

# ASSESSMENT

Your entitlements and obligations -  
the Compact digested



Advice for  
students

ASKe

# Making the Compact work for you in 3 easy ways...

## 1

### Engage in dialogue with tutors and peers

- Brookes recognises that effective assessment and feedback needs active dialogue between students and staff. Your tutors should provide plenty of opportunities to talk (inside and outside class). Whether you are unsure about assessment tasks, the standard of work expected or you want to explore your ideas, make sure you take those opportunities.
- Your tutors should provide (orally, visually or in writing) supportive, constructive and timely feedback on assessment. Take your feedback seriously and work with it; taken together it will tell you what you have not understood (about the topic and assessment), where there are gaps in your knowledge and skills, new ideas to think about, and how you can improve your work. If you don't understand your feedback, talk to your tutors and/or peers.
- Your tutors should understand the nature of assessment and its difficulties. Discuss how well you are doing in assessment with your tutors and your academic advisor.
- Make the most of the chance to work in groups to test and clarify your understanding of the subject and compare understandings of good quality work.

## 2

### Self assess your work and be prepared to assess the work of others

- All programmes in Brookes should include activities that prepare you to make better judgements about your own work and that of others. This is an important skill to learn that you will use all your life, in employment or other activities. The more practice you have at self and peer assessment the more you develop an understanding of what good quality work is like (tutors see a lot of students' work which helps to develop their expert judgement). Therefore, participate fully in these activities, for instance by utilising exemplars, undertaking marking activities, taking up drafting opportunities.
- Attempt to judge the quality of every piece of work that you do. To develop the skills of self assessment you should actively engage with assessment tasks – understand the task and assessment criteria, and spend sufficient time on the task to explore it fully and get the most out of it. Compare your self assessment with the judgement and feedback made by others (peers and tutors). Sometimes the assessor may be prepared to comment on how well you were able to self assess your work.

# 3

## See yourself as a member of your learning community

- Get to know the customs and meet the expectations of your learning community (students, tutors, researchers, administrators and others, e.g. employers). Each has its own characteristics. All learning communities should recognise the importance of assessment to learning and the need for it to be well planned within a programme. Yours will endeavour to make sure that assessment is unbiased and fair and that concentration of assessment deadlines is avoided as much as possible. You should:
  - engage with all the study activities (inside and outside class) of your modules and programme;
  - try to understand why and how each assessment relates to the learning activities and goals of your programme;
  - use the information you are given (written, oral, visual etc.) and ask questions about assessment design, tasks and how assessment judgements are made to get to the heart of what sort of learning is valued by your community;
  - meet assessment deadlines, ensure your work is authentic (it is what it says it is) and your own (created by you);
  - engage with your feedback, reflecting on it to help support your induction into the community, and check your understanding of it within the community. Your programme should offer obvious opportunities for you to use your feedback in subsequent work.
- If you think you have something to contribute in the way assessment at the programme or module level is structured, let it be heard. Participate through the evaluation process, through your student representative, or just talk to your tutors.

# The secret to assessment – there is much more to it than marks

Assessment is more complex than most people think. If you want to reap all the benefits of assessment you need to see it as more than doing a task and receiving a mark. Brookes has an Assessment Compact\* that encapsulates our values and approach to assessment. The Compact is built on many years of concentrated research and practice. A key value is that assessment is a joint responsibility of staff and students and the Compact sets out expectations for everyone. This leaflet is designed to help you understand your entitlements under the Assessment Compact and the part you need to play to ensure that you get the most from assessment.

Assessment is a key part of the learning process in Higher Education and, like many other aspects of that process, depends on your relations with tutors, peers and the task itself. For assessment to work best, those involved (tutors, students and administrators) must develop an understanding of how it works – how assessment tasks promote and shape learning and how assessment judgements are made – and must actively participate both individually and collectively in class as well as the wider discipline-based community. A good assessment depends on good two way communication (dialogue), for clarification, exchange of ideas and developing learning. In other words, you should try to become assessment ‘literate’ through dialogue, practice, and participation. When you understand the nature of assessment you will develop the confidence you need to really reach your learning potential.



ASKe (Assessment Standards Knowledge exchange) is a Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) set up in 2005 with a £4.5 million award from HEFCE in recognition of good practice based on pedagogic research into aspects of assessment. Its work continues in conjunction with the Pedagogy Research Centre based in the Faculty of Business at Oxford Brookes University.

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