

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



Illustration by Lucy Vigross

Art and Design

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



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' (Q-TAG) and a full list of qualification categories can be found [here](#).

BTEC Level 3 / Level 4 Foundation Diploma in Art and Design falls in category B2.

For B2 qualifications there will be three options available to centres with completing learners:

1. Continue as normal and access full claims
2. Continue with reduced unit assessment options where available, and access full claims
3. Where option (1) and (2) have been exhausted, but content has been taught and learners are 'assessment ready', centres will have the option to access a Q-TAG for learners as a last resort.

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.

The qualifications in this guidance fall into category B.

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



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 20 credits. This reduction can be applied to any units in Stage 2 of the programme, 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. Please note that Unit 10 must be undertaken. Please refer to the information in this guide relating to flexibility when assessing Unit 10.

This guidance includes the following topics:

- **Revised External Examination process**
- **Recording adaptations and delays to assessment**
- **Flexibility when assessing Unit 10 Final Major Project**
- **Questions and Answers**
- **Useful links and contact for further support**



Revised External Examination process

Remote sampling

External Examination sampling will take place remotely, and we plan to recommence the process in June 2020. Centres 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.

New minimum sample size

In order to accommodate remote sampling and reduce the administrative burden on centres, sampling will **only look at Unit 10**, and the minimum sample will be **3 x student Unit 10 portfolios**, covering the full range of grades awarded. The sample must include examples where a 'centre assessment grade' has been calculated. External Examiners retain the right to ask for more samples if further evidence is needed to verify the accuracy of assessment decisions.

Arranging the sample

Centres should discuss sampling arrangements with their External Examiner **before** sending any materials. Discussion should cover any areas where alternative evidence has been used for assessment, or where centre assessment grades have been applied. The sample should include:

- The assignment brief for Unit 10
- Internal verification of the assignment brief
- Student evidence*, including authenticity declaration
- Assessment decisions and feedback
- Standardisation and Internal verification of assessment decisions

*Please see the **Questions and Answers** sections for more guidance on assessment evidence.

Evidence for the Details Comments section of the External Examination report

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

- Assessment plan
- Minutes of team meetings



- Student Handbook
- 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 visit. The External Examiner will have access to the previous report and will be able to update the relevant sections, noting any changes. Where possible, the

Programme Leader and External Examiner may also discuss programme management and assessment by telephone or video call.

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

Recording adaptations and delays to assessment

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 External Examiner will also be available to support you should you need additional support.

For any adapted assessment or delays to 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 and/or can support where there are delays to assessment.

Any adapted assessments or delays to assessment will need to be recorded in your verification report. This data may be passed onto the DfE/Ofqual should they require it.

Flexibility when assessing Unit 10 Final Major Project

The following table looks at each assessment criterion in turn and discusses alternative approaches to assessment and evidence where required. Centres should discuss their assessment processes and the evidence used with their External Examiner.

Due to the constraints of remote working, assessment criteria P8 and M3 can be 'discounted'. A student achieving all the other criteria at the same grade may be awarded the overall grade. e.g.:



- A student achieving all Pass criteria apart from P8 may be awarded a Pass
- A student achieving all Pass and Merit criteria apart from P8 and M3 may be awarded a Merit
- A student achieving all Pass, Merit and Distinction criteria apart from P8 and M3 may be awarded a Distinction

In all cases, where evidence from the Final Major Project is unavailable, incomplete or compromised, centres may use alternative evidence sources from elsewhere in the programme.

These are discussed in more detail in the **Questions and Answers** section.



Pass Assessment Criteria	Comments	Suggested evidence
P1 propose a timebound Final Major Project	This should not be unduly affected, and can be assessed via the Statement of Intent from each student. For centres where the Final Major Project did not commence until after restrictions came in, Assessors are advised to take this into consideration when assessing P1.	Statement of Intent.
P2 research relevant historical, cultural and contemporary sources	Contextual research should not be unduly affected. Though it is recognised that primary research from visits, interviews and face-to-face contact may be compromised, this should not undermine achievement of P2.	Research notes, annotations, references, bibliography.
P3 apply appropriate references to the realisation of the Final Major Project	The ability to reference research sources should not be affected. It is recognised that not all students will have been able to 'realise' their intended outcomes. Therefore, 'realisations' can be defined as any practical work that students were able to produce. Students are encouraged to discuss this in their evaluation.	Research notes, annotations, references, bibliography.
P4 appraise the effectiveness of the Final Major Project development	While Final Major Project outcomes may be compromised, students are encouraged to reflect on their ideas development, working processes and evaluate their effectiveness.	Annotations, journal, blog, evaluation.
P5 identify and follow up issues, responses and dilemmas	The current situation should provide plenty of opportunities for students to discuss how they responded to challenges, in terms of adapting their working processes and creative decisions.	Annotations, journal, blog, evaluation.
P6 reflect on Exploratory and Pathway Stages in relation to the Final Major Project	This should not be unduly affected, and students should reflect on how their Final Major Project relates to their development during the early stages of the programme.	Annotations, journal, blog, evaluation.
P7 propose alternative resolutions	The current situation should provide plenty of opportunities for students to discuss how their original intentions have been affected, and any alternative approaches or solutions they developed.	Annotations, journal, blog, evaluation.
P8 exhibit a Final Major Project	It is recognised that a physical exhibition of project outcomes will not be possible this year. This will affect every student and therefore achievement of this assessment criterion can be discounted.	Digital presentation of final outcomes, where possible. Discussion of intended outcomes, if relevant.
P9 reflect on proposals and realisations	It is recognised that not all students will have been able to produce final outcomes, or that final outcomes may be compromised. Therefore, 'realisations' can be defined as any practical work that students were able to produce. Students are encouraged to discuss this in their evaluation.	Final outcomes, or designs/ plans for intended final outcomes. Annotations, journal, blog, evaluation, reflection on work completed in relation to Statement of Intent.



Merit Assessment Criteria	Comments	Suggested evidence
<p>M1 manage a personal synthesis of in-depth research to inform and invigorate considered contextual referencing in the Final Major Project</p>	<p>Contextual research should not be unduly affected. However, it is recognised that primary research from visits, interviews and face-to-face contact may be compromised. Assessment of M1 should be based on the quality, relevance and depth of personal research.</p>	<p>Research notes, annotations, references, bibliography.</p>
<p>M2 sustain levels of commitment and attention to detail within the Final Major Project</p>	<p>It is recognised that many students have had to deal with significant challenges, including personal health and wellbeing, financial and social pressures, and that this may have substantially affected their ability to maintain focus, commitment and attention to detail. Assessors are advised to consider this carefully when assessing M2 and students are encouraged to record and discuss any issues they have faced.</p>	<p>Annotations, journal, blog, evaluation. Evidence from previous projects if required.</p>
<p>M3 demonstrate the capacity to devise and construct a substantive body of work demonstrating consistent quality</p>	<p>It is recognised that many students will not be able to produce a substantive body of work, and that quality and consistency may be compromised. In this case, alternative evidence sources may be considered, including work from previous projects that demonstrates the student's ability to meet M3.</p>	<p>Portfolio of practical work, annotations, journal, blog, final outcomes, including outcomes from previous projects if required.</p>
<p>M4 demonstrate the ability to objectively reflect on the development of the Final Major Project, devising appropriate quality solutions</p>	<p>It is recognised that not all students will have been able to produce final outcomes, or that final outcomes may be compromised. Therefore, 'appropriate quality solutions' may be defined as plans or designs for intended outcomes, where necessary.</p>	<p>Final outcomes, or designs/ plans for intended final outcomes. Annotations, journal, blog, evaluation, reflection on work completed in relation to Statement of Intent.</p>
<p>M5 work collaboratively in seeking out and using the advice of others to extend and develop the potential of the Final Major Project</p>	<p>It is recognised that the ability for students to work collaboratively will have been compromised. Social distancing/isolation restrictions will have meant that many students will not have had access to practical advice and expertise from others during their Final Major Project. This will affect every student and therefore achievement of this assessment criterion can be discounted.</p>	<p>Portfolio of practical work, annotations, journal, blog, final outcomes, where possible.</p>



Distinction Assessment Criteria	Comments	Suggested evidence
D1 appraise and articulate critical decision making through the Final Major Project, showing the ability to engage with original thinking, concepts and approaches	The ability to demonstrate engagement with original thinking, concepts and approaches should not generally be undermined, though it is recognised that students' critical decision making may focus more on responses to the constraints of remote working. Access to specialist resources is also a factor, and Assessors should take this into consideration when assessing D1.	Research notes, annotations, journal, blog, references, bibliography, practical outcomes.
D2 respond proactively, independently and imaginatively to challenges and constraints in the realisation of the Final Major Project	The current situation should provide plenty of opportunities for students to discuss how they responded to challenges and constraints in terms of adapting their working processes and creative decisions. It is recognised that not all students will have been able to 'realise' their intended outcomes. Therefore, 'realisations' can be defined as any practical work that students were able to produce. Students are encouraged to discuss this in their evaluation.	Annotations, journal, blog, evaluation. Final outcomes, where possible, or designs/plans for intended final outcomes.
D3 demonstrate the ability to apply a professional rigour and standard to the Final Major Project	It is recognised that not all students will have been able to apply a professional rigour and standard to their Final Major Project. Students are encouraged to discuss this in their evaluation. Access to specialist resources is a major factor, and Assessors should take this into consideration when assessing D3. Alternative evidence sources may be considered, including work from previous projects that demonstrates the student's ability to meet the D3.	Portfolio of practical work, annotations, journal, blog, final outcomes, including outcomes from previous projects if required.
D4 understand and apply informed self-critical judgement when identifying success potential in the Final Major Project	It is recognised that not all students will have been able to produce final outcomes, or that final outcomes may be compromised. Therefore, evaluation and critical reflection may focus on this, and discuss intended outcomes and designs rather than a final outcome.	Final outcomes, or designs/ plans for intended final outcomes. Annotations, journal, blog, evaluation, reflection on work completed in relation to Statement of Intent.
D5 demonstrate the ability to proactively engage in critical debate that informs and extends the Final Major Project	Contextual research and awareness of contemporary critical debate should not be unduly affected. However, group critiques and direct engagement with peers, tutors and potential audience are likely to have been compromised and Assessors should take this into consideration when assessing D5. Alternative evidence sources may be considered, including observations of individual contribution to group critiques, discussions and debate during previous projects that demonstrate the student's ability to meet the D5.	Research notes, annotations, references, bibliography, journal, blog, evaluation, observation of group critiques, discussions and debates, including previous projects if required.



Questions and Answers

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

We are allowing some flexibility when assessing the Unit 10 Final Major Project, and recognise that individual students will have experienced different challenges during the Covid-19 pandemic. Just as students from different centres will have been 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 Final Major Project.

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. The table above provides guidance on each assessment criterion, and where necessary, you may use alternative evidence to support the awarding of a centre assessment grade.

My centre is now closed completely and I don't have access to any evidence or records

At the time of publication, the UK is in 'lockdown', with significant restrictions on travel and work. However, we hope that by the end of the Summer term, at least some of these restrictions will have been reviewed, so it may be possible that by the time we recommence External Examination, you will be able to access the systems and information you need. Deadlines for External Examination may also be extended, so that we can accommodate centres where access is difficult.

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
- [Pearson statement and guidance for UK BTEC and WBL centres](#)
- [Pearson statement and guidance for international centres](#)

Further support

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



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

The new specification is now published [here](#) and is ready for first teaching from **September 2020**. You can access the specification here, and a new Delivery Guide and support materials will be published soon.

Equalities and Objectivity

It is important that when forming any judgment on a Centre Assessment Grade for a learner a centre should consider any reasonable adjustment to mitigate any adverse impact of the Centre Assessment Grade process. We are committed to ensuring that all learners are treated fairly through these mitigating measures, and we acknowledge that centres will be best placed to accommodate this within their Centre Assessment Grade judgements.

As Ofqual has advised, "centres should use their professional experience to make a fair and objective judgement of the grade they believe a learner would have achieved had teaching and learning continued as normal and they were able to complete their assessments. For learners with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), or other vulnerable learners, we propose centres should make their judgement assuming learners had continued to receive any usual additional learning support and had any agreed reasonable adjustments in place."

Centres will be aware of any reasonable adjustments in place for learners and Centre Assessment Grades should be made on the basis that reasonable adjustments would have been in place should assessment have taken place. Protected characteristics should also be considered as part of this. Similarly, centres should also take into account any special consideration which may have impacted upon a learner's achievement in previous work/assessments if this is used as a basis for a Centre Assessment Grade.

In its published outcomes, Ofqual has recognised the importance of ensuring non-bias in Centre Assessment Grades 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](#).