding evidence	Excellent evidence	Very good evidence	Good evidence	Satisfactory evidence	Insufficient evidence	Little or no evidence
<b>Technical/technique</b> The quality of the technical aspects of the product and their delivery	Exceptional evidence	Outstanding evidence	Excellent evidence	Very good evidence	Good evidence	Satisfactory evidence	Insufficient evidence	Little or no evidence

**Level 6 Rubric:**

Grade Assessment Fields:	90, 95, 100	80, 85	72, 75	62, 65, 68	52, 55, 58	42, 45, 48	30, 35, 38	0, 5, 10, 20
<b>Investigation/ contextualisation</b> Informed through the critical exploration and conceptual understanding of complex ideas and diverse perspectives	Exceptional evidence	Outstanding evidence	Excellent evidence	Very good evidence	Good evidence	Satisfactory evidence	Insufficient evidence	Little or no evidence
<b>Knowledge/ideas</b> Through the synthesis and critical analysis of relevant practical, technical and theoretical information	Exceptional evidence	Outstanding evidence	Excellent evidence	Very good evidence	Good evidence	Satisfactory evidence	Insufficient evidence	Little or no evidence
<b>Development/Process</b> Realisation through experimentation, risk-taking, reflection evaluation and problem-solving in complex and unpredictable contexts	Exceptional evidence	Outstanding evidence	Excellent evidence	Very good evidence	Good evidence	Satisfactory evidence	Insufficient evidence	Little or no evidence
<b>Communication/ articulation</b> Of complex ideas and arguments that is clear and persuasive to a range of audiences	Exceptional evidence	Outstanding evidence	Excellent evidence	Very good evidence	Good evidence	Satisfactory evidence	Insufficient evidence	Little or no evidence
<b>Production/realisation</b> That meets the expectations of relevant professional standards	Exceptional evidence	Outstanding evidence	Excellent evidence	Very good evidence	Good evidence	Satisfactory evidence	Insufficient evidence	Little or no evidence
<b>Technical/technique</b> The quality and utility of the technical features of the product and the Level of skills with which it is produced or delivered	Exceptional evidence	Outstanding evidence	Excellent evidence	Very good evidence	Good evidence	Satisfactory evidence	Insufficient evidence	Little or no evidence

**Level 7 Rubric:**

Grade Assessment Fields:	90, 95	80, 85	70, 75	60, 65	50, 55	40, 45	0,15,35
<b>Investigation/ contextualisation</b> Informed through comprehensive critical analysis and evaluation of complex and diverse concepts, theories and practices	Exceptional evidence	Outstanding evidence	Excellent evidence	Very good evidence	Good evidence	Insufficient evidence	Little or no evidence
<b>Knowledge/ideas</b> Through the articulation of creative vision and/or the critical evaluation of conceptual, practical, technical and theoretical information	Exceptional evidence	Outstanding evidence	Excellent evidence	Very good evidence	Good evidence	Insufficient evidence	Little or no evidence
<b>Development/Process</b> Realisation through experimentation, risk-taking, critical reflection, evaluation and problem-solving in complex emergent contexts	Exceptional evidence	Outstanding evidence	Excellent evidence	Very good evidence	Good evidence	Insufficient evidence	Little or no evidence
<b>Communication/ articulation</b> Of complex and contradictory arguments and theories that is in-depth, critical, insightful and appropriately pitched for the intended audience	Exceptional evidence	Outstanding evidence	Excellent evidence	Very good evidence	Good evidence	Insufficient evidence	Little or no evidence
<b>Production/realisation</b> That fully meets the expectations of relevant professional and academic standards	Exceptional evidence	Outstanding evidence	Excellent evidence	Very good evidence	Good evidence	Insufficient evidence	Little or no evidence
<b>Technical/technique</b> The quality and utility of the technical features of the product and the skills with which it is produced or delivered	Exceptional evidence	Outstanding evidence	Excellent evidence	Very good evidence	Good evidence	Insufficient evidence	Little or no evidence



### Categorical Marking Scheme (Undergraduate)

Mark Category	Equivalent Classification	Level 4 Pass/Fail	UG Assessment Rubrics
100 95 90  85 80  75 72	<b>First</b>	Pass (40%)	Exceptional Evidence
			Outstanding Evidence
			Excellent Evidence
68 65 62	<b>2:1</b>		Very Good Evidence
58 55 52	<b>2:2</b>		Good Evidence
48 45 42	<b>3rd</b>		Satisfactory Evidence
38 35	<b>High Fail</b>	Marginal Fail (35%)	Insufficient Evidence
30 20 10 5 1 0	<b>Fail</b>  <b>Non-submission</b>	Fail (1%)	Little or No Evidence

### Categorical Marking Scheme (Postgraduate)

Mark Category:	Equivalent Classification:	Level 7 Assessment Rubric:
95	<b>Distinction</b>	Exceptional Evidence
90		
85		
80		Outstanding Evidence
75		Excellent Evidence
70		
65	<b>Merit</b>	Very Good Evidence
60		
55	<b>Pass</b>	Good Evidence
50		
45	<b>Fail</b>	Insufficient/ Little or No Evidence
40		
35		
15		
1		
0	<b>Non-submission</b>	

## Part three: Calibration and Moderation

To assure ourselves that assessment criteria are applied consistently by markers, that students are being treated fairly through the assessment process, and that there is a shared understanding of the academic standards students are expected to achieve, we deploy three strategies:

- 1) **Calibration** – a process that ensures standards are understood by faculty and consistently applied. We use examples of previous work to align all markers on a module.
- 2) **Internal Moderation** – a process that checks that standards are being applied consistently at the module level, within or across campuses. We ask markers who did not mark the work initially to check the consistency of colleagues' marking by looking at assessed work samples.
- 3) **External Moderation** – this process is undertaken by External Examiners who work at other universities and are experts in the subject area your students are studying. They look at work from across all campuses and compare standards with those they are familiar with across the sector. External Examiners have the power to raise any concerns they have over marking in their annual reports.

The Head of School is responsible for assuring the consistency of marking through subject-based course-level calibration. Calibration is a peer review process, providing an opportunity before marking to mark, discuss, review and compare examples of previous student work to reach a shared understanding of the academic standard the work needs to meet. These social moderation processes can involve sharing and agreeing on examples of student work that meet the standard for each marking band.<sup>7</sup>

Sadler's model<sup>8</sup> is that an academic standard cannot be determined simply by a written description but requires examples (assessed work) combined with dialogue leading to a description of why the examples meet the relevant standard.

The process we have adopted for calibration is as follows:

- First, course Leaders will select a representative sample of assessments from the previous year, which will be anonymised.
- Participants will be provided with examples alongside the BIMM University Assessment Rubric/Categorical Marking Scheme and relevant assessment brief three weeks before the event.
- Participants will grade the work and provide feedback (anonymously), and these will be shared one week before the calibration event.
- In small groups of four to six, participants will share outcomes and discuss them to agree on a final grade.

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<sup>7</sup> Adapted from: Bloxham, S. Reimann, N and Rust, C. Calibration Synthesis Report. Advance HE 2018.

<sup>8</sup> D. Royce Sadler (2012) Assessment, evaluation and quality assurance: Implications for integrity in reporting academic achievement in higher education, *Education Inquiry*, 3:2, 201-216, DOI: 10.3402/edui.v3i2.22028

- Groups will give feedback to the larger group (minimum of twelve) and highlight the three most important characteristics in deciding a grade.
- Following the calibration event, Course Leaders will produce a calibration report alongside assessment rubric-based guidance for marking teams and students.

### **Calibration Process**

Participants assess  
examples independently.

Participants come  
together in small groups  
to discuss how they  
marked the work.

Participants meet as a  
large group to agree  
outcomes and a shared  
understanding of  
standards is achieved.

### **Advice for Effective Calibration**

- Timing; calibration needs to be completed early enough in the year before significant summative assessment takes place.
- Focus on calibrating against a specific standard defined by our Assessment Rubric and the relevant Assessment Fields.
- Avoid narrow/unique specialism debates, and try to find common ground.
- Focus on the Learning Outcomes to be demonstrated via the task, not the task itself.
- Don't get distracted by assessment design issues (although these should be noted and fed in module/course monitoring/modifications).
- Allow enough time for quality dialogue.
- Ensure participants are aware of the pre-meeting work.
- Distribute pre-meeting work in good time.
- Keep judgements as anonymous as possible to allow for free discussion, avoid defensive marking, and avoid problems of perceived differences in faculty experience or status.
- Encourage participation by starting with tricky assessment tasks for a subject.
- Focus on agreeing on what is important in making judgements, drawing out examples and sharing descriptions of why the pieces were marked at that level. Both are needed: exemplar and descriptor.
- Use technology to facilitate both pre-work and the calibration event.
- Staff may also use the examples from the calibration process as exemplars for students.



## Internal Moderation

Heads of School ensure internal moderation and double marking is conducted according to the policy below:

- Internal moderation of assessed work ensures that the marks awarded for an assessment task across a module are within reasonable limits of the relevant Assessment Fields and Categorical Marking Bands against which students' work is being assessed.
- We also conduct cross-campus moderation to check that standards are consistently applied across campuses for the same course.
- Moderation may be limited to sampling and, second, marking a representative number of pieces of assessed work across the marking range from a cohort of students. It may also involve second marking the whole cohort's work (double marking).
- Double marking is when a second allocation of marks is given to a piece of work by a second internal marker (who cannot see the marks and comments of the first Marker). Dissertations and final projects should always be double-marked.

The university's rules for Internal Moderation are as follows:

- Level 4 work does not contribute to the final award category and will be marked by one Marker.<sup>9</sup>
- All summatively assessed work at levels 5, 6 and 7, except assessments weighted at 30% or less of the module total, must be moderated or double-marked based on a sample across the full spread of grades to verify the overall marking standard. The process for completing moderation paperwork is detailed in the university's [Quality Handbook](#). Please remember that External Examiners will see moderation paperwork, and it may be shared with students in the case of a complaint or appeal.
- The table below details the moderation required at each level. There are ten separate marks 'bandings' (0-9, 10-19, 20-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60-69, 70-79, 80-89, 90-100).

Details of moderation requirements at each academic level are provided in the table below.

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<sup>9</sup> Whilst assessments at Level 4 are not subject to moderation, marking by new markers or faculty assessing on new modules or courses will be monitored as appropriate (this may include double marking) until competence in the application of appropriate standards has been demonstrated. Markers will only engage in solo marking after completing calibration.

## **BIMM University Moderation Requirements**

Level:	Internal Moderation Requirements:
4	None required.
5	10% of assessments (minimum of two from each banding; maximum of 50) across the full range of First Markers, subject to availability.
6	For all 15 credit modules, 10% of assessments (minimum of two from each banding; maximum of 50) across the full range of First Markers, subject to availability. For all 30 credit modules, all assessments will be double-marked.
7	For all 15/30 credit modules, 10% of assessments (minimum of two from each banding; maximum of 50) across the full range of First Markers, subject to availability. For all 60 or 90-credit modules, all assessments will be double-marked.

### **The Procedure for the Marking and Moderation of Assessments is as Follows:**

- The First Marker grades the student's work using the university Assessment Rubric and Categorical Marking Scheme, annotates the work as necessary, and provides feedback to the students on how their mark has been derived.
- The Moderator reviews a percentage of assessments, as outlined in the table above, to ensure that the Assessment Rubric and Categorical Marking Scheme have been applied consistently and at the correct pitch by the First Marker(s) and to evaluate the quality of feedback. For small batches of assessments, a sufficient number should be reviewed to assess the appropriateness of the First Marker(s) work.
- If the Moderator identifies no issues, they complete the moderation form by clearly identifying student and module data and stating that the process has been completed satisfactorily.
- Where a Moderator identifies a non-categorical provisional mark, it should be changed to the closest available categorical mark. Where such a provisional mark falls between two categorical marks, it should be changed to a higher mark.
- If the Moderator identifies a problem with the consistency of marks awarded by a First Marker, this is reported to the Course Leader, and all the First Marker's assessments are double marked, and the new marks are agreed upon, recorded on the moderation coversheet and amended in the original location.
- If the Moderator identifies a problem with the quality of feedback written by a First Marker, this is reported to the Course Leader, who works with that First Marker to revisit and improve their feedback. This process will be recorded on the moderation coversheet.

- If the Moderator finds a problem with the pitch (i.e., consistently over or under-marking), the Moderator will report this to the Course Leader, who will report it to the Deputy Chair of the Assessment Board, and a recalibration will be agreed upon in consultation with the External Examiner, but the markers do not need to double-mark all assessments. Instead, the recalibration is annotated on the moderation coversheet, and marks are amended.
- All practical assessments will be recorded, and the First Marker will attend and mark the performances of all students. Moderation of these marks may occur during the performance using a marking panel or later using the recordings.
- Once the internal moderation/double-marking process has been completed, External Examiners carry out External Moderation.
- The requirements detailed above constitute the minimum moderation requirements for the university. Other moderation may be carried out if, for whatever reason, a Head of School deems it appropriate to do so.

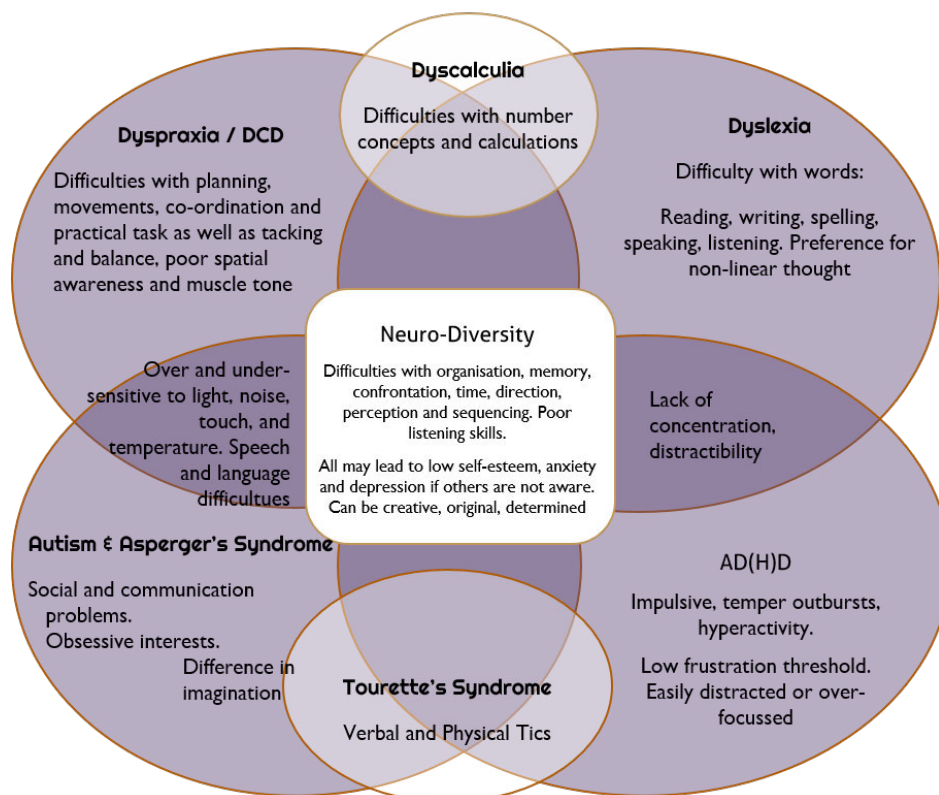
**The Procedure for Double-marking Assessments is as Follows:**

- The First Marker marks using the university Assessment Rubric and Categorical Marking Scheme, annotate assessments as necessary, clearly state how the mark has been arrived at and provide feedback.
- The Double Marker independently marks all the assessments.
- The two markers meet and agree to a single set of marks and feedback.
- The Course Leader will adjudicate if the markers cannot agree on marks.

## Part Four: Marking the Work of Students with Specific Learning Difficulties

Understanding the nature of students' disabilities and how these may impact how students respond to assessments informs an inclusive approach during the marking of assessments. Students with disabilities have a legal right to additional support and reasonable adjustments. This is achieved by providing an Individual Support Plan (ISP), prepared in consultation with your Course Leader and Student Life and shared with relevant teaching and administrative staff. The ISP will detail agreed adjustments to delivery and assessment and make recommendations to the teaching staff regarding strategies that may be deployed to support students with Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLDs).

A specific learning difficulty (SpLD) is a difference or difficulty with some particular aspects of learning. The most common SpLDs are Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, Attention Deficit Disorder/ Attention Deficit (Hyperactivity) Disorder, Dyscalculia and Dysgraphia. However, sometimes there is a diagnosis of Specific Learning Difficulties rather than Dyslexia or Dyspraxia because the individual experiences a unique combination of difficulties that cannot be readily categorised but may include features of one or more recognised SpLDs. Similarly, some people will have an assessment for more than one SpLD; it is very common for there to be an overlap, as indicated below:



SpLDs are lifelong neurological differences that can present barriers to new learning, recalling, or processing information and literacy acquisition.

SpLD traits can present themselves in many positive ways, such as:

- Above-average intelligence.
- Exceptional creativity.
- Unique problem-solving skills.
- A keen sense of empathy and justice.
- Good intuition.

However, someone living with an SpLD may also experience the following:

- Poor focus and attention.
- Poor handwriting.
- Poor spelling and sentence construction.
- Short-term and working memory difficulties.
- Difficulties with reading, absorbing information and comprehending text.
- Trouble synthesising information.
- Difficulties in organising thoughts for writing.
- Poor personal organisation and coordination skills.
- Left/right confusion.

The effects of SpLDs can be challenging to manage, but with the proper guidance, interventions, technologies, and strategies, they don't need to limit academic attainment or career aspirations.

- Give students time to prepare and provide clarity and structure:  
As appropriate, provide assessment questions, details and deadlines as far in advance as possible using specific instructions and concise/simple language.
- Always use Assessment Rubric criteria linked to the module Learning Outcomes.
- Notify students of changes to assessments or deadlines in plenty of time.
- Give examples of different assessment types and discuss the structure with students, how the material should be presented and the expectations for each assessment.
- Provide regular opportunities for formative feedback.
- Give direct feedback in typed, audio or video format, using specific examples of how a point could be improved, setting comments against assessment criteria.

Our university Assessment Rubric stipulates the knowledge and skills that must be demonstrated for grades to be awarded. The Assessment Rubric includes an assessment field focusing on the technical aspects of a work submitted for assessment. Where this field is applied to text-based work, markers should look for punctuation, spelling, and grammar errors and point these out to students in feedback. Students should also be encouraged to use spelling and grammar checkers when proofreading their work before submission. Markers may deduct marks where it is clear that students have not taken enough care over

the technical aspects of their written work, particularly when such errors interfere with the reader's ability to understand what is written.

However, when marking the work of students with SPLDs, markers should be aware that SpLD students' written assignments may lack the polished writing demonstrated by their peers due to difficulties with spelling, grammar, and sentence structure. Errors, in some cases, may persist despite extensive proofreading. Markers might reasonably, in normal circumstances, consider such work technically flawed or careless and deduct marks for poor presentation. However, in the case of SpLD students, such errors should be understood and considered when assessing written work.

Consider SpLD when marking:

- Read the work and look for ideas, understanding, and knowledge.
- Be clear about the marking criteria (rubric), especially knowledge and understanding.
- Make constructive and positive comments.
- Explain your comments in a straightforward and accessible way.
- If you comment on spelling, grammar, and punctuation, select a sample section rather than correcting the entire essay. Inform the student that this is your approach.
- If a dyslexic student is marked down for minor spelling, grammatical and punctuation errors, this may be considered discriminatory. Therefore, be prepared to discount such mistakes, provided the meaning remains clear.
- Be clear that comments on spelling, grammar, and punctuation foster skills development and do not penalise errors. However, if you have marked for content/ideas only (and not spelling/ grammar/punctuation) make this clear. Attempt to ignore structural flaws, such as organisation and sequencing of information, and focus on marking based on content.

Please contact your Campus Student Life team if you have any concerns or questions about supporting your students with SpLDs or believe one of your students might have an undiagnosed SpLD.

## Part Five: Feedback on Assessment

### Return of Marks & Feedback to Students

Course Leaders ensure that all Markers know the deadlines for returning provisional marks and student feedback. The Head of School will closely monitor this.

- The university aims to return provisional marks and feedback to students via Canvas no later than 21 days (plus any public holidays) from the submission deadline/final performance date. Please note that this period will be extended by a week over the winter break to reflect that the university is closed entirely at this time.
- If students submit work after published deadlines, they may not receive provisional marks and feedback until 21 days (plus any public holidays) after they submit (where extensions are granted) or 21 days (plus any public holidays) after the close of the late submission window.
- If, for any legitimate reason, the university cannot return provisional marks and feedback within 21 days (plus any public holidays). Students must be communicated with in a clear and timely manner to inform them of the reason for the delay and the proposed new return date. The Course Leader is responsible for this communication.
- It should be noted that provisional marks are for guidance only. The Internal and External Moderation process may result in revised marks, and the Module Assessment Board confirms final student marks.

### Ways of Providing Feedback

The quality of feedback is closely monitored by the Head of School, overseen by the Dean of Faculty/Director of Postgraduate Studies, who monitors academic quality across their subject area.

Feedback on learning and assessment is one of the most powerful tools available to educators.<sup>10</sup> There are two critical elements to the process of feeding back to students on their achievement of the assessments we set:

- Providing feedback.
- Receiving feedback.

However, first, we must consider the purpose of feedback and its value to our students. Feedback serves several overlapping purposes:

1. It clarifies the students' performance and achievement.
2. It is transformational in enabling students to reflect, improve their performance, and become more autonomous learners.
3. It builds student confidence and motivation.

Moreover, we aim to design assessment that is 'assessment for learning' rather than simply an 'assessment of learning', so points two and three are equally important as point one. Assessment for learning encourages our students to become self-directed learners who can

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<sup>10</sup> Hattie, J., & Timperley, H. (2007). The power of feedback. *Review of Educational Research*, 77, 81-112.

set their own goals and apply critical assessment to their performance. This is one of the key outcomes of Higher Education, as it promotes critical thinking and enables lifelong learning.

Engaging with feedback in a number of ways and using forms of feedback such as self-assessment, goal setting, and peer assessment also make our students assessment literate in that they begin to understand the process of assessment from the inside and thus have a better understanding of what we as assessors are looking for from them.

### **What is Effective Feedback?**

- It helps clarify what good performance is.
- Facilitates the development of self-assessment (reflection) in learning.
- Delivers high-quality information about their learning to students.
- Encourages teacher and peer dialogue around learning.
- Encourages positive motivational beliefs and self-esteem.
- Provides opportunities to close the gap between current and desired performance.<sup>11</sup>

### **To Provide Effective Feedback, You Should Pay Attention to the Following:**

#### **Clear, detailed and specific**

- It is important that students understand the feedback you give. To achieve this, feedback should be specific about where mistakes were made or where additional information can be found.

#### **Forward focussed**

- Feedback should be constructive, not just backwards-looking, focusing on aspects of the work relevant to later assessments. For example, focusing on generic issues such as skills, knowledge, understanding, or presentational factors helps feedback function as feed-forward, building skills for future work.

#### **Build motivation and self-esteem**

- Feedback should help students want to learn by being encouraging and supportive in tone, focusing on existing strengths where there are weaknesses, and providing guidance on how to improve.

#### **Realistic and focused on your student's performance**

- Make sure your students realise that the feedback is about their work rather than about them as people, with an appropriate level of challenge, asking them to do things they can do, not things they do not know how to do.

#### **Target feedback on the purpose of the assignment and the criteria for success**

- The functions of feedback vary according to the nature of the assessment and its criteria for success (the Assessment Fields). Therefore, be flexible and avoid a one-size-fits-all approach.

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<sup>11</sup> Nicol, D. J., & Macfarlane-Dick, D. (2006). Formative assessment and self-regulated learning: a model and seven principles of good feedback practice. *Studies in Higher Education*, 31,199-218.



**Feedback should encourage a dialogue between you and your students as a way to make sense of their learning**

- Feedback should not be seen simply as something faculty delivers to students, leaving individuals to try to understand what has been said about their work. Instead, dialogue between tutors and students, peer-to-peer feedback, and discussion around the meaning of feedback can help students learn more.

**It helps your students develop their ability to make informed judgments about their work**

- Feedback aims to enhance learning and improvement of future work and develop students' abilities to self-audit the quality of their work.

**Areas in Which We Can Provide Feedback Include:**

Alignment to brief,  
assessment fields and  
Learning Outcomes

Subject  
understanding,  
communication skills,  
academic skills

Style and approach,  
transferable skills,  
student effort and  
points to work on

Comments should not, however, be too general. For example, brief comments such as the generic advice to 'be more critical' are not helpful because such statements don't tell the students what this phrase means in the context of their work.

**What Feedback Should Cover:**

- A clear and logical structure so students can 'follow' the message.
- A summary of the main feedback points.
- Reference to the Assessment Rubric and Module Learning Outcomes.
- Comments on different elements of assignment structure.
- Information as to what has been done well and why.
- Information as to areas that need to be improved and why/how.
- Reasonably attainable targets for improvement – even for good work.
- Guidance as to how the improvements could be made.

## Constructive Feedback

Give detailed feedback but don't overdo it and focus on what is important

Focus equally on what is good about the work and what could be better

Focus equally on both the form and content of the work

## Forms of Feedback

- **Written feedback** is the most ubiquitous format and effectively provides feedback for several types of assessments, mainly text-based assignments where markers may also provide annotated comments. It can be quick to produce, easy to distribute, and sent quickly electronically due to its small file size. It may also be printed out and read in hard copy. However, it can be seen as overly formal, less substantial, and detailed, and it may not suit all markers or all students.
- **Audio feedback** is increasing in popularity. It may be faster to produce (with practice), though it may be slower to distribute due to larger file sizes, and it requires the ability to use audio recording technology. It also has advantages in that it can be perceived as more personal, and tone and emphasis provide improved student understanding. In addition, it is more easily understandable and provides much more detail than written feedback.
- **Video feedback** is much more demanding for markers in terms of technology and can be slow to record and distribute due to large file sizes. However, this format is highly engaging, can be extremely sophisticated (including multimedia input), provides all the advantages of audio feedback, is perceived as dynamic, and offers greater insight into performance for students.
- **Generic or group feedback** – with some assessments, it can be beneficial to provide feedback to a class along with or ahead of individual feedback, as it allows faculty to have a dialogue with students based on some of the generic themes emerging from their collective work.
- **Peer feedback** – peer assessment and feedback can effectively engage students with the process and understanding of how assessment and feedback support learning.

As you can see, each feedback delivery mode has advantages and drawbacks.

Faculty at BIMM University are currently using both written and audio feedback, and there have been experiments with video feedback. The availability of faster video streaming is commonplace, perhaps a good time for further work in this area. Whatever format you choose should be appropriate and accessible to you and your students.

**All Feedback Should be as Follows:**

- Phrased objectively and be as complete as possible concerning all sections of the assessment.
- Refer only to the requirements of the particular assessment task, i.e. the skills, knowledge, values and attitudes.
- Related to the Assessment Fields and Learning Outcomes, with comments against each.
- Match and justify the grade, balancing positive and negative comments in proportion to the mark awarded.
- Be directly actionable, so there is no uncertainty about what a student must do to address shortcomings.
- Be candid, but not cruel, about weaknesses.
- Do not attempt to be humorous about failings.
- Do not make comments of a personal nature.

**Informal Feedback**

There are lots of different ways of doing this. For example, through practical explorations around the idea of feedback with music and dance staff working towards their fellowship, we have captured the following range of informal feedback mechanisms occurring across BIMM University:

**Teacher Feedback, such as:**

- Individual feedback on activities and tasks in class.
- Recording classes, using these videos to show students their progress, showing their development and using this as a way of giving feedback.
- Giving verbal feedback to the whole class.
- Giving early feedback on a text-based assessment before students hand it in.
- Using partnering with students in learning activities and tasks as feedback.
- Focus groups for reflection or critical questioning.
- Tutorials at a point in the teaching as a chance to reflect on individual progress.
- Weekly tasks are given to students, which can be face-to-face or by email /Canvas.

**Student Self-assessment, such as:**

- Asking individuals questions during class as a means of assessing their understanding.
- Asking students to self-monitor their progress.
- Asking students – how do you think it went? Then, give feedback on how you, as the teacher, saw it. Students then get to reflect on their understanding of the standards you expect.

- Going through assessment criteria before tutorials. Asking students to assess themselves and to use this as a starting point for discussion in tutorials

**Peer Assessment, such as:**

- Role play (students can act as the teacher and give feedback).
- Listening to / watching students' performances in various contexts, then giving verbal or electronic feedback.
- Sharing's – an informal way of getting feedback from their peers and self-assessing where they are in relation to others.

**In Addition, Verbal Feedback Should:**

- Be clear and focused.
- Use positive language.
- Check for understanding.
- Give students time for summary and reflection.
- Do not be personal or overly critical.

At the start of the course, teaching teams should make students aware of how feedback will be communicated to them, focusing particularly on any of the above methods (or any other suitable ones) and how students can use these to help them progress.

Teaching teams should also take a proactive approach by including students in their work to develop how feedback is given and its role in students' learning journeys. This should help counter the common perception that feedback is only connected to assessed work and instead promote recognition of all the times teachers give feedback to and with them. This will hopefully encourage good feedback literacy among students and staff and help promote the feed-forward approach.

It may be worth drawing a distinction for students between the motivational language often used in classes for encouragement (e.g. "Keep it up, that's great") and actual feedback (e.g. "You've engaged well with the task set."). If students believe that positive motivational language correlates with a future grade, they may expect to obtain higher marks for formal assessments than they receive and might, therefore, feel misled by their tutors or unfairly assessed by them.

**In Summary**

- Feedback should be a conversation between students and teaching staff.
- It should help develop assessment literacy among your students to understand what is expected of them (what good looks like) and why and how they are being assessed.
- It should be a tool for learning and the personal development of your students as they develop the skills to self-assess their achievements.

## Assessment Literacy – How Students Use Feedback

Despite your best efforts, research indicates that there are good reasons why your students may not make the best use of the feedback you provide, including:

- Students do not find the feedback useful.
- They do not know how to act upon the feedback.
- The feedback is not sufficiently specific, detailed, or individualised.
- A perceived lack of agency to implement the feedback.
- The feedback style is too authoritative.
- Students find the feedback difficult to understand, i.e., they do not understand the complex academic or technical terminology.
- Students lose motivation to engage with feedback if they perceive their effort might not pay off.<sup>12</sup>

## Partnership – Developing Engagement with Feedback Toolkit (DEFT)

To ensure your students can develop assessment literacy, you should consider giving and receiving feedback as a shared enterprise. We should spend time with our students discussing assessment, feedback, and how to utilise our feedback. The 'Developing Engagement with Feedback Toolkit' (DEFT) was developed to support educators and students in working together to overcome critical barriers to student engagement with feedback. The resource in the toolkit is designed to be flexible. Educators can choose elements that seem most applicable to their students' discipline area or level of study. The resources illustrate activities for supporting students in their engagement with feedback. They should ideally be embedded into broader institutional or programme-level strategies for developing students' assessment literacy and self-regulation. We have produced our version of the DEFT Toolkit, including a student guide in PDF format and a series of bespoke workshop plans you can draw on and integrate into your teaching at the course or module level.

The following are examples of things faculty should consider doing when developing feedback literacy amongst their students:

- Discuss with the class or individual student how the assessment will be managed, what the assessment criteria are, what was left out of the assessment criteria, and why.
- Provide tutorials where written feedback can be discussed, and the next steps can be explored further.
- Provide examples of previously submitted work and describe the grade's rationale.
- Running assessment workshops where students mark work submitted in previous years.

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<sup>12</sup> Jonsson, A. (2013). Facilitating productive use of feedback in higher education. *Active Learning in Higher Education*, 14, 63-76., Pitt, E., & Norton, L. (in press). 'Now that's the feedback I want!' Students' reactions to feedback on graded work and what they do with it. Nash, R.A. and Winstone, N.E., 2017. Responsibility-sharing in the giving and receiving of assessment feedback. *Frontiers in psychology*, 8, p.1519.

- Provide marks only after students have responded to your feedback.
- Reporting formative feedback in class with break-out discussions.