

Guidance for centres and
external examiners during
Coronavirus (COVID-19)



Art and Design

Final arrangements for assessment and external
quality assurance of BTEC Level 3 / Level 4
Foundation Diploma in Art, Design & Media Practice



This guidance includes the following topics:

- **Revised External Examination process**
- **Questions and Answers**
- **Useful links and contact for further support**
- **Equalities and Objectivity**
- **Malpractice and Maladministration**

Overview

As we continue through this extraordinary period, we have all worked hard to issue results to all our learners, ensuring that they continue to progress onto the next stage of their lives. We thank you all for your continued support and hard work; we know this has been extremely unsettling, and it continues to be our overwhelming priority to support you throughout this unprecedented situation.

Ofqual has introduced a new regulatory framework, called the [VTQ Contingency Regulatory Framework \(VCRF\)](#). The VCRF categorises qualifications into two groups: category A and category B.

Category B qualifications will be qualifications that are most similar to GCSEs, AS and A levels where exams and other assessments cannot continue as normal.

As such, for category B qualifications, the VCRF will permit Awarding Organisations to issue results on the basis of alternative evidence including teachers' judgements of learners' performance when exams do not take place and/or when learners cannot complete all internal assessment. Further guidance on 'Qualification Teacher Assessed Grades' and a full list of qualification categories can be found [here](#).



For category A qualifications, adaptations to assessment will remain the main mitigation for these qualifications to support learners progress, which are in the main competency based or license linked qualifications.

We have updated our guide to reflect the new framework, and to provide more clarity and support if required for continuing with External Examination process on our position on learners certificating for August 2021.

More information on the VCRF can be found [here](#).

Summary of changes

We have added guidance on the quality assurance model for the new **RQF Foundation Diploma in Art, Design and Media Practice**, which replaces the 2010 QCF specification and is available for first teaching from September 2020.

New RQF Foundation Diploma in Art, Design and Media Practice from 2020

The new specification is now published and is ready for first teaching from **September 2020**. You can access the specification [here](#). A Delivery Guide, administration templates and a wide range of support materials are also freely available on the [specification page of the BTEC website](#).

Update 17 March 2021

Reduced assessment remains available for these qualifications and centres should continue to make every effort to assess and submit evidence for the External Examination process. Should students continue to be impacted by Covid-19 and are unable to complete assessment with reduction to assessment in place, you may submit [Q-TAGs](#) (Qualification-level Teacher Assessed Grades). In this circumstance, please contact your External Examiner and they will help you determine the most appropriate action. It is important that you contact your EE as soon as possible if you think you will need to submit Q-TAGs, as they have a submission deadline of 18th June 2021.

Reduction to assessment



As detailed within the Reduced Assessment Guide, in line with other BTEC qualifications of a similar size, we have reduced the assessment in this qualification by 150 GLH, allowing you and your learners to focus more on the teaching and learning of the content and development of skills for progression. All content should continue to be delivered, and you may choose how you adapt your programme to reduce the amount of time spent on assessment. This may be, for example, by removing or combining formative assessments, by reducing the time spent on the Final Major Project or a combination of these. Please note that a Final Major Project must be undertaken, but it may be reduced in time and scope.



Revised External Examination process

Remote support

For the new RQF Foundation Diploma in Art, Design and Media Practice, Pearson has incorporated an early support visit to programmes running for the first time. This will include all programmes in 2020-21, and any new programmes from 2021-22 onwards.

This support will still take place in 2020-21, but it will be in the form of an online meeting.

Support meetings are designed to ensure centres understand the new specification and will look at:

- Assessment plans (formative and summative)
- Assignment briefs
- Delivery methods

The purpose of the support meeting is to;

- Improve communication between Pearson and customers
- Clarify internal assessment processes
- Discuss how teaching & learning can support assessment
- Discuss approaches to delivery of BTEC creative qualifications
- Allow for constructive and informative feedback in a supportive setting

Once the External Examiner has received their contract, they will contact your centre and arrange a mutually convenient date for your support meeting. This should be during the first term if possible.



Remote sampling

External Examination sampling will take place remotely, once summative assessment has taken place toward the end of the programme.

Prior to sampling, you must send the External Examiner the assessment results for the whole cohort, identifying the assessment criteria achieved and the final grade awarded for each student. It will also be useful to identify the specialist pathway selected by each student. From this information, the External Examiner will select the sample.

You should use an appropriate file sharing platform (Dropbox, Google Drive, One Drive, Yousendit, etc.). To ensure the safety of External Examiners and postal workers, please do not post any physical work or memory sticks.

For shared drives, please ensure the External Examiner has the required permissions to access the evidence. All files and folders should be clearly labelled to ensure the External Examiner can navigate the evidence easily. File formats should be accessible to External Examiners, so please make sure evidence is saved in a readily available format (e.g. .PDF, .JPG, etc. – and **not** software-specific files, such as .PUB, .AI, .PSD, .FBX, etc.).

In order to maintain a clear digital archive of student work, and to facilitate external examination, it is important that students keep digital records of their work at all stages of the programme. This will help them to select and edit final submissions for summative assessment, and ensure access to the evidence for Assessors, Internal Verifiers and External Examiners.

Sample size

The number of students sampled is linked to the registrations on a programme.

Number of students	Minimum number of students sampled
1 – 8	All
9 – 100	9
More than 100	Additional 9 per 100

As there are no discrete units on the Foundation Diploma in Art, Design and Media Practice, the sample should reflect a full summative portfolio submitted by each student sampled, which covers all six assessment criteria.



This should be accompanied by copies of formative feedback, summative assessment decisions, standardisation and internal verification documents relating to the student sample.

Evidence for the Detailed Comments section of the External Examination report

Your External Examiner will arrange a mutually convenient date for an online meeting to discuss programme management and to confirm arrangements for sampling.

The Detailed Comments section of the External Examination report covers the following topics:

- Actions from previous report
- Management of academic standards
- Effectiveness of assessment instruments
- Maintenance and audit of records
- Registration and certification claims
- Student support and review
- Areas of good practice

Usually, this section would be completed following a discussion with the programme team and review of documentation at the visit. As this is not possible, the External Examiner will need to see some basic evidence relating to programme management, prior to the online meeting. This could include:

- Registration data
- Assessment plan
- Minutes of team meetings
- Student handbook
- Assignment briefs
- Formative feedback records
- Summative assessment records
- Internal verification / standardisation records
- Records of final exhibition (if applicable)
- Minutes of assessment boards (if applicable)

It will also be useful to let the External Examiner know of any changes to programme management since the last report. The External Examiner will have access to the previous report and will be able to update the relevant sections, noting any changes.

As it will not be possible to meet students, the Student Support section of the report will focus on discussion with programme staff and evidence from your centre's published support materials.



Working with you on adaptations

If your learners are impacted and you need to provide adapted assessments for your learners, you may liaise with your External Examiner for advice before certification. Your Senior Standards Verifier will also be available to support you should you need additional support.

For any adapted assessment, it is important that you notify your External Examiner, this is to ensure that Pearson retains sufficient oversight to ensure that we know what adaptations are being implemented.



Questions and Answers

The following questions attempt to anticipate potential issues that may be experienced due to further restrictions placed on centres or local areas.

My students haven't been able to complete their Final Major Projects. How can we make assessment decisions?

In the new Foundation Diploma in Art, Design and Media Practice, summative assessment evidence can come from any work produced by students throughout the programme. Therefore, provided that formative assignments or projects have given students the opportunity to meet the six assessment criteria, there should be sufficient evidence to be able to make valid assessment decisions.

Some of my students have had access to resources and support to complete assignments, but others haven't. How do I make sure assessment is fair?

We recognise that just as students from different centres may be affected differently, so may students from the same cohort. Individual health, physical and mental wellbeing, financial, social and family contexts will also have affected a student's ability to complete their programme.

A lack of access to specialist resources and support should be taken into consideration when assessing student work. In some cases, students may have only been able to produce designs or plans for final outcomes. However, it is anticipated that by the end of the programme, all students will have been able to complete final outcomes for a range of projects.

Useful links and contact for further support

Useful links

- [Ofqual](#)
- [Higher education support for centres teaching and learning online](#) - statement and links to Pearson guidance and resources to help during the pandemic. This is also relevant for the Foundation Diploma

Further support

If you have any questions, please contact the [Pearson Customer Portal](#).



Equalities and Objectivity

It is important that when making adapted assessment available for learners, centres consider the ability of some groups of learners in accessing adapted assessments. We should look to, as far as possible, to ensure that any adaptations do not advantage or disadvantage any learner and minimise any disadvantage to learners with a protected characteristic. For learners with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), or other vulnerable learners, whilst we have published guidance to support adapted assessment across sectors, we acknowledge that centres will be best placed to accommodate this when making adapted assessments available for their learners.

Ofqual has concluded that Pearson remain subject to a number of equalities obligations, both under the Equality Act and under the General Conditions (Condition [D2](#)) and these will continue to apply in addition to the extended extraordinary regulatory framework. Reasonable adjustments must be made available wherever possible, and we will be obligated to monitor any disadvantages for groups of learners and remove these where they are not justified.

In its published outcomes, Ofqual has recognised the importance of ensuring non-bias during this time and has provided additional guidance to Awarding Organisations and [Heads of Centres](#) to support this. If you need support or guidance please do contact our sector specialists, whose details are [here](#).



Malpractice and Maladministration

Assessments can be adapted so that students are able to progress in their learning and life despite the current disruptions to our normal way of teaching, learning and assessing. It is important that centres ensure standards are maintained when assessments are adapted. As with all of our internally assessed assessments, we expect our centres to deliver and assess them appropriately. Centres should also be aware of the heightened potential of student malpractice where assessments are adapted – through impersonation for online assessment or collusion between students for example.

We may need to investigate where there are concerns centres may not have delivered adapted assessments appropriately or not followed the centre assessed grade process guidance. Centres are reminded to report all instances of suspected malpractice to Pearson via candidatemalpractice@pearson.com (for learner malpractice) or via pqsmalpractice@pearson.com (teacher malpractice and maladministration).