TMSCLIMC_C
MSc Climate Change Management

Course Handbook 2009-2010

Department of Geography, Environment and Development Studies
Birkbeck College
University of London
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I. **Introduction**

Welcome to the Masters programme in Climate Change Management in the Department of Geography, Environment and Development Studies (GEDS) at Birkbeck College, University of London. We hope that you will enjoy your time at Birkbeck and find it stimulating and exciting. The first few weeks of study can be challenging, however, as you will have to familiarise yourself with many new things. This handbook is designed to help with this by providing key information about both the programme and the College in a single document.

We strongly advise you to carefully read all chapters of the Handbook so that you are aware of College procedures and policies. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Programme Director Dr Becky Briant (b.briant@bbk.ac.uk) or the Assistant School Manager with responsibility for GEDS Ms Harriet Smith (hl.smith@bbk.ac.uk).

**Term Dates 2009/10**

**Autumn Term**
Christmas Closure: college closing at 5:00pm on 23 December 2009 and re-opening on 4 January 2010.

**Spring Term**
Easter Closure: college closing at 6:00pm on 31 March 2010 and re-opening on 7 April 2010.

**Summer Term**
May Day Bank Holiday: closed all day on 3 May 2010.
Spring Bank Holiday: closed all day on 31 May 2010.
August Bank Holiday: closing at 8:00pm on 27 August 2010 and re-opening on 31 August 2010.

Both the Autumn and Spring terms are teaching terms. The Summer term consists of a period set aside for revision classes, followed by examinations in May and June.

The GEDS office remains open during vacations (10 am – 6 pm), unless the whole College is closed.

Students should be aware that academic staff are often away from Birkbeck outside termtime.
# Key GEDS contacts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Tel.</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Room</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Head School</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Andrew Jones</td>
<td>6471</td>
<td><a href="mailto:a.jones@bbk.ac.uk">a.jones@bbk.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>710</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Programme Director</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Becky Briant</td>
<td>6455</td>
<td><a href="mailto:b.briant@bbk.ac.uk">b.briant@bbk.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>713</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOTE – I work part-time, and will usually be able to respond to queries on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays only</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assistant School Manager with responsibility for GEDS</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Harriet Smith</td>
<td>6475</td>
<td><a href="mailto:hl.smith@bbk.ac.uk">hl.smith@bbk.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>715</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Administrative Assistant</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Eva Peters</td>
<td>6473</td>
<td><a href="mailto:e.peters@bbk.ac.uk">e.peters@bbk.ac.uk</a> or <a href="mailto:secret@bbk.ac.uk">secret@bbk.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>715</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All Birkbeck numbers begin 020 7631 XXXX unless otherwise indicated.
II. **A-Z of Frequently Asked Questions**

**Note:** many of your questions can also be answered by logging on to My Birkbeck at: [http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/](http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/) or visiting the My Birkbeck help centre on the ground floor of the main building.

**Accommodation**
The University of London Accommodation Office provides details of available accommodation.

Their contact details are:

Tel: 020 7862 8880  
Email: housing@lon.ac.uk  
Website: [http://housing.lon.ac.uk](http://housing.lon.ac.uk)

**Computing facilities**
The College has a number of student computing rooms, of which four are in the main building: 402; 536; 458; 321.

For help and information, visit the IT Services (ITS) website at [http://www.bbk.ac.uk/its](http://www.bbk.ac.uk/its) or go to ITS Reception (Room 151, Malet Street Main Building, telephone: 020 7631 6543).

Opening hours are:
Term Time: 10am-8pm Monday-Friday.  
Outside Term: 10am-6pm Monday-Friday.

If required Helpdesk staff will liaise with appropriate ITS technical support staff to answer user queries.

For details about IT Services provide by Birkbeck please see the guide which is sent to all new students at their home address once they have enrolled and also available online from [http://www.bbk.ac.uk/its](http://www.bbk.ac.uk/its) and from ITS Reception.

**Purchasing software:**
- Some software covered under a Birkbeck site licence is free for student home use, although you will need to pay for an installation CD (£5). This includes the statistical packages SPSS and S-PLUS. Further details of this software and other free downloads can be found at [http://www.bbk.ac.uk/its/help/software/downloads](http://www.bbk.ac.uk/its/help/software/downloads)
• Students wishing to purchase Adobe products (including Macromedia products) should use the Adobe UK Education Store.
• Microsoft software can be purchased directly through Viglen, more details here: http://www.bbk.ac.uk/its/help/software/purchasing/student_purchase/viglen. Alternatively, Microsoft have a number of deals specifically for University Students.
• Students wishing to purchase products from Adept Scientific (including Endnote, Maple, MindGenius and MathCAD) should read the Endnote section of the library website. Follow the instructions for purchasing Endnote and you will be taken to the Education section of the Adept Scientific site where you can buy Endnote and the other packages.
• Alternatively, look around for special education deals. These two web sites are a good place to start:
  o The Education Store (http://www.education-store.com/education/GB/portal/index.html)
  o Pugh Computers (http://students.pugh.co.uk/)

Disabilities
The College Disability Statement and various useful contact details are given on page http://www.bbk.ac.uk/disability/. The Disability Office can be found at:
  Room G018
  Birkbeck, University of London
  Malet Street
  London WC1E 7HX
  Tel: 020 7631 6336
  Email: disability@bbk.ac.uk.
  Minicom: 020 7631 6630

Staff
• Disability co-ordinator: Mark Pimm, who is your central point of contact at Birkbeck, manages the disability service at Birkbeck.
• Disability administrative assistant: Steve Short makes the appointments for the Disability Office staff and provides the administrative support for the service.
• Part-time disability mentor: Caroline Grattan provides academically focused support for students with mental health needs and chronic medical conditions.

Enrolment
Once you have your student userid it is possible to enrol online at http://intra.bbk.ac.uk/index.shtml. Alternatively, please contact the
Registry on 020 7631 6390 for any queries regarding your enrolment.

Examinations

Please read chapters IV and V of this handbook before asking any questions about examinations. General queries can be directed to Harriet Smith or, if your query is about exam registration, timetabling or the announcement of results, the Examinations Office on 020 7631 6598.

Fees

For any queries about rates or payments of fees please contact the Fees Office on 020 7631 6295.

Health and Safety

The College Safety Officer is Mr Tom McCartney, who can be contacted on 020 7631 6218 or t.mccartney@bbk.ac.uk

In the event of an emergency, phone 555 (internal telephone number). This can be dialled from most Birkbeck buildings to REPORT any emergency and to REQUEST help. A 555 call is routed to a special telephone staffed at all times by a Duty Attendant who will summon the required assistance. 555 callers MUST identify themselves and the specific assistance required, and also inform the Duty Attendant of the precise location of the emergency.

In the event of the fire alarm being sounded, everyone must leave the building without delay by the nearest available exit and must not re-enter the building until the alarm has been silenced and permission has been granted by the Senior Fire Officer or Duty Attendant.

Library

Although lectures and seminars are an essential element of the course, success in learning depends largely on the reading and research that is undertaken individually by students. Most items on module reading lists can be found in the Birkbeck Library and it is important that you register and familiarise yourself with the Library
as soon as you can. At times, you will also find it useful to use other libraries in the course of your research.

Birkbeck Library is on the first floor of the main building in Malet Street. The opening times of the library are designed to meet the needs of part-time students in full-time work. During term-time the Library is open:

- Monday - Thursday 10.00 am – 10.30pm
- Friday 11.00 am – 10.30 pm
- Saturday - Sunday 10.00 am – 8.00 pm

You can borrow up to 10 items and they can be renewed as long as no-one else requests them. Most books can be borrowed for 3 weeks. Some books, videos and DVDs can be borrowed for 1 week.

Birkbeck Electronic Library
You can access many Library resources from your PC. You can access a whole host of electronic journals and databases from any PC in College. The majority of resources can also be accessed from home or work with your IT Services (ITS) username and password.

The Library website is at http://www.bbk.ac.uk/lib. As well as giving comprehensive information about the Library, its services and collections, you can also:
- Search the Library catalogue, renew your books and place reservations on items out on loan.
- Read articles in over 12,000 electronic journal titles and newspapers.
- Search databases to help you find out what has been written about the subject you are researching, including Business Source Premier, Science Citation Index and Social Science Citation Index.
- Access past exam papers.
- Work through LIFE – an online tutorial to help you make the most of the Library.

Other libraries
Birkbeck students can also use a range of other libraries. Students have reference access to most University of London college libraries. In addition, the UK Libraries Plus Scheme allows students reference access to over 135 other higher education libraries and part-time students may also borrow from up to three member libraries. See the Library web site for more information.

Further information and help
- Loan and renewal queries: 020 7631 6239
- Help desk: 020 7631 6063
• Subject Librarian, Helen Matthews: 020 7631 6290 or h.matthews@bbk.ac.uk

**Students’ Union**
For personal advice, counselling, and study skills contact the Birkbeck College Students’ Union (BCSU) office on 020 7631 6335, or by email at info@bcsu.bbk.ac.uk More information can be found on the Students’ Union website: [www.bbk.ac.uk/su](http://www.bbk.ac.uk/su).
III. Programme details

Aims

The MSc in Climate Change Management aims to meet the needs of both climate-change practitioners and those hoping to move into this fast-developing sector. The programme will provide students with a comprehensive advanced level grounding in many areas of climate change and an opportunity to reflect on practice at both individual and corporate levels.

Learning outcomes

On successful completion of this programme a student will be expected to be able to:

Subject Specific:
- Critically evaluate scientific scenarios for future climates and landscape impacts.
- Assess the effectiveness of different environmental policy approaches.
- Determine suitable business responses to the climate change challenge.
- Develop in-depth knowledge in particular specialist areas of climate change and environment.

Intellectual:
- Understand, summarise and discuss research articles relating to both science and social science aspects of climate change.
- Communicate climate change concepts and issues to academic, professional and lay audiences.
- Create conceptual links between material covered in the core and option modules.
- Undertake a substantial independent research project.

Practical:
- Master a range of appropriate research methodologies and data analysis tools.
- Apply various business methodologies to appropriate datasets.

Personal / Social:
- Actively take part in discussions with tutors and peers.
- Plan effectively and organise work schedules.
- Complete work in accordance with deadlines.
- Communicate and collaborate effectively with other students.
- Engage effectively with a range of climate change stakeholders.
**Structure**

To successfully complete the MSc in Climate Change Management, students need to gain 180 credit points. These are gained by completing eight taught modules (having a weighting of 15 credit points each) and a dissertation with a weighting of 60 credit points.

It is possible to gain intermediate qualifications at both the end of Year 1 and in June of Year 2, as follows:
- Postgraduate Certificate: complete four taught modules (Year 1).
- Postgraduate Diploma: complete eight taught modules (Years 1 and 2).

**Year 1**
- Compulsory Modules (each 15 credits) in:
  - Climate Change
  - Climate Change and Sustainable Business Practice
  - Environment and Policy
  - Research Methods in Management I

**Year 2**
- Dissertation (60 credits)
- Four option modules (each 15 credits):
  - At least two from:
    - Climate Change and the Global South
    - Climate Change and Energy Issues
    - Modelling Climate Change Impacts
    - Coastal management in a changing climate
    - Introduction to Geographic Information Science
  - No more than two from:
    - Cultural Landscapes
    - Philosophy and Politics of Environmentalism
    - Environmental Management and Business Policy
    - Environmental Communication
    - Environmental Law and Policy
    - Environmental Ethics

Subject to approval by the Programme Director, students may also select option modules from another postgraduate programmes.
### Time planner

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tuesdays – Climate Change</strong></td>
<td><strong>Option module</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coursework #1</td>
<td>E Exams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CC coursework #2</td>
<td>Exams</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Thursdays – Environment and Policy</strong></td>
<td><strong>Option module</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Coursework</td>
<td>E Exams</td>
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<tr>
<td>E&amp;P exam</td>
<td>Exams</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Mondays – CC and Sustainable Business Practice</strong></td>
<td><strong>Option module</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coursework #1</td>
<td>E Exams</td>
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<tr>
<td>CC and Sustainable Business Practice coursework #2</td>
<td>Exams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tuesdays – Research Methods in Management 1</strong></td>
<td><strong>Option module</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RM I exam</td>
<td>Exams</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tutorial meeting</strong></td>
<td><strong>Dissertation research and writing (80%)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tutorial meeting</td>
<td>Dissertations presentation (5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissertation briefing meeting</td>
<td>Dissertations proposal (15%)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dissertations research and writing (80%)</td>
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**Note:**
- In week 1 of the Autumn term, there is only a session on Thursday (Climate Change, 1st October). From the following week (6th October onwards), we meet on both Tuesdays and Thursdays.
- Coursework deadlines will be advised by the convenors of each individual module.
IV. Module descriptions

GGPH034H7 Climate Change

Module Convenor: Dr Becky Briant (b.briant@bbk.ac.uk)
Location: Malet Street Building 352
Time: Tuesdays, 6-9 pm, Autumn term

Aims

This module aims to provide an overview of both climate change science and key issues in tackling climate change.

Learning outcomes

- Understand the functioning of the climate system and the parameters within which change happens.
- Critically evaluate the evidence for human-induced climate change.
- Understand the principles of climate modelling and forecasting and evaluate model output.
- Determine the nature of climate impacts on natural systems.
- Appreciate the social complexity and ethical issues associated with mitigating and adapting to climate change.
- Understand, summarise and discuss research articles relating to both science and social science aspects of climate change.
- Undertake active participation in discussions with tutors and peers.
- Plan effectively and organise work schedules.
- Complete work in accordance with deadlines.

Content

- Fundamentals of the climate system and past changes over geological timescales
- Evidence for recent human-induced climate change
- Climate modelling and forecasting
- Climate change impacts on natural systems
- Mitigating human-induced climate change
- Adaptation strategies

Assessment

Coursework 50% Academic report (2-3000 words)
Coursework 50% Lay report (2-3000 words)
GGPH033H7
Climate Change and Sustainable Business Practice

Module Convenor: Dr Becky Briant (b.briant@bbk.ac.uk)
Module Lecturer: Ms Isabela de Souza
Location: Malet Street Building 351
Time: Mondays, 6-9 pm, Spring term

**Aims**
This module aims to provide an overview of the evolution of business management and strategy with regards to climate change.

**Learning outcomes**
- Have a critical conceptual and applied understanding of the factors that shape business climate change strategies and performance.
- Understand the impacts of climate change on different business sectors.
- Critically evaluate the usefulness of different marketing strategies, such as carbon labelling.
- Understand the complexities in relation to a transition to a low-carbon economy.
- Appreciate the difficulties in carbon footprinting and lifecycle analysis.
- Undertake active participation in discussions with tutors and peers.
- Develop independent research, analytical and oral presentation skills.
- Plan effectively and organise work schedules.
- Complete work in accordance with deadlines.

**Content**
- Business drivers
- Impacts of CC on different sectors and different approaches
- Carbon reporting and the Carbon Disclosure Project
- Carbon in the supply chain
- Carbon footprinting and lifecycle analysis
- Financing a low-carbon economy
- Innovation for a low-carbon economy
- Cross-sector partnerships and the role of NGOs for a low-carbon economy

**Assessment**
Coursework 50% Professional report (2-3000 words)
Coursework 50% Lay report (2-3000 words)
GGPH307H7 Environment and Policy

Module Convenor: Professor John Shepherd (j.shepherd@bbk.ac.uk)
Location: UCL Bedford Way LG04
Time: Thursdays, 6-9 pm, Autumn term

The aim of this course is to examine how policy is made in the environmental field in the United Kingdom and Europe, the evolution of those policies over the last five decades or so and their impact on people, places and businesses. The course content and structure have been selected and designed with two main sets of perspectives on environmental matters in mind:

- those of the social and economic geographer in which the real world is seen as settled places, work areas and cultivated land, open spaces and cherished environments linked together by culture/sentiment, transport networks and travel for various purposes, and
- those of the governmental and commercial practitioner i.e. the policy maker and business decision maker who are involved at a practical level in shaping and responding to political imperatives and legislation intended to mitigate the effects of climate and environmental change and/or improve the quality of the environment in specific senses and so enhance human well being and/or business performance.

These two perspectives, are brought together in the backgrounds and interests of the lecturers on the course. John Shepherd (the course leader) has had many years experience of delivering policy oriented research to governmental and other bodies on matters related to land use, the planning process, sustainable settlements and, more recently, as director of the Defra funded Rural Evidence Research Centre (www.rerc.ac.uk). Tim Allen, Director of Research for the Local Government Association (www.lgar.local.gov.uk) and Visiting Professor at Birkbeck and has worked at the ‘cutting edge’ of the design of environmental policy for the Countryside Agency and Defra and has also advised HM Treasury on countryside matters. Peter Damesick, also a Visiting Professor at Birkbeck and at one time a lecturer in the Department of Geography, is Head of UK Research for CB Richard Ellis (www.cbre.co.uk) one of the world’s leading advisors on commercial real estate. Ms Fiona Lickorish is Head of Horizon Scanning and Futures at Defra (www.defra.gov.uk).

An outline of course topics by week is as follows:

1. What is environmental policy and how is it made? (JS)
2. Population and environmental policy (JS)
3. Meeting the carbon challenge: science, politics and policy (JS)
4. The evolution of post war environmental regulation and policy (TA)
5. Governance interactions in policy development and implementation (TA).
6. Sustainable environments: local government, localism and place shaping (TA)
7. Sustainability and the city: sustainable shops and offices (PD)
8. Recycling the city: obsolescence, development and tall buildings (PD)
9. Thinking about future environments (FL)
10. Summary: our geography of environmental impacts (JS)

**Assessment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Essay</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>3,000 words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>3 from 6 questions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MOMN011H7 Research Methods in Management 1

Module Convenor: Dr Marion Frenz (m.frenz@bbk.ac.uk)
Location: Clore building B01 (basement lecture theatre)
Time: Tuesdays, 6-9 pm, Spring term

Aims
• to provide students with the necessary understanding to interpret and critically assess published research in the field of international business/management; and
• to provide students with the necessary understanding to design and conduct their own theoretical and empirical research in international business/management.

Learning objectives
• to understand how methodology affects research design and research outcomes and be able to use this knowledge to critically appraise the literature in international business/management; and
• to be able to use their knowledge of research methods to design and conduct their own theoretical and empirical research, including in their dissertation and coursework.

Content
Qualitative research methods, quantitative research methods and the philosophy of social science. The course includes computer laboratory sessions using SPSS. It is expected that students will apply their knowledge of research methods in their dissertations and coursework.

Pre-course reading
If you have not studied research methods before you should read Collis and Hussey (2003) before the start of the course. This book provides an introduction to the material covered in the course. Please note that this is an introductory text and is pitched at a lower level than the material covered in the course.

Course Readings
The following is indicative of the nature and level of material to be mastered in the course. Course reading is made available via blackboard. Students are expected to download the materials.

Assessment
A three-hour examination (100%) held in May 2010.
V. **Assessment – procedures and criteria**

**Hand-in procedures**

Coursework should be handed in to the assignment box outside the Department, with a completed coversheet attached.

Each coursework deadline will have two dates. The first date has been chosen to effectively manage your work flow and is when it is expected most assignments will be handed in. The second date is a final cut-off beyond which late submission penalties will be applied. College regulations on late submission are not very forgiving (see section V below) and it is therefore strongly recommended that you hand in your work at the first deadline unless you have a very good reason to delay.

**Receiving feedback on your work**

Feedback will be provided on your coursework both in terms of a numerical grade and written suggestions on how to improve in further work. The marking criteria below will help you to interpret the numerical grade assigned to your work.

Feedback will not be provided before the final cut-off date for submission has passed. The timing of receipt of feedback after this time will vary between teaching staff.

**Marking criteria used for Masters programmes in the Department of Geography, Environment and Development Studies**

**80-100% Distinction**  
An outstanding answer with logical sequence of ideas, excellent presentation of subject matter and written in unambiguous, readable English. Totally focused on the question. Presentation of ideas showing a degree of sophistication only found at the top of MSc level. There should be synthesis, critical weighing of evidence and quotation of authorities is recent literature. If appropriate, the candidate’s own opinion should be evident.

**70-79% Distinction**  
Very good presentation of discussion with logical sequence of ideas and sensible subdivision of subject matter. Written in unambiguous, readable English. Totally focused on the question and showing evidence of understanding and reading beyond the lectures. Appropriate choice of
examples with relevant diagrams where necessary. Skill in synthesis should be obvious. A complete answer with good presentation of discussion: well-written and informative. Accurate recall of material in lectures and good understanding of principles underlying subject. Style not as critical as for 70%+ answers; any weakness in presentation should be compensated for by signs of extra reading and synthesis.

50-59% Pass
Clear, relatively complete account of the lecture content and of extra relevant information. Some weaknesses in organised and less detailed than a 60%+ answer. Information should be largely relevant and accurate. Little evidence of synthesis.

40-49% Fail
A less than complete recall of information gained only from lectures and handout sheets, but showing some understanding of principles. However, organisation is adequate for only part of the answer. Irrelevant material, omissions and inaccuracies all reduce the quality of the answer.

30-39% Fail
A partial and superficial answer with some material relevant to the question and some understanding of principles. However, organisation is poor, with serious omissions or major errors, and the style, grammar and syntax may be inadequate.

20-29% Fail
Answer predominantly composed of irrelevant material. Relevant material shows some understanding of question set but marred by inaccuracies. An answer to the ‘wrong’ question would probably be marked in this range where it is judged that the question has been misunderstood.

0-19% Fail
Inadequate knowledge and understanding; trivial and anecdotal; unfocused and irrelevant. Individual marks may be awarded for individual accurate facts.

Evaluation
GEDS regularly invite student evaluation of both modules and programmes, and you are encouraged to participate fully in this. You are also welcome to submit comments to the Programme Director at any time.
VI. Plagiarism

The University of London and Birkbeck regulations prohibit plagiarism. These regulations are designed to ensure that the standard of our degrees is maintained. The Department of Management checks all work for plagiarism as part of our assessment procedures. We also scan in a sample of all coursework to be checked using various electronic resources that compare the text of work against published sources, Internet resources and essay banks. The penalties for submitting work that is plagiarised are severe and include termination of course of study and being barred from entering any University of London examination.

Please, therefore, read the following sections carefully to ensure that you do not plagiarise in any of your coursework or your dissertation.

All work submitted by a student as part of the requirements for any degree must be expressed in the student’s own words and must incorporate his or her own ideas and judgements. This applies equally to coursework and dissertations no less than to examinations. **Plagiarism—the presentation of another person’s thoughts or words as one’s own—in essays, dissertations or other assessed work violates all principles of sound academic practice and is a serious disciplinary offence.** Action will be taken wherever plagiarism is suspected and the Department regularly checks coursework and dissertations using the JISC Plagiarism System. Disciplinary proceedings will be initiated wherever there is evidence that plagiarism has been committed. Where plagiarism is confirmed, candidates will fail on the work concerned and may be liable for further disciplinary action, including permanent exclusion from study not only at Birkbeck, but also anywhere else in the University of London. The handling of cases of alleged plagiarism is governed by the University of London’s Regulations for Proceedings in Respect of Examination Irregularities.

The purpose of this section is three-fold:

- to clarify what constitutes plagiarism;
- to provide clear guidance as to how best to avoid it; and
- to set out the penalties that may be applied where plagiarism is discovered.

**What is plagiarism?**
The College statement on the subject, provided to all students, is as follows (emphasis added):

You are reminded that all work submitted as part of the requirements for any examination of the University of London or Birkbeck College must be expressed in your own words and incorporate your own ideas and judgements. Plagiarism—that is, the presentation of another person’s thoughts or words as though they were your own—must be avoided, with particular care in coursework and essays and reports written in your own time. Direct quotations from the published or unpublished work of others must always be clearly identified as such by being placed inside quotation marks, and a full reference to their source must be provided in the proper form. Remember that a series of short quotations from several different sources, if not clearly identified as such, constitutes plagiarism just as much as does a single unacknowledged long quotation from a single source. Equally, if you summarise another person’s ideas or judgements, you must refer to that person in your text, and include the work referred to in your bibliography. Failure to observe these rules may result in an allegation of cheating. You should therefore consult your tutor or course director if you are in any doubt about what is permissible.

Recourse to the services of ‘ghost-writing’ agencies (for example in the preparation of essays or reports) or of outside word-processing agencies which offer ‘correction/improvement of English’ is strictly forbidden, and students who make use of the services of such agencies render themselves liable for an academic penalty.

Simply put, plagiarism is a form of fraud. That is why the University, Birkbeck and the Department take it extremely seriously. It is dishonest and undermines the entire basis for the academic awards given to students: the award of a degree, and its class, should be conferred on the basis of the recipient’s own work, not the work of others. Plagiarism subverts the assessment process and, if undetected and unpunished, has a corrosive effect on the value of all degrees awarded.

It is important to understand that plagiarism encompasses a broad spectrum of offences and is more than the wholesale use of others’ exact words as your own: summaries, précis and paraphrases, as well as shorter quoted passages, should all be acknowledged as such with appropriate references.

It is acceptable, in your work, to use the words and thoughts of another person or data that another person has gathered but the
borrowed material must not appear to be your creation. If you are citing the words or ideas of others you must reference the source using the reference style outlined below. This includes all source material, that is, journal articles, books, and internet sources as well as essays, practical and research reports written by other students including those from previous years, whether you have their permission or not. It also applies to both ‘hard-copy’ material and electronic material, such as Internet documents. Examples include copying someone else’s form of words, or paraphrasing another’s argument, presenting someone else’s data or line of thinking, without acknowledging the author or source.

Plagiarism may be unintentional, caused by making notes from sources such as books or journals without also noting the source, and then repeating those notes in an essay without acknowledging that they are the data, words or ideas belonging to someone else. Guard against this by keeping careful notes that distinguish between your own ideas and researched material and those you obtained from others. Then acknowledge the source.

**Example:**

Original source:

“The flexibility of the UK and US labour markets has been identified as a key explanation for the high growth rates of these two economies in recent years, and there is increasing pressure on other countries to reduce perceived labour market rigidities. While the assumed benefits of labour market flexibility receive much attention in public discussion, little is known, with some exception in relation to employee training, about its effect on the use by firms of new work practices, or of the results on corporate performance.” (Michie J and Sheehan-Quinn M (2001), ‘Labour market flexibility, human resource management and corporate performance’, British Journal of Management, 12 pp 287–306.)

Plagiarised version:

*Labour market flexibility in the UK and US economies provides an explanation for the high rates of economic growth observed in these economies. This has put increasing pressure on other countries to reduce labour market rigidity. However, little is known about the effects of labour market flexibility on the use of new work practices and corporate performance.*
Acceptable version:

A recent paper (Michie and Sheehan-Quinn, 2001, p. 288) on labour market flexibility has argued that, although labour market flexibility has been identified as a possible explanation for the high rates of growth observed in the UK and the US, little is known about the effects of labour market flexibility on the adoption of different types of work practices and the impact on corporate performance.

There are two main differences between the plagiarised version and the acceptable version above. First and foremost, the inclusion of the authors’ names acknowledges whose ideas these originally were (not the student’s) and the reference refers the reader to the full location of the work when combined with the bibliography. Note that in the plagiarised version, the argument was paraphrased—but without acknowledgement of the source of the idea and original text, this is plagiarism. The second difference concerns the style of paraphrasing. The plagiarised version merely repeats the same points as the original version, but with minimal rewording, making the sentences very derivative. The acceptable version on the other hand summarises the point that is relevant to the essay being written in a way that means it can easily be developed into the student’s argument in the next sentence.

In writing any work, therefore (whether for assessment or not) you should document everything that you borrow—not only direct quotations and paraphrases but also information and ideas. There are, of course, some common-sense exceptions to this, such as familiar proverbs, well-known quotations or common knowledge. However, you must indicate the source of any appropriated material that readers might otherwise mistake for your own. If in doubt, cite your source or sources.

**Copying material verbatim**

Another example of plagiarism is the verbatim copying of chunks of material from another source without acknowledgement. Any sentences or phrases copied verbatim must be in quotation marks with the reference and page number cited at the end of the quotation.

**Re-submission of work**
Another form of plagiarism is submitting work you previously submitted before for another assignment. While this is obviously not the same as representing someone else’s ideas as your own, it is a form of self-plagiarism and is another form of cheating. If you want to re-work a paper for an assignment, ask your lecturer whether this is acceptable, and acknowledge your re-working in a preface.

**Collaboration and collusion**

In collaborative work (if this is permitted by the lecturer) joint participation in research and writing does not constitute plagiarism in itself, provided that credit is given for all contributions. One way would be to state in a preface who did what; another, if roles and contributions were merged and truly shared, would be to acknowledge all concerned equally. However, where collaborative projects are allowed, it is usually a requirement that each individual’s contribution and work is distinguishable, so check with your lecturer. **Usually, collusion with another candidate on assessed work (such as sharing chunks of writing or copying bits from each other) is NOT allowed.**

**Copyright infringement**

Finally, you must guard against copyright infringement. Even if you acknowledge the source, reproducing a significant portion of any document (including material on the Internet) without permission is a breach of copyright, and a legal offence. You may summarise, paraphrase and make brief quotations, but more than this risks infringing copyright.

**How can you avoid plagiarism?**

This section is intended to help you avoid unintentional plagiarism. The mistaken belief that plagiarism is limited to the wholesale reproduction of entire papers or long passages of text is widespread, but these are only its most spectacular forms. While penalties are generally much more severe where the plagiarism is flagrant, no case of plagiarism that is uncovered will be ignored. You could, therefore, find yourself in difficulties as a result of too close a reliance on sources that are not properly acknowledged. Even if it was clearly unintentional, plagiarism will, if detected, lead at the very least to a low failure mark for that piece of work. At most you could face suspension from all further study in the
University of London. It is therefore very important to know just what is and is not likely to get you into trouble.

So what do you do?

- Always attribute quoted words. It does not matter if the quote is long or short, every quoted passage taken directly from the work of another should be clearly marked as such by the use of quotation marks. The full reference, including page number, should be given for each quotation.
- Always give full references for paraphrases of others’ ideas or judgements. Simply rewriting a passage in your own words rather than the author’s does not avoid plagiarism. Paraphrases or summaries of the ideas or judgements of others should be referenced fully.
- Give references to support purely factual claims where necessary. Plagiarism is mainly about the appropriation of others’ ideas and judgements. Factual references are less sensitive. You certainly do not need to include (as some students do) references for facts that are well established and can be found in any number of places (don’t bother with a reference telling the reader where you found the date of the Enron collapse, for example). However, where the facts are less well known and some other investigator has persuasively established some claim of fact, you should acknowledge this in your references, as a well as the sources for any quantitative data you might use.
- Include a reference to any source used in a sentence at the end of that sentence. One way to find yourself sailing rather too close to the wind is to include a single reference at the end of a long passage of more than one paragraph that gives the source for the entire passage. This can give the reader the impression that the reference refers only to the last paragraph or so, rather than the whole passage. If for some reason you wish to avoid repeating references to the same source, then include a statement or footnote early on indicating that the discussion that follows is drawn from such-and-such a source. For example: ‘Except where indicated otherwise, the description of EU policy-making set out in this section is drawn from Kassim (1997:275–89).’ You should also attempt to paraphrase ideas rather than text as in the acceptable version above. You then need only provide additional references for those points in the description of EU policy-making taken from sources other than Kassim (1997). Direct quotations from Kassim (1997) should still be in quotation marks.
- Remember that a full bibliography is necessary but not sufficient. You should be at pains to include every source on which you
have relied in your bibliography. However, mere inclusion in the bibliography is not enough. If you have drawn on a source in ways that are not acknowledged in the text, its inclusion only in the bibliography is insufficient (though omitting it from the bibliography altogether would generally be an even more serious offence).

Ultimately, the golden rule should be: when in doubt, give the reference. This not only protects you from unintended plagiarism, it is also good manners: credit should be given to sources where and when they are used. That is why it is not unusual to find academic articles of 10,000 words or so that have anywhere from 50 to 150 references. Students sometimes worry that giving full references throughout will make it appear as though their papers are just compilations of other people’s views. However, even if there are 100-odd references to a medium-length article or chapter, the author’s own contribution to the discussion should be clear to the reader. If it is not, then the paper is probably not a very strong one. This means that thorough referencing will provide a good check on the substance of your essays and dissertations: if the finished product looks like nothing more than a cut-and-paste job full of others’ ideas and data, it probably needs to be rewritten.

The above guidelines apply to essays, other coursework, dissertations and theses. You do not need to worry about punctilious acknowledgement of sources when writing unseen written examinations. Generally, it helps in an exam to show familiarity with the major writers in a given field, but examiners do not expect to find references to all the items relied on. After all, exams are meant to test your understanding of the material, not your memory.

The penalties for plagiarism

Plagiarism is regarded as a serious disciplinary matter. While the penalties imposed depend on the seriousness of the offence, even the minimum penalties are serious:

- Any case of plagiarism detected will be recorded in the offending student’s file and will be reported to the Examinations Office of the College. This can have far-reaching consequences in itself: a former student needing a reference from the School will be in an unenviable position should his or her file contain a case of plagiarism.
- Work found to contain plagiarism will be failed. If it is our opinion that you are attempting to pass someone else’s work as your own, you will be awarded a mark of zero, and the case will
automatically be referred to the Board of Examiners who will consult with the College Registrar over referral to the University of London as explained in section 3.5.4. The penalties include termination of your course of study. If evidence of plagiarism is produced after a mark has been awarded, the mark can be revoked and indeed an entire degree can be revoked.

- All cases of plagiarism will be penalised by failure and more serious cases will result in more serious penalties. You may, in a serious case, be failed for your degree and forbidden from re-entry. This is also the case for less serious infringements where students have failed to own up when confronted or have been found to commit plagiarism on more than one occasion. You should therefore be aware that, if a relatively mild penalty is applied to a mild first offence of plagiarism, the penalties are likely to be much more severe in the event of a second infraction.

**University hearings and appeals**

When we ask you to sign the coursework and dissertation coversheet you confirm that you have read and understood the advice given with regard to plagiarism in assessed work. You agree to abide by these rules and you agree that the JISC plagiarism service can be used to detect plagiarism. You also accept that you will be penalised if you fail to abide by the rules.

If a lecturer suspects plagiarism, the Department checks your work via the JISC plagiarism service. If plagiarism is confirmed, the Director of Postgraduate Education will invite you to a hearing. The module tutor / the dissertation supervisor and the Director of Postgraduate Education will then establish how to proceed.

The hearing committee may find that no offence has been committed. If it finds that an offence has been committed, it is empowered to impose a range of penalties, including the exclusion of the candidate from all future examinations for awards of the University of London—effectively barring the candidate not only from re-entering Birkbeck College but also from entering any other institution of the University to read for a degree or other award.

Candidates may appeal against a hearing committee’s decision on grounds of procedural irregularity or against the penalty imposed by the hearing committee. An appellate committee has the power to reverse or modify the penalties imposed by the hearing committee, although it may not impose any more severe penalties than those imposed by the hearing committee. However, candidates should be aware that, in the event of an unsuccessful appeal, the appellate
committee can order them to pay a contribution to the costs of the appeal. This contribution shall be recoverable from the appellant candidate as a civil debt due to the University.

VII. **College Regulations (Common Awards Scheme)**

**Introduction**

1. The majority of Birkbeck’s postgraduate programmes are offered as part of the College’s Common Awards Scheme. Programmes within the Scheme have common regulations, and a common structure, and this makes it possible for you to take modules from Schools across the College which are outside of your normal programme (subject to programme regulations and timetable constraints).

2. This chapter gives a brief introduction to the Common Awards Scheme. Further details on programme regulation and areas of interest are available on the Common Awards Scheme website: http://www.bbk.ac.uk/reg

**Structure of Programmes**

3. All programmes offered as part of the Common Awards Scheme will consist of modules, each of which will be “credit-rated”. In order to achieve your award you will need to gain at least the following, and meet the requirements outlined in your programme specification:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>Credits needed</th>
<th>Min at upper level</th>
<th>Max at lower level</th>
<th>Birkbeck common awards schemes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Masters Degree</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>150 level 7</td>
<td>30 level 6 (not included in calculation of classification)</td>
<td>4 modules plus dissertation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate Diploma</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>90 level 7</td>
<td>30 level 6 (not included in calculation of classification)</td>
<td>4 modules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate Certificate</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60 level 7</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>2 modules</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. The Common Awards Scheme offers, for postgraduate programmes, half modules (15 credits), modules (30 credits), double modules (60 credits), or exceptionally triple modules (90 credits) and quadruple modules (120 credits – normally for MRes dissertations).

5. The detailed requirements for each programme are published in the relevant programme specification. Each module on a programme is designated as one of the following:

- **core**: the module must be taken and passed to allow the student to complete the degree.

- **compulsory**: the module must be taken, and Programme Regulations must stipulate the minimum assessment that must be attempted.

- **option**: students may choose a stipulated number of modules from a range made available to them. Option modules are clearly identified in Programme Regulations.

- **elective**: students may replace an option module with modules from another programme, subject to approval of Programme Directors, availability of places and timetable requirements.

- **pre-requisite**: modules, meaning they must be taken and passed to allow for progression to a specified follow-up module.

6. Detailed regulations on the structure of programmes, maximum period of registration and other areas are available in the Regulations for Taught Programmes of Study, which can be downloaded from the College Website (http://www.bbk.ac.uk/reg/regs).

**Degree Classification**

7. Postgraduate awards may be made with Merit or Distinction. Distinctions are normally awarded to students who achieve an average result of 70% or more, including a mark of 70 or over in their dissertation, for all level 7 modules on their programme. A Merit is normally awarded to students who achieve an average result of 60% or more for all level 7 modules. Level 6 modules included as part of the programme are not included in the
calculation for degree classification for postgraduate programmes.

**Failure and Re-assessment of a Module**

8. The Regulations for Taught Programmes of Study outline how an examination board should treat a failed module when considering progression and awards. However, each examination board is responsible for judging, within these regulations, whether a fail can be "compensated" (i.e., whether you can be awarded credit for that module even if you have not actually passed), whether you will need to re-take the module (see paragraph 9) or whether you will be able to attempt a re-assessment (see 10).

9. For any module on a postgraduate programme, if your module result is less than 40% any subsequent attempt to pass the module will normally be a "re-take" – a re-take requires attendance at the module’s lectures and seminars as well as another attempt at the assessment.

10. If you obtain a module result of between 40% and 49% for any module on a postgraduate programme then the Board of Examiners may offer "re-assessment" as an alternative to a "re-take". Re-assessment is where a student will re-attempt a failed element of a failed module; it does not require attendance at lectures and seminars. You will not normally be reassessed in elements that you have already passed.

11. A Board of Examiners may offer an alternative form of assessment for failed elements as part of a re-assessment regime.

12. The timing of any re-assessment will be at the discretion of the Board of Examiners; this will normally be either at the next normal assessment opportunity or in some instances before the beginning of the next academic year.

13. You will normally be offered two attempts at passing a module (the original attempt plus one further attempt which will either be a re-assessment or a re-take). After this, if the module has not been passed it will be classed either as a "compensated fail" (see 14) or a fail. In some cases this will mean that it will not be possible for you to gain the award that you have registered for; in such cases, your registration will normally be terminated.
14. If your module result is between 40 and 49% your Board of Examiners may award a “compensated fail”. This will mean that you retain the module result, but are awarded credit for that module. An MA or MSc may be awarded to a student carrying no more than 30 credits as compensated fail. A core module may not be treated as a compensated fail; core modules must be passed in order to gain the award. The awards of MRes, Postgraduate Diploma or Postgraduate Certificate do not normally permit the inclusion of compensated fail results in the calculation of classification.

Common Award Scheme Policies

1. As part of the introduction of the Common Awards Scheme, the College has implemented a number of College-wide policies. The full policies can be seen at http://www.bbk.ac.uk/reg/regs Some brief details on key policies are included here:

Late Submission of work for assessment

2. College policy dictates how Schools will treat work that is due for assessment but is submitted after the published deadline. Any work that is submitted for formal assessment after the published deadline is given two marks: a penalty mark of 50% for postgraduate students, assuming it is of a pass standard, and the ‘real’ mark that would have been awarded if the work had not been late. Both marks are given to the student on a cover sheet. If the work is not of a pass standard a single mark is given.

3. If you submit late work that is to be considered for assessment then you should provide written documentation, medical or otherwise, to explain why the work was submitted late. You will need to complete a standard pro-forma and submit it, with documentary evidence as appropriate, to your Tutor or Programme Director. The case will then be considered by the appropriate sub-board or delegated panel.

4. If no case is made then the penalty mark will stand. If the case is made and accepted then the examination board may allow the ‘real” mark to stand.

Assessment Offences

5. The College Policy on Assessment Offences incorporates the College policy on plagiarism.
6. The policy describes three stages in the process for dealing with assessment offences (which include plagiarism, collusion, examination offences and other offences). The first stage allows for a very rapid and local determination for first or minor and uncontested offences. Stage 2 allows for a formal school investigation, where a student wishes to contest the allegation or penalty, where there is an allegation of a repeat offence or for more serious cases. Stage 3 involves a centrally convened panel for third and serious offences, dealt with under the Code of Student Discipline.

7. The College treats all assessment offences seriously. It makes strenuous efforts to detect plagiarism, including using web-based software that can provide clear evidence. If you are in any doubt as to what constitutes acceptable conduct you should consult your personal tutor or another member of academic staff. The College has a wide range of sanctions that it may apply in cases of plagiarism, including the termination of a student’s registration in the most serious cases.

**Mitigating Circumstances**

8. The College Policy on Mitigating Circumstances determines how boards of examiners will treat assessment that has been affected by adverse circumstances. Mitigating Circumstances are defined as unforeseen, unpreventable circumstances that significantly disrupt your performance in assessment. This should not be confused with long term issues such as medical conditions, for which the College can make adjustments before assessment (for guidance on how arrangements can be made in these cases please see the College’s Procedures for Dealing with Special Examination Arrangements).

9. A Mitigating Circumstances claim should be submitted if valid detrimental circumstances result in:
   a) the late or non-submission of assessment;
   b) non-attendance at examination(s);
   c) poor performance in assessment.

10. For a claim to be accepted you must produce independent documentary evidence to show that the circumstances:
   a) have detrimentally affected your performance or will do so, with respect to 9a, 9b and 9c above;
   b) were unforeseen;
   c) were out of your control and could not have been prevented;
   d) relate directly to the timing of the assessment affected.
11 Documentation should be presented, wherever possible, on the official headed paper of the issuing body, and should normally include the dates of the period in which the circumstances applied. Copies of documentary evidence will not normally be accepted. If you need an original document for another purpose, you should bring the original into the School Office so that a copy can be made by a member of College staff. (Where a photocopy is made by a member of staff they should indicate on the copy that they have seen the original).

12. Discussing your claim with a member of staff does not constitute a submission of a claim of mitigating circumstances.

13. You are encouraged to submit your claim for mitigating circumstances in advance and at the earliest opportunity. The final deadline for submission of a claim is normally 1 week after the final examination unless otherwise stated by your School. Where possible, claims should be submitted using the standard College Mitigating Circumstances claim form (available from your School office) which should be submitted in accordance with the procedure for submission published by your School. Claims should always be supported by appropriate documentary evidence.

14. You should be aware that individual marks will almost never be changed in the light of mitigating circumstances. Assessment is designed to test your achievement rather than your potential; it is not normally possible to gauge what you would have achieved had mitigating circumstances not arisen. Where mitigating circumstances are accepted, and it is judged by an examination board that these circumstances were sufficiently severe to have affected your performance in assessment the usual response will be to offer you another opportunity for assessment without penalty, at the next available opportunity.

15. Guidance on what may constitute acceptable mitigating circumstances is available as an appendix to the policy, available from http://www.bbk.ac.uk/reg/regs or your School office; you should note that this is not an exhaustive list, and that each case will be treated on its merits by the relevant sub-board or delegated body.

Break-in-Studies Policy

16. The Common Awards Scheme regulations allow you to suspend studies for a maximum of two years in total during your programme of study. This may be for one period of two years, or
for non-consecutive shorter periods (see 17) that add up to a total of two years or less.

17. Any break-in-studies on a postgraduate programme would normally be for a minimum of one year; breaks may also be permitted for a period of one or two terms, dependent on the structure of the programme.

18. Any application for a break-in-studies should be made in writing to your programme director or personal tutor. If you are applying for an approved break-in-studies, you should give details of the length of the proposed break and the reasons for the application.

19. You will not be liable for fees while on an approved break-in-studies. If you have attended for part of a term you will normally be liable for the fees due in that term, unless there are mitigating circumstances.

20. If you are on a break-in-studies you will not have access to the Library or ITS unless you make an application and pay the appropriate fee to use these facilities. Applications must be made directly to the Library and/or ITS.

21. If you do not re-enrol after having completed two years of break-in-studies you will be deemed to have withdrawn from your programme. If you wish to resume your programme after having been withdrawn, you will normally be required to re-apply for admission.

**Other Policies**

22. In addition to the policies above, other College academic-related policies include:

   Termination of Registration  
   Procedures for Dealing with Special Examination Arrangements  
   Suspension of Regulations  
   The Operation of Boards and Sub-Boards of Examiners  
   The Role of External & Intercollegiate Examiners  
   Marking and Moderation

To see these policies, please see the Common Awards Scheme website:

http://www.bbk.ac.uk/reg/regs
VIII. Learning resources

Personal Tutors

The programme director acts as personal tutor for all students on the programme. In addition to termly formal meetings, students can seek help from their personal tutor if they have problems of a personal or confidential nature, and should keep them informed of any personal circumstances that may be relevant to their programmes. Any student who wishes to change personal tutor for any reason should contact the Head of GEDS, Dr Andrew Jones.

Libraries

Although lectures and seminars are an essential element of your course, success in learning depends largely on the reading and research that you undertake. Most items on module reading lists can be found in Birkbeck Library and it is important that you familiarise yourself with the Library as soon as you can. At postgraduate level, you will also be expected to use other libraries during your studies.

Birkbeck Library

The entrance to Birkbeck Library is on the ground floor of the main building in Malet Street. Your College ID card gives you automatic access to the Library. There is no need to register. The opening times of the Library are designed to meet the needs of part-time students in full-time work. During term-time, the Library is open
• Monday – Friday 10.00am – 10.30pm
• Saturday – Sunday 10.00am – 8.00pm

You can borrow up to 10 items and they can be renewed as long as no one else requests them. Most books can be borrowed for 3 weeks. Some books, videos and DVDs can be borrowed for 1 week. A few items can only be issued for 1 day. There is also a Reading Room Collection with reference access to key course readings. Please be a responsible Library user. The smooth running of the Library depends on your co-operation. Please renew or return items promptly, especially if someone else has requested them. If you fail to return items on time you will incur fines and your borrowing rights will be suspended. Students who have overdue items at the
end of the academic year will have examination results withheld until they return the items.

You can access a whole host of electronic journals and databases from any PC in College. The majority of resources can also be accessed from outside College with your IT Services (ITS) username and password. The Library website is at http://www.bbk.ac.uk/lib. As well as giving comprehensive information about the Library, its services and collections, you can also:

- Search the Library catalogue, renew your books and place reservations on items that are out on loan.
- Read articles in almost 20,000 electronic journal titles and newspapers.
- Search databases to help you find out what has been written about the subject you are researching, including Business Source Premier, LexisNexis and the Social Sciences Citation Index.
- Access past exam papers.
- Work through LIFE – an online tutorial to help you make the most of the Library.

Birkbeck Library aims to be accessible and convenient for all and offers a range of services and equipment designed to meet the needs of Library users with disabilities. This includes postal loans, one-to-one help with Subject Librarians, leaflets in alternative formats, a CCTV magnification system, writing slopes and orthopaedic chairs. For full details of our services and equipment, please visit the online guide at http://www.bbk.ac.uk/lib/disability.html or contact Library Access Support on 020 7631 6491. Email: library-disability@bbk.ac.uk

If you have particular difficulty in accessing the Library, you may benefit from using the LAMP Service (LibrAry Materials by Post) which provides extended loans, postal loans for books and photocopies of journal articles and a book fetching service. LAMP is free to students who have registered their disability with the Birkbeck Disability Office - contact Mark Pimm in the first instance.

Other libraries

Birkbeck students can also use a range of other libraries. Students have reference access to most University of London college libraries and free access to Senate House Library (University of London) on Malet Street (including electronic resources). In addition, postgraduate students can join the SCONUL Access Scheme which allows access to most other higher education libraries with limited borrowing rights. See the Library web site for more information.

Further help
If you require any assistance using the resources or finding information either in Birkbeck Library or elsewhere, please ask at the Help Desk. Telephone: 020 7631 6063. Alternatively, contact your Subject Librarian, Helen Matthews, by asking in the Library or by telephoning or emailing: 020 7631 6290 or h.matthews@bbk.ac.uk.

Computing facilities

Facilities and help

Computing facilities and services include eight PC workstation rooms, managed by the IT Services (ITS), listed below. These provide access to a range of software: Microsoft Office, electronic mail, and web browser, and access via the internet to a range of information sources. Conditions of use of the workstations are available on the ITS Website and also displayed in all Workstation rooms.

- Room 402 Main Building: 29 Windows XP systems; duplex laser printer; open 24 hrs, seven days a week.
- Room 536, Main Building: 28 Windows XP systems; duplex laser printer; 24 hrs, seven days a week.
- Room 458 Main Building: six Windows XP systems; duplex laser printer; open 7am to 11pm daily
- Room 321 Main Building: 40 Windows XP systems; duplex laser printer; open 7am to 11pm daily.
- Room B43, Senate House North Block: 24 Windows XP systems; laser printer; open 8am to 9pm weekdays, 9am to 5pm weekends.
- Room G03, Clore Management Centre: eleven Windows XP systems; laser printer; open 8am–10pm, weekdays during term.
- Room 10, 43, Gordon Square: 25 Windows XP systems; duplex laser printer; open 7am–10pm, weekdays during term.
- Room 11, 43, Gordon Square: 21 Windows XP systems; laser printer; open 7am–10pm, weekdays during term.

To access these and other centrally managed systems, you need a username and password which is sent to all new students at their home address once they have enrolled. For help and information, visit the ITS website at www.bbk.ac.uk/its or go to ITS Reception, Room 151, Malet Street Main Building, tel: 020 7631 6543.

Opening hours are as follows:
Term Time: 10am-8pm Monday-Friday.
Outside Term: 10am-6pm Monday-Friday.
If required Helpdesk staff will liaise with appropriate ITS technical support staff to answer user queries.

**Birkbeck College Electronic Mail**

You have been allocated an electronic mail address on Birkbeck email systems. This will be used for College communications. The Birkbeck email system is a simple webmail interface, and details of how to use it are provided in ITS documentation, sent to all new students. The webmail service is available at [http://webmail.bbk.ac.uk](http://webmail.bbk.ac.uk). Please note that all departmental emails will be sent to your Birkbeck email account. The information we send out is very important for students and it is your responsibility to check the email account or have your mail forwarded to an external account.

**Computers and the law**

These guidelines will help you avoid breaking the law (i.e. the Computer Misuse Act of 1990) and College Regulations.

- Do not use any software product that is not properly licensed either individually or through a campus site licence.
- Do not make unauthorised copies of licensed software.
- Do not allow others to use your registered user identifier or password.
- Do not attempt to gain access across a network into a computer system of which you are not a registered user.
- Do not send offensive or excessive private material over a network.
- Do not attempt to interfere with or destroy systems software or data not belonging to you, for example by deliberately introducing a computer virus.
- Make sure you abide by the principles and obligations of the Data Protection Act under which the College is registered as both a Data User and Computer Bureau. The College takes a serious view of such offences and you are advised to consult the Computing Regulations for more details. These are available from the Central Computing Services.

**Support for disabled users**

In our experience, support is best tailored to the individual students needs. The Disability IT officer can provide advice on a range of specialist products to support students with special needs, and support with accessing the specialist hardware and software in the computer workstation rooms and the Library. If you would like an appointment please contact the Disability Office on 020 7631 6336
or email disability@bbk.ac.uk, or come to the ITS Reception, room 151, in the Main Building.

Most users access ITS facilities using PC workstations located in eight rooms around the College. The workstations allow personal tailoring of the desktop, which is then available from all PCs in any ITS workstation room. This may include size of icons, size of text and colour schemes. ITS Reception can provide help in setting up the desktop.

A number of systems have additional enabling technologies available:

- Hardware includes mouse replacements, additional keyboards, large screen monitors and scanners, adjustable desks, and specialist orthopaedic chairs.
- Software is designed to be of assistance to students with visual impairment, blind students, students with dyslexia and a range of other problems. Software includes SuperNova, TextHelp Read and Write, Inspiration.

The College also provides a Virtual Private Network service providing access to network services from home via your Internet Service Provider. This includes: College based electronic mail, Intranet, World Wide Web, ITS documentation, Library catalogue, Birkbeck Electronic Library and networked filestore.

Use of personal equipment

The College has a Wireless and Mobile computing service that allows students to connect their own equipment (including laptops and PDAs) to the College network for access to resources required for their study.

Blackboard Virtual Learning Environment

Blackboard is a ‘learning environment’ for delivering web-based course materials. Each module is listed in Blackboard and if you log on it will show you the modules you are registered for. You can access Blackboard from any location with an Internet connection and web browser, using your ITS username and password to log on. Central Computing Services will send you these details once you officially enrol as a student. Point your Web browser at www.ble.ac.uk. For help, go to the ITS Reception, room 151 in the main building in Malet Street or phone 020 7631 6543. If there are modules missing on your WebCT account, you will need to update your details at the Administrative Office. Most lecturers upload lecture notes and additional course materials on the respective module sites.
IX. Advice on studying

Introduction

This section is designed particularly for students who are returning to education after a long period. At Birkbeck we are well aware that our part-time students may encounter difficulties for unavoidable reasons relating to work or family. Students should feel free to discuss any such difficulties relating to their study with their personal tutor or any member of the Departmental staff. Further advice and support is available from the Students’ Union, who operate study skills sessions and who also offer counselling for non-academic issues.

Birkbeck part-time students have many other claims on their time. You will need to be firm about setting aside regular periods for private study. It is more productive and much less disruptive of family and personal relationships if you can establish a regular pattern of study. Try to be realistic about the amount of time available. If you set an impossibly high target, you may become discouraged by your failure to live up to it; but if you set your target too low, you may be disheartened by your inability to keep up with the work. Apart from individual study, discussion with other students on the course can be very helpful. A visit to the bar for coffee or a drink after lectures or practical sessions is a good way to assemble an informal study ‘network’.

Writing Notes

Making notes on your reading helps discipline your thinking. Do not copy out large chunks unselectively. The purpose of notes is to provide a short and clear summary of the argument. Investing time in making this clear as you read will save time later on. Different people have all kinds of tricks for taking notes. What matters is what works best for you, which you can only discover by trying to write notes in a structured way.

An especially important set of notes is your notes of lectures and classes. A useful strategy is to rewrite your lecture notes regularly (preferably soon after the lecture when it is still fresh in your mind) so you have clear useful notes when it is time to revise for exams. This helps you keep up with material as your course goes along. Please note that lecture handouts, such as PowerPoint slides, only provide an outline of the material covered in a lecture. You will need to supplement this with detailed notes.
In order to develop a capacity for independent thinking, you will have to do a lot of work on your own. If a question occurs to you in a lecture or while reading, make a note of it, so that you can think about it and follow it up later. Although your lecturers may be glad to discuss such questions with you, it will probably be more useful to you if you first try to find the answer for yourself.

Using Books and Journals

When beginning to study from a book or part of a book, start by skimming through the material. This can provide a perspective from which you can then plan detailed study, supported by careful note taking. When making notes from any book, it is well worth taking adequate notes at the first attempt to avoid wasting time backtracking later, when the book may no longer be easily available. Also make sure that you have kept a complete reference to the source book so that you can easily return to the source at a later stage.

Many references on your reading lists will be to articles in academic journals. An increasing number of these are now available online, with archives going back several years. Information about availability of online journals is given on the Birkbeck Library website, www.bbk.ac.uk/lib.

When writing coursework, you will be expected to perform a literature search to find additional articles relevant to your topic. This will normally be done by using the Web of Knowledge, available at http://wok.mimas.ac.uk. Information on how to use this, along with a username and password is available in library inductions or by talking to library staff.

Lectures

Different lecturers have different views on the extent to which students should participate while in lectures, and you will have to judge this for yourself. If you cannot hear, cannot read the notes on a board or feel that a point has not been explained clearly, you should not be afraid to say so. If you are the only member of a class continuing to experience difficulty on a particular point, then it is best to talk to the lecturer at the end of the lecture rather than slow down the whole class.

In lectures, it is important to take detailed notes. Try to note down the essential points rather than transcribing every word. This approach allows you to devote the bulk of your attention to the ideas that are being conveyed. In many cases, you will have been
given a handout that will assist your note taking, as some material will already be written down for you but you must supplement this with the detailed points covered by the lecturer. It is especially important to make a note of points that you have not entirely understood, so that you can look into them after the lecture is over. Some of these points will resolve themselves by the end of the lecture, but sometimes you may need to seek advice from the lecturer or a text.

After a lecture, and while it is still reasonably fresh in your mind, you should go over your notes, rewriting any portions that are hard to read and sorting out any problems that you noted at the time or that occur to you while rereading. It is best to do this before the next lecture.

You are expected to attend all lectures. However, if you have to miss a lecture, try to arrange in advance for a fellow student to provide you with a copy of their notes.

**Coursework**

*Introduction*

It is important that you hand in written work on time. To delay handing in work is unfair to other students who have made the effort to hand in work on time. If you pace your efforts on coursework, rather than waiting until the last minute, it will be much easier to meet any deadlines. Getting an early start and working regularly toward completing coursework will enable you to identify quickly any points of difficulty. These may include not only some difficulty in understanding the work, but mundane problems such as a computer fault or running out of ink in your printer just before the work is due.

*Tips on Essay Writing*

It will probably be much easier for you to succeed in your studies if you try consciously to develop the techniques of study. These are not inborn but can be cultivated. Of course, the techniques vary with the subject studied, but there are some general practices that can be developed and put to use. Below is some guidance that you might find helpful.

- **Focus on the question**
  
  You can’t decide what to answer until you have thought very hard about what you are being asked. Questions are usually quite precise, not an invitation to write something vaguely in
that area. Take time to understand what the question is really asking. Answer only the question asked, not what you would like to have been asked.

- **Develop an essay plan**
  To begin with you will have a few ideas. It may be helpful to write down some possible paragraph headings and to determine the best order in which to discuss these points. Then see if there are other points you have left out. Once you have a structure mapped out, you can start to fill in the detailed points (usually only two or three) that will go under each paragraph heading. Only when you have the whole plan completely mapped out should you start to write out your answer.

- **Execute your plan**
  As you write out your answer, let the reader or examiner know where you are going. Include an introduction sketching the argument you are about to develop and a conclusion summarising what you have just said. Because your plan has already solved the problem of the best order in which to make your points, you will also write more interesting and better-argued essays. It is not good practice simply to give a list of points. If your plan is good, you will start to realise that one point is decisive and must be dealt with first and that points two to four really just expand the first point.

  One final word of advice. Unless the question specifically asks you for an unusually large number of facts, don’t allow your essay to become overburdened with too many irrelevant details. Think of your plan as a skeleton, the bones of the logical argument. You flesh out this skeleton with a few well-chosen examples to make it more complete. The examples must not be so numerous that they obscure the skeleton structure of the answer.

**Examinations**

In May and June you will have examinations for some of the modules you have taken in the previous Autumn and Spring Term. The Examinations Office releases the Exam Timetable by the end of the Spring Term every year. It is unwise to gear your work specifically towards the examinations too soon. For most of the first two terms, you will do best to concentrate on gaining as full an understanding as you can of the various topics covered in your classes. It is a good idea to take an early look at past examination papers, so that you have these in the back of your mind. These are available on the Birkbeck Electronic Library online at: http://bel.bbk.ac.uk/bel2/examlist.htm You should also make a note of issues or topics that have been clearly emphasised by the
lecturer; these notes can help you focus on the key areas for later revision. Aim to begin serious revision for the examinations during the Easter vacation, so that any problems that present themselves can be raised with the lecturers in the first four weeks of the Summer Term, when revision classes will be held.

Revising for Examinations

It is wise to plan and start your revision for examinations several months ahead.
• Think about which days of the week and at what time of the day you could set aside about an hour for revision.
• Draw up a revision timetable and allow at least four to six weeks to revise the year’s work. This, of course, may vary depending on how well you have paced your work through the year.
• Split up each module into topics and estimate how much time you will need to revise each. The timetable should show what you intend to revise on a given day or evening throughout each week.
The following is a useful basic plan for revising:
• Read carefully the notes you have made from lectures and textbooks.
• Read the exam questions that a lecturer has previously set on the topic you are about to revise. This will help you to establish what is important. Be aware, however, that the content and emphasis of a module may change from year to year.
• Try to devise logical thought pathways so that once you have remembered the start of a pathway the steps flow back into the mind without too much effort.
• After sorting out how you will remember something, put your notes on one side and try to write down as much as you can of what you have been studying. If you have forgotten a step, look at your notes again to refresh your memory.
• Before starting the next session of revision, write down the essential facts of the work you revised last time. Look again at your notes for the work you have forgotten. Do not be disheartened if you seem to have forgotten a lot. It is usual to need to go over the work time and time again.

What Questions Will Appear in the Examination?

Often, this year’s examination questions will look similar to previous years’, so, have a look at the last few years’ papers for the same module and try to do the questions as soon as you feel able. If your module is new, or has changed substantially, your lecturer will inform you and provide you with a sample examination paper.

Examination Technique
Before the Examination Day

You should make sure you know how long the examination lasts and how many questions you will be expected to answer in the time. Nearly all candidates suffer from pre-exam nerves, and you should not subject yourself to additional stress on the morning of the examination trying to find the things you need to take with you. Make sure you know where the examination will be held and when the examination begins. On the day before the exam, gather everything that you will need such as:
- several pens and pencils
- an eraser
- a ruler
- your examination entry card with your candidate number.

The Examination Itself

- Remember to leave all notes outside the examination hall. It is a breach of University of London regulations to bring any written materials into the examination.
- Sit in your designated seat.
- DO NOT write your name anywhere on your answer booklet – ONLY your candidate number.
- Write legibly. A scribbled examination answer may earn fewer marks than if it had been written clearly simply because the examiner cannot read your writing.
- Make sure you answer the required number of questions and try to spend the correct amount of time on each one. If all questions carry equal marks, spend an equal amount of time on each one.

When You Receive the Paper

- Read the instructions at the top of the exam paper to make sure how many questions you are required to answer. It is also worth checking that you have been given the correct exam paper. Allocate the appropriate amount of time for each question. If, for example, you are asked to answer two questions in 90 minutes, then you should allow about five minutes to READ (and understand) each question and to formulate a plan of action. This gives about 35 minutes to answer each question and leaves five minutes to check through each answer and perhaps to add further information that reading through has reminded you about.
- Read all of the questions first. Be aware that there may be questions on the reverse of the page. Read carefully before making up your mind which questions to tackle. As you read each question, it sometimes helps to jot down a few words or formulae that immediately come into your mind. These jottings will assist you to
decide which questions you know most about and help you to form a rough plan of your answer either in your mind or on the script.
• Before writing anything, make sure that you understand what is required to answer the chosen question. Try to put yourself in the mind of the examiner to establish what he/she is actually asking. Answer the question on the paper and not one that you had expected and/or would have liked to have been asked.
• Keep your eye on the time and when the time you have allowed for the first question has passed you should finish the answer as quickly as possible even if you haven’t included all the relevant information. There may be time towards the end of the examination to finish the question to your complete satisfaction.
• Read through what you have written to make sure that what you have written is what you intended to write. Then go on to your second question. The rate at which marks are scored for a question is often very high for the first fifteen minutes of writing, but usually decreases rapidly as the time runs out.
• Make sure that you answer the required number of questions. If you are asked to attempt three questions and you only feel confident of answering two, you should always make an attempt at a third question. Failure to do so means that you have effectively thrown away 33.3% of the marks, and the maximum mark that you can achieve is 66.6%. Even if you write two distinction-level answers and attain 75% for each, you would only attain a mark of 50%—a bare pass.
• Start each answer on a new page of the answer book and write the number of the question at the top of every page. For multi-part questions, please also note which part you are answering (e.g. 2a, 4c, etc.). Don’t worry if other candidates are collecting supplementary answer books when you have only reached the middle of your answer book. Many students find it easier to write largely when writing at speed, or double-spaced to allow corrections or additions to be made more legibly, and so will use paper much more quickly.
• Fully label any diagrams, giving them titles (e.g. Figure 1), and refer to them in the text of your answer. Make sure that your diagrams are clearly presented, but realise that we do not expect great artistry! Do not waste time using various colours for drawings unless it is essential to make a part of the diagram clear.
• You should not leave the examination early (unless you feel unwell). Go over your work carefully to see if you can recall any additional information that would add to your answers. Think carefully before you cross out anything; it may be correct after all. Crossed-out writing is ignored by the examiners (even if it is correct).

Composing Answers
• Some questions start with the word ‘Discuss’, and this usually requires you to comment on, or critically appraise a statement, viewpoint or proposition in a clear, step-by-step sequence. An essay type of answer is required and it will be considerably improved if you take a few minutes to plan your answer to give the information in a logical order. If you start writing immediately, you will probably find that you need to add information later in your answer that will be out of sequence or make an untidy mess. It is likely that your answer will include a number of separate ideas or distinct pieces of information; these should be set out in separate paragraphs. Note that you may present arguments in support of or in disagreement with the statement, provided that the arguments are solid and show knowledge of the literature.

• If you encounter a question asking you to ‘compare and contrast’, make sure that you point out both the similarities (comparison) and differences (contrast) between the opposing topics or ideas. The basic points of composition for a discussion-type question apply.

• Answers to both these types of question will be considerably improved by including relevant examples to illustrate and amplify the theory. Answers to calculations should show clearly the method used step by step. Always summarise the final answer to the question and remember to include the units of the quantity, if appropriate.

• Avoid using abbreviations except the common ones such as e.g. In particular, do not use 'etc.' because it suggests that you do not really know any more but are trying to give the impression that you do. Instead, start a list of examples with the word ‘including’ or ‘for example’. You may, of course, use common technical abbreviations as used in the literature such as HRM.

Common Faults in Exams

Beyond an inadequate knowledge of the subject, the following areas commonly cause students to lose marks:
• Failure to understand what the question is about.
• Including irrelevant material.
• Lack of examples to support the statements you have made.
• Failure to devote the right amount of time to each question.

Attendance
• Classes for the taught modules run from 6.00 p.m. to 9.00 p.m. in the evening, usually with a short break in the middle. Each module is made up of one class a week for an 11-week term plus one or two revision classes in the Summer Term. Some modules with have a reading week either in the middle or at the end of a term to allow
you time to undertake independent reading and study for the module.
• Registers are often kept to enable staff to keep track of student progress. It is not uncommon, however, for Birkbeck students to find attendance difficult on occasions during their course. Students who cannot make a particular class for any reason should send their apologies, preferably by email, to the module tutor. It is the responsibility of students, not their lecturers, to ensure that they receive any materials or instructions that may be given out in classes they miss.
• If problems persist, be sure to discuss them with your Personal Tutor, as it may be possible to adjust your workload until the crisis is past or to arrange a break in studies while you deal with major problems. As with coursework, it is important to develop a regular pattern.
x. **Student support**

**Complaints Procedure**

It is hoped that most complaints can be resolved speedily by means of students pursuing matters informally but directly with the person concerned. In some circumstances where the informal approach fails or where the matter is sufficiently serious or urgent, steps can be taken using the formal complaints procedure. The student complaints procedure is set out on the University website in the Registry section at [http://www.bbk.ac.uk/reg/regulations](http://www.bbk.ac.uk/reg/regulations). The College recognises that students may have legitimate complaints relating to their course of study, the availability or quality of facilities, other students or staff of the College. Such complaints should normally, wherever possible, be put simply, clearly, promptly and directly to the members of staff or student(s) concerned.

Where the complaint relates to a teaching or School-related problem, a student should without delay discuss the problem
- with their Programme Director; or
- with any other member of staff of the School or programme designated for the purpose.

Where the complaint relates to any other aspect of the College’s services or facilities other than a teaching or School-related problem, a student should without delay discuss the problem with a senior member of staff of the Service concerned. A student may wish to consult a member of staff of their School or programme for advice before doing so. Students may also telephone or write to the Office of the Registrar for advice and guidance and/or for a ruling on the applicability of this procedure. Birkbeck College Students’ Union (BCSU) may also be able, in certain circumstances, to assist in presenting or resolving a complaint. Students should refer to the College website for additional information.

**The Students’ Union**

All internal students of Birkbeck College are automatically members of Birkbeck College Students’ Union, which exists to promote welfare and social activities for students, and to represent their interests on College committees. It is affiliated to the National Postgraduate Committee (www.npc.org.uk) and also provides a free, confidential and professional counselling service, an advice centre and study skills support. More information about these is available on its website: [http://www.bbk.ac.uk/su](http://www.bbk.ac.uk/su) or from the BCSU office on 020 7631 6335, or the President on 020 7631 6365 or by
email at president@bcsu.bbk.ac.uk. A broader range of social and sporting activities, including the Energy Base gym, is offered by the University of London Union (ULU), located next to the Malet Street Building, which Birkbeck students are entitled to join. Their website is http://www.ulu.lon.ac.uk

**Careers Information and Guidance**

Most students are interested in developing their careers, either within their current field of work or in a completely new direction. The Specialist Institutions’ Careers Service [SICS], part of The Careers Group, University of London, offers great expertise and experience in working with students and graduates of all ages and at all stages of career development. And it’s Birkbeck’s next-door neighbour!

- Term-time they offer an Early Evening Advisory Service specifically and exclusively for evening students on Mondays between 17.00 & 19.00.
- Drop-In Advice Service - Monday-Thursday, 14.00-16.30 – always very popular with the Birkbeck students.
- Longer Advisory Interviews can be arranged if necessary - for complete career beginners, for people wanting a practice job interview, and for every stage and situation in between.
- They also offer Psychometric Testing and Personality Assessment Workshops, Employer Presentations, Computer-based Career Guidance Programs, Insight Career Courses as well as invaluable information on Course Funding.

Enrolled students of Birkbeck who are following degree and postgraduate courses lasting one year or longer courses may use the services of SICS free of charge up to the end of July of the year they finish [September for postgrads]. For more information visit The SICS website at http://www.careers.lon.ac.uk/sics

SICS is located at:
4th. Floor, ULU Building, 
Malet Street 
WC1E 7HY 
020 7866 3600 
sics@careers.lon.ac.uk

**Accommodation**

The University of London Accommodation Office (ULAO) is the main office for the provision of available private sector accommodation details, advice and information for the University. Its full range of accommodation services is made available to all University of
London students and staff from participating Colleges and Institutes. Their contact details are:
Tel: 020 7862 8880
Fax: 020 7862 8084
Email: housing@lon.ac.uk
Website: http://housing.lon.ac.uk
The ULAO are able to assist students in searching for accommodation in the private sector. This can range from sharing with students, landlords, or searching for a studio flat, to forming groups with individual students or searching with others.

Overseas students joining the programmes will be sent the booklet Finding Somewhere to Live in London provided by ULAO, along with details of fees and payment from Birkbeck Registry.

**Disabilities**

At Birkbeck there are students with a wide range of disabilities including dyslexia, visual or hearing impairments, mobility difficulties, mental health needs, HIV, M.E., respiratory conditions etc. Many of them have benefited from the advice and support provided by the College’s disability service.

The College has a Disability Office located on the main corridor of the Malet Street building. We have a Disability Service Manager, Mark Pimm, and a Disability Advisor, Steve Short. Mark is your first point of referral for disability enquiries at the College whilst Steve is for dyslexia. They can provide advice and support on travel and parking, physical access, the Disabled Students Allowance, special equipment, personal support, examination arrangements etc. If you have a disability or dyslexia, we recommend you make an appointment to see them as soon as possible after commencing your course. Appointments lasting one hour are available from 12 noon to 5 pm Monday to Friday and are booked by Steve (details below).

At your first appointment at the Disability Office they will ask you to complete a Confidentiality Consent Form. This allows you to state who in the College can be informed of your disability. Remember, if you wish, we do not need to inform people of the exact nature of your disability, just your disability related needs. They will also complete an Individual Student Support Agreement form, confirming your support requirements and send this to your School and relevant Departments at the College so they are informed of your needs.
Access

Birkbeck’s main buildings have wheelchair access, accessible lifts and toilets, our reception desks have induction loops for people with hearing impairments and we have large print and tactile signage. Disabled parking, lockers, specialist seating in lectures and seminars and portable induction loops etc can all be arranged by the Disability Office.

The Disabled Students Allowance

Students with disabilities or dyslexia on undergraduate or most postgraduate courses who meet the eligibility criteria regarding residency are eligible to apply for the Disabled Students Allowance (DSA). This can meet the cost of special equipment e.g. computers, cassette recorders, etc, non-medical personal help e.g. note-takers, interpreters, readers, etc, book and photocopying allowances and additional travel costs. The Disability Service Manager can assist you in applying to your Local Education Authority (LEA) for this.

The Personal Assistance Scheme

Some students need a personal assistant to provide support on their course, for example a note-taker, sign language interpreter, reader, personal assistant, disability mentor or dyslexia support tutor. Birkbeck uses 2 specialist agencies to recruit Personal Assistants and they can assist you with recruiting, training and paying your personal assistant. Please contact Steve for information on this scheme.

Support in your School

The provision which can be made for students with disabilities by Schools is set out in the Procedures for Schools for Compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act. This is available from the Disability Office and the Disability website (see below).

As mentioned above your School will receive a copy of your Individual Student Support Agreement from the Disability Office. This will make specific recommendations about the support you should receive from the School. Whilst we anticipate that this support will be provided by the Programme Director, tutors and School Administrator the Department of GEDS also has a Disability Liaison Officer, Dr Martin Frost. If you experience any difficulties or require additional support from the School then they may also be able to assist you. He may be contacted at m.frost@bbk.ac.uk.
Support in Central Computing Services and Library Services

There is a comprehensive range of specialist equipment for students with disabilities in Central Computing Services. This includes software packages for dyslexic students (TextHELP Read and Write and Inspiration), screen reading and character enhancing software for students with visual impairments, specialist scanning software, large monitors, ergonomic mice and keyboards, specialist orthopaedic chairs etc. For advice and assistance please contact the Disability IT Officer. There is also a range of specialist equipment in the Library including a CCTV reading machine for visually impaired students as well as specialist orthopaedic chairs and writing slopes. The Disability Office refers all students with disabilities to the Library Access Support service who provides a comprehensive range of services for students with disabilities.

Specific Learning Difficulties (Dyslexia)

Mature students who experienced problems at school are often unaware that these problems may result from their being dyslexic. Whilst dyslexia cannot be cured, you can learn strategies, which make studying significantly easier. If you think you may be dyslexic you should contact Steve, he can screen you and where appropriate refer you to an Educational Psychologist for a dyslexia assessment. These assessments cost £215. Some students can receive assistance in meeting this cost from their employer. In exceptional cases students may receive assistance from the Access Fund.

Examinations

Students with disabilities and dyslexia may be eligible for special arrangements for examinations e.g. extra time, use of a word processor, amanuensis, enlarged examination papers etc. In order to receive special arrangements you must provide Medical Evidence of their disability (or an Educational Psychologists Report if you are dyslexic). For School examinations you should contact your Programme Director to request special arrangements at least 2 weeks before the examination. For main College summer examinations you are given the opportunity to declare that you require special provision on your assessment entry form which is circulated by the School in December. Students who require provision should then attend an appointment with the Disability Office to discuss and formalise the appropriate arrangements. The closing date for making special examination arrangements in College examinations is the 15th March and beyond this date consideration will only be given to emergency cases.
The Disability Handbook

The Disability Handbook provides detailed information on the support available from the College. Copies are available from all main reception areas, the Disability Office and from the College disability web site at: http://www.bbk.ac.uk/disability/policies. For further information or to make an appointment to see Mark or Steve, please call Steve Short (Disability Advisor) on 020 7631 6336 or email disability@bbk.ac.uk.

Nursery

The College operates a well-equipped evening nursery at a moderate cost and nursery facilities are available to students. The nursery is open in term-time from 5.30 – 9.00 pm and takes a maximum of 16 children per evening. Children two to ten years are accepted. In exceptional circumstances, children up to 12 will be accepted. However, Nursery Staff reserve the right not to accept older children if they are disruptive. The cost is £8.50 per evening per child (£1.00 discount per evening for two children booked into the Nursery on the same night). For further information please see http://www.bbk.ac.uk/hr/policies_services/nursery or contact the Nursery Manager, Deirdre Lazarus, Evening Nursery (Birkbeck College), 50-51 Gordon Square, London WC1H 0PQ, tel. 020 7679 4634 (24 hour answer phone – term-time only) or email: (d.lazarus@bbk.ac.uk).

Medical Services

The Gower Street Practice at 20 Gower Street (tel: 020 7636 7628) provides National Health facilities for Birkbeck students. The practice provides the following:
• Doctor’s appointments. If you need to see a doctor, you should make an appointment (telephone 020 7636 7628).
• Open Clinics. These are held between 9.15am and 10.30am Monday to Friday and do not require an appointment.
• Nursing Sisters’ clinic. These are held every day from 9.15am to 10.30am and from 2.30pm to 4.00pm. You can attend these without an appointment.
• Travel Clinic. Held on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 9.00am to 11.45am, here you can get both inoculations and advice on overseas travel. No appointment is necessary.
• Emergency appointments. In case of emergencies, a doctor is in attendance from 4.30-5.30pm. You can attend these without an appointment.
• Psychiatric help and counselling. The practice offers both psychiatric help and counselling services. If a tutor believes that either of these would aid a student, he or she can refer the student to the practice or contact the on-call doctor directly. The doctors are particularly experienced in problems of study stress, fatigue and related matters.

Further information: http://www.gowerstreetpractice.org.uk/index.html

Grants and Awards

The College recognises that mature students have needs for financial support that differ from those of school-leavers. It therefore provides advice on sources of support for both part-time and full-time students from public bodies, employers, charitable foundations, etc., and maintains its own scheme of awards operated by the Scholarships Sub-Committee. Information on financial support for study, including regulations, eligibility criteria and method of application are available from the Student Financial Support Office on 020 7631 6362 or at studentawards@bbk.ac.uk