

ASSESSMENT

Modes of Assessment:

Assessment is used to test your skills and knowledge in the different areas of the course and offers a formal opportunity to provide feedback on your progress. Most courses are assessed, and details of assessment are given in this Handbook.

There are two modes of assessment used in undergraduate study: Continuous Assessment and Formal Assessment. In Continuous Assessment, all your work in class is taken into consideration when forming a judgement; Formal Assessments take a variety of forms, but are concerned with testing you at a given time, that allows you to prepare in advance. Modes of formal assessment include: showings of work (such as a dance class); performances; and mock auditions. In addition, your Professional Development Portfolio (PDP) assignments are submitted for assessment.

Assessments differ for each course and are conceived as the best way to test abilities in each subject area. Overall, each assessment is designed to complement the learning aims and outcomes of each course. This in turn provides information on the ability and progress of each student in fulfilling the aims of the course.

All assessment marks remain provisional until confirmed by the Board of Examiners at the end of the year.

Continuous Assessment

This is undertaken by teachers at key points in the course in accordance with published criteria. Teachers measure your progress and achievement in each class, which is consolidated in a written report at the end of term. It is important to note that while continuous assessment gives credit for progress, effort, preparation, and participation, achievement gained in formal assessment constitutes 50% of the mark.

Remember that forms of language used in class may not be reflected on the assessment sheet. For example, if a tutor says to you “Very Good” or “Excellent” following an exercise, this may refer to your effort or your achievement relative to your norm, being used as a way to encourage you to do better. The continuous assessment report will indicate your standard of achievement across a number of areas and it is important that you do not confuse this with only your standard of effort, or comments designed to give you encouragement.

Continuous assessment reports should be shared with your parents/guardian.

Formal Assessment

During the course of the year you will have assessment classes or performances in all of your practical subjects. These are an opportunity to show the progress you have made and for staff to identify any areas of weakness in your work for which you may need additional help. Following each assessment, you are given feedback which should be kept by you for reference throughout your course. The School aims to give you feedback as soon as possible after the assessment; this will be verbal and will relate to your achievement of assessment criteria for the subject. You will also have an interview with the Artistic Director and a senior staff member. You will be expected to talk about your work and your progress in these interviews. You should produce minutes from the interviews, to inform your personal progression. Feedback should be used by you to set relevant learning targets for the next stage of the course. Assessment marks are subject to an internal moderation meeting which usually takes place at the end of each term.

Dates of all formal assessments are displayed on the assessment notice boards.

Terms Used in Assessments

- Formal Class Assessment
This refers to the presentation of work in a studio setting and will include both prepared and unseen work, class work and repertoire performance.
- Performance Assessment
This refers to the presentation to an audience of prepared repertoire and will usually take place in a theatrical setting.
- Viva Voce
This is used to test your depth of understanding and analysis in a given area and will take the form of an initial verbal presentation by you, followed by questions from, and discussion with, the panel.
- Progress Review
This is not part of the formal assessment procedure however it is valuable to you in providing feedback which can then be used to set targets. Progress Review is carried out regularly by your Tutor, across the course and in conjunction with your class teachers. Feedback is given verbally, and you should make and file your own notes.

Assessment processes

Assessment processes adhere to the University of Kent Credit Framework:

<https://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/credit-framework/index.html>

The following describes how the assessment process works at Central School of Ballet:

Assessments are either marked by a team of three tutors or marked independently by one tutor with a sample second-marked by another tutor. All assessment marking is moderated.

Each marking tutor fills in an assessment sheet that details a mark and comments (this can then form the basis for discussion in an interview or tutorial). Following the assessment, the marking team meet with the year tutor and the class teacher. They discuss each student and provide feedback which is recorded by the year tutor. The process of discussion leads to a decision about the awarding and allocating of marks.

Marks for all modules and module components are given as a grade. Assessors reach a decision about a grade by consulting the criteria and band descriptors in the Course Handbooks, and by using one of the 23 grades according to the University of Kent marking scale. Students should always refer to the criteria and band descriptors for a greater understanding of the standard of work following assessment.

The school aims to give feedback on assessments as soon as possible. Students meet with their year tutor and another member of staff to be given the feedback from the different assessed disciplines. It is important that this is done verbally as there are opportunities for the students to ask questions and participate in discussion. The student records this feedback and they are given an indication of the bands into which their marks fall.

In the feedback process, students are expected to talk about their progress, achievement, self-assessment and the targets they have set for the coming period. There is opportunity for the students to gain further clarity if required through questions and discussion.

For formal assessment feedback, students should be aware that tutors place most emphasis on the actual feedback comments. Tutors will use comments such as, 'you are working within the very good/ good band and you are in the top, middle or just within this band'. This highlights the level of work without referring directly to the numerical mark.

It is important that students know how and what they need to improve. Feedback should empower the student to move forward in a positive way. The aim of the feedback is to help students to set targets and take ownership of their work. Rather than focussing on giving a mark, the feedback is used to help to explain the level the student is achieving within the assessment band descriptors. Tutors and students need to have a copy of the band descriptors at the meeting and these are always referred to.

Continuous assessment marks take account of attendance and progress over a period of time in addition to achievement. Continuous Assessment Reports are given to students at the end of each term. Reports indicate the level at which the student is working according to the relevant band descriptor. Tutors give detailed written feedback and students are asked to raise any concerns or issues with their tutors so that they can be discussed.

The External Examiner has access to all the work that contributes to the degree award. At times over the year External Examiner visits the school to look at samples of practical and performance work and assessment marks. They have the right to recommend that marks be adjusted if they believe they are too high or low (this recommendation is noted at the Board of Examiners meeting at the end of the academic year).

Students have the right to appeal against decisions of the Board of Examiners but may not appeal against academic judgement. If you have a query about your assessment comments or your feedback, it is important that you speak to your tutors. You can arrange a tutorial where the issue can be explained and discussed fully.

Note:

We are not imposing a 'no mark rule'. In the interests of good practice, we aim to place the emphasis in the verbal feedback session and the written report, on points of strength and areas for improvement. Marks for all elements of assessment contribute to the Module marks which are confirmed with students after the meeting of the Board of Examiners.

Protocol for Submission of Written Work

To facilitate tracking of coursework and concessions made to students as a result of mitigating circumstances, students need to submit their written assignments in the following way.

- 1 Assignment guidelines will be distributed and explained by Tutors at the start of term.
- 2 Written assignments need to be uploaded to Turnitin prior to submitting for marking via Moodle. Training will be given to students prior to the first submission date.

Note: Students are strongly recommended to allow good time to submit their work electronically, as system glitches will not be accepted as a valid reason for late submission. The Learning Development Manager can assist with queries regarding uploads.

- 3 The Learning Development Manager will collate assignments for marking, noting any missing work.
- 4 Essays are then marked, moderated and returned to the students via Moodle.
- 5 Work which is not submitted on time, where no mitigation has been agreed or is relevant, will receive a mark of zero. Where an assignment needs to be completed in order to ensure that all learning outcomes have been achieved, and there are extenuating circumstances, a new deadline can be given.

Note:

Failure to submit assignments on time, where no extenuating circumstances exist, may result in the failure of the whole module. In accordance with the University of Kent regulations, students are permitted to resit the module, but the module mark will be capped at 40%

Applications for Extensions

A student may sometimes not be able to perform a project or hand in their work on the designated date for a legitimate reason.

If you have a legitimate reason for not being able to participate in an assessment or to submit work on time, then you may request an assessment extension, which will grant you a fair amount of extra time to complete the work or prepare for assessment.

All requests for **extensions for practical work** should be made through your tutor or the Artistic Director. The student is responsible for completing an Assessment Deferral form (available from your tutor or from the school office) and submitting it to the Senior School Manager. You will be notified of the date for the deferral assessment.

All requests for **extensions for written work** should be made through the Head of Studies or Learning Development Manager. If agreed, the student will be given an Extension Request form to complete. A new date for submission will be discussed, agreed and noted on the form. The signed form needs to be retained by the Learning Development Manager.

Please note:

- Extensions must be applied for **at least 24 hours** before the deadline. Only in very exceptional circumstances will extensions be allowed once the deadline has passed.
- Extensions work differently for different types of assessment
 - **Group Performance or Group Class Assessment**
If you are unable to present work at a group performance or class assessment, either a new date for the performance or class will be set, or a new project will be set. If either of these is impractical, the matter will be referred to the Examination Board.
 - **Solo Performance, Class Showing, Test or Examination**
If you are unable to present work at a solo performance or showing or a test/examination, a new time will be agreed with you, if practical.

- **Verbal Presentation**
A new date for the presentation will be agreed with the class tutor.
- **Written or Project work**
A new hand in date will be set equivalent to the amount of time you were indisposed.

Reasons for requesting an extension that are normally considered legitimate:

- Illness or injury
- Family or personal problem
- Diagnosed Specific Learning Difference / English not the first language (written work only)

Reasons for requesting an extension that are NOT normally considered legitimate:

- Computer or printer problems
- Poor personal time management
- Moving house
- Holiday
- Books not available in the library
- Left the work at home/on the bus/stolen etc.

An extension will only be offered for an equivalent amount of time to that which you were indisposed. For example, if you were ill for three days, you can ask for a three day extension.

Note that:

- Illness must be supported by certification as appropriate (self-certification – five days and under, GP certification – above five days).

Failure to submit work or attend an assessment

For Central's Higher Education Courses, attendance has an impact on assessment. Students must attend a minimum of 80% of all classes to be eligible for assessment. This applies to all assessed courses. Details of the [attendance policy](#) (see p13) and can also be found in the Student Handbook.

If a student does not to complete an assessment and does not have good reason for missing the assessment, under the Kent Credit Framework, they would normally record a fail or a mark of zero for that assessment. The final module mark will be calculated in the normal manner.

Students will have opportunities to retrieve failed modules. Modules passed through retrieval will be capped at the pass mark (40). Retrievals are confirmed at the exam board at the end of each academic year.

Where there are known mitigating circumstances in advance of an assessment, then the appropriate conventions will be applied in line with Annex 9 of Kent's Credit Framework.

<https://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/credit-framework/documents/cf2020-annex9-mitigation.pdf>

Board of Examiners and External Examiners

All assessment marks are provisional until finally approved by the Board of Examiners. The Exam Board usually takes place in July at Central with representatives from the University of Kent and the External Examiners. Leading up to this meeting all marks are subject to a range of moderation processes.

The Central staff who sit on the Board of Examiners are approved by the University of Kent, currently: Dr Jamieson Dryburgh, Director of Higher Education and Natasha King, Head of Studies.

The External Examiners are appointed by the University of Kent, currently: Carla Trim-Vamben and Kit Holder.

Important:
**Under no circumstances should students contact the
External Examiners directly.**

The External Examiner is expected to make an informed, independent assessment of the course. They ensure that all students are treated fairly and that our standards are in line with other degree courses in the country. The External Examiner has access to all assessed work. They are invited to see performances and are asked for advice concerning learning, teaching and assessment on the course. They attend the annual Exam Board and write an annual report for the University of Kent. Occasionally the External Examiner meets a group of students to discuss their work. The External Examiners' reports are considered at relevant staff meetings and at the Student Voice Forum, and are made available on the staff and student notice boards.

MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES

See the University of Kent website for details regarding the management of mitigating (concessionary) circumstances.

<https://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/credit-framework/documents/cf2020-annex9-mitigation.pdf>

Please note:

On occasion it may be necessary for a student to repeat modules in attendance (for example if half or more of the credit required to progress to the next stage of study has not been obtained).

Where a repeat of a year is required due to injury or illness and extenuating circumstances apply, any repeat year is recommended by the Mitigation Committee, and must be approved by Board of Examiners.

SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS

At Central we are committed to supporting all students to reach their full potential in all aspects of the course. In addition, we provide specific support to students with Specific Learning Differences such as Dyslexia, a specific learning difference affecting reading, spelling, writing, memory and concentration and sometimes maths, music, foreign languages and self-organisation. In most cases a one-to-one study skills tutor is appointed to support the individual student. This is funded through Student Finance, Disabled Student Allowance (DSA) which also provides students with learning aids such as laptops and relevant software. Students are fully supported in the process of applying for this funding. For further information, please see the Learning Development Manager.

With regards students for whom English is not their first language, dedicated staff for English as a Foreign Language provide lessons to support the development of writing, reading, listening and speaking skills, where appropriate.

PROGRESS AND PROGRESSION

The Student Progress Review Process

Student progress is monitored through daily observation by the course tutors and Heads of Year, the termly Progress Review and the Assessment process. If there is concern about a student's progress this will be raised with the Senior Management Team (SMT) and a course of action determined. All student progress is discussed at least termly by the teaching team, headed up by the Artistic Director and is further considered by the Academic Board.

If a student's progress is a cause for concern a meeting will be arranged between the student and members of the Senior Management Team using the [Support Through Studies policy](#) as appropriate.

Entry to the BA (Hons) in Professional Dance and Performance (top up degree)

It is important to note that the Foundation Degree and the BA (Hons) Degree are considered as two separate courses.

Please be advised that completion of Central School of Ballet's Foundation Degree does not guarantee progression from the Foundation Degree to the BA (Hons) top up degree.

The entry requirements for admission to the BA (Hons) top up degree course are as follows:

a. completion of an application form, and successful completion of Central School of Ballet's Foundation Degree (240 credits)

OR

b. successful completion of 240 credits on a directly comparable course (or equivalent), plus a required entrance task (a piece of reflective writing and a research task) and an audition. This route also applies to applicants from another member school of the Conservatoire.