POSTGRADUATE CERTIFICATE | DIPLOMA | MASTERS

CULTURE DIASPORA ETHNICITY

Handbook 2014/15

Full-Time & Year 1

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOSOCIAL STUDIES

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES, HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY
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Introduction

Welcome to the PG Cert/PG Dip/ MA Culture Diaspora Ethnicity Programmes at Birkbeck

We warmly welcome you to the PG Cert/PG Dip/ MA Culture Diaspora Ethnicity programmes. This interdisciplinary programme brings together and builds upon innovative traditions of postcolonial studies at Birkbeck. It stretches across the social sciences and arts and humanities and draws from Sociology, Cultural Studies, History, Law, Literary Studies, Psychosocial Studies and Urban Studies. The programme explores core historical and theoretical perspectives in the broad multidisciplinary area of 'race' and ethnicity, multiculture and postcoloniality. It examines connections between histories of empire and contemporary social formations and inequalities in the U.K and Europe and considers how local debates on 'race' and racism are shaped by the global geopolitics of the twenty-first century.

The programme was developed by Professor Avtar Brah and Professor John Solomos in 1986 and was rehoused in the new Department of Psychosocial Studies in 2010. It is convened by academic staff who are currently working on research on racialisation, psychoanalysis and postcoloniality; contemporary political communities and urban cultures; criminalisation and imprisonment and housing, ‘development’ and displacement.

This handbook will be the main source of important information throughout the duration of the programme. You will receive separate module guides for each core and special subject optional module and they will be distributed at the beginning of each module.
Programme Staff

Luca Bartozzi  l.bartozzi@bbk.ac.uk
Dr Richard Bramwell  r.bramwell@bbk.ac.uk
Dr Melissa Fernandez  m.fernandez@bbk.ac.uk
Professor Stephen Frosh  s.frosh@bbk.ac.uk
Dr Gail Lewis  g.lewis@bbk.ac.uk
Dr Yasmeen Narayan  y.narayan@bbk.ac.uk
Edel Quinn  edel.quinn@bbk.ac.uk

Department Address

Department of Psychosocial Studies, School of Social Science, History and Philosophy
Birkbeck College, University of London
30 Russell Square
London WC1B 5DT
Student Support

The Personal Tutor is Luca Bartozzi and we would ask you to contact him to discuss your progress or if you have any particular concerns. Your Personal Tutor can also offer guidance on essay writing and choosing special subject option modules.

There are other forms of support for students as detailed in your Student Handbook and on the My Birkbeck website [http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services](http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services) including disability support, additional study skills support, English Language support, the University counselling service, the Students’ Union and the Careers Service. Please speak with your Personal Tutor if you have difficulty accessing any of these services or if you require other forms of support that are not detailed in this handbook.

Moodle

Moodle, the Virtual Learning Environment of Birkbeck, can be used to communicate with fellow students and staff, to access the required readings each week and to submit essays and receive feedback. Please ensure that you familiarise yourself with Moodle at the beginning of the programme. If you experience any difficulties with Moodle, please contact the Programme Administrator.

Student-Staff Exchange Committee

Student-staff exchange meetings will take place twice a year. This will ensure that you have an opportunity to make your views on learning, teaching and programme design known. Students are asked to nominate two programme representatives (one full-time and one part-time) by the fourth week of the first term.
For guidance, programme representatives should encourage their co-students to identify strengths of the courses as well as any areas of concern. A Class Representative Handbook is available from the Birkbeck Student’s Union.

Student representatives meet twice a year with the Director for a Student-Staff Exchange Committee at the following times:

**Monday 17 November 2014 at 5.0**

**Monday 2 February 2015 at 5.0**

Prior to the Student-Staff Exchange Committee, the programme representatives are sent an email asking them to email or meet with the rest of their cohort to discuss any matters pertaining to the programme that they would like raised. Once any issues have been identified, the programme representatives should email Yasmeen with items for the agenda. Matters can be raised anonymously if appropriate. Minutes of this meeting and actions taken following the meeting are circulated to all students. Matters discussed at the Student-Staff Exchange Committee are also conveyed to all academic staff who work on the Culture Diaspora Ethnicity programme and the Head of the Department of Psychosocial Studies.

**Birkbeck Term Dates 2014/15**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Dates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Autumn Term</td>
<td>Monday 29 September to Friday 12 December 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring Term</td>
<td>Monday 5 January to Friday 20 March 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer Term</td>
<td>Monday 20 April to Friday 3 July 2015</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Fees

For information on fees, please contact the Fees Office, Birkbeck, Malet Street, London WC1E 7HX. Tel: 020 7631 6295 or, for email contacts, see http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/finance/fees-information/contact-us.

Birkbeck Library

Details on how to register with the library are sent to you when you enrol. For queries about library membership, please call the Reader Services Librarian on 020 7631 6369 or please see http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/facilities/library/birkbeck-library-guide.

University of London Senate House Library

Details will also be sent to you about how to join the University of Senate House Library when you enrol.
Computing and Communication

All students are entitled to computing and word processing services. You will need to use your username and password to access IT services. These are provided to all registered students of the College along with personal storage space on a networked file server.

An email address nominated and maintained by each student will be used for all College correspondence. Students requiring a Birkbeck email account can apply for one (see [http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/facilities/computing/email](http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/facilities/computing/email)). You are expected to access your My Birkbeck Profile to update your email address and other personal details and to access information about your programme of study.

It is important that the address, telephone numbers and email addresses that we have for you are up-to-date so that we can get in touch with you quickly if necessary.

Please inform both Registry and the Programme Administrator of any change of name by email.

Class Times

Students should be available for classes between 6.00 - 8.30 pm.

Attendance

Students are expected to regularly attend classes. If you are unable to attend a class for your option please inform the Programme Administrator. If you are unable to attend a class for the core module please email the Module Lecturer.

Teaching Methods

These include lectures, seminar discussions, group work, tutorials, student presentations and student-led seminars. Teaching methods vary across option modules.
Guidelines for Lecture Seminar Participation for Core Modules

The objective of the lecture is to give you a broad overview of theoretical and political discussions relevant to each week's topic. Do ask questions during the lecture. You can also refer to the lecture in seminar discussions.

Students are expected to read the required readings on Moodle and to come to class prepared with criticism, comments or questions to contribute to seminar discussions. Do refer to relevant readings when you participate. Working closely with the texts will help you develop a more advanced understanding of central arguments and enable you to develop your own position. You may draw on personal experience to illustrate particular points of argument but in relation to the texts and debates under discussion.

Please note that there are different points of entry to the programme and thus varying familiarity with different bodies of knowledge. We also ask you to be mindful that there may be students who are hard of hearing or profoundly deaf who are working with British Sign Language Interpreters and note-takers in class.

Students presenting at the seminar may answer one of the essay and seminar presentation questions on the module reading guide or may formulate their own question. If you choose to formulate your own question, do send this to the module lecturer in advance for approval. Students must advance their own argument in relation to the relevant debates and open up questions for discussion and not just summarise particular texts.

Tutorials

Core module lecturers and your personal tutor are available for tutorials by arrangement. Students should contact staff directly. We strongly advise that students meet with their Personal Tutor to discuss essay plans for their core modules and special subject option modules particularly if they are unfamiliar with a specific subject area.
Study Skills

There will be two sessions on study skills in the autumn term. Please see the ‘Study Skills’ module guide on Moodle.

There are also other resources on study skills available at Birkbeck. Please see http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/facilities/support for further information.
Programme Structure

The programme combines taught core and special subject option modules with the opportunity for independent research supervised by an academic. The core modules introduce you to central historical and theoretical perspectives in the interdisciplinary subject area of ‘race’ and ethnicity, multiculture and postcoloniality. Option modules are specialist courses which focus on a specific area such as human rights, migration and refugees, or perspectives on Japanese cinema.

Postgraduate Certificate students take 60 credits composed of two core modules or one core module and one option module.

Postgraduate Diploma students complete 120 credits and take two core modules and two option modules.

Masters students complete 180 credits and take two core modules, two optional modules, a Research Methods module and complete a dissertation.

Full-Time Students

- ‘Race,’ Racism, Postcoloniality (Autumn term, Core Module 1 | 30 credits)
- Culture, Community, Identity (Spring term, Core Module 2 | 30 credits)
- Two Option Modules (30 credits each. Please see separate special subject options module document)
- A Postcolonial Imagination | Researching ‘Race’ and Contemporary Culture (Spring Term)
- Dissertation Workshop Series (Summer term)
- Dissertation (60 credits)
Part-Time Students

Year 1

- ‘Race,’ Racism, Postcoloniality (Autumn term, Core Module 1 | 30 credits)
- Option Module 1 (30 credits. Please see separate special subject option modules booklet.)
- A Postcolonial Imagination | Researching ‘Race’ and Contemporary Culture (Spring term.)
- Dissertation Workshop Series (Summer term)

Year 2

- Option Module 2 (30 credits. Please see separate special subject option modules booklet.)
- Culture, Community, Identity (Spring term, Core Module 2 | 30 credits)
- 10,000-12,000 word dissertation (60 credits)
- Presentations | Dissertation workshops (Summer Term)

In Year 1, part-time students take the core module ‘Race’, Racism, Postcoloniality’ in the autumn term. Option modules can be taken in the autumn, spring or summer terms depending on individual workloads. We recommend however that students take their option module in the spring term in order to balance their workload throughout the year. The module ‘A Postcolonial Imagination: Researching ‘Race’ and Contemporary Culture’ will be held in the spring term and a series of dissertation workshops will be held in the summer term.

In Year 2, option modules can be taken in the autumn, spring or summer terms depending on individual workloads but we advise students to take their option module in the autumn term to balance their workload throughout the year. The core module ‘Culture, Community, Identity’ is held in the spring term. The dissertation is submitted at the beginning of September at the end of their second academic year.
Full-Time students

Autumn 2014 | Core Module 1 | ‘Race’, Racism, Postcoloniality

This interdisciplinary, introductory module stretches across the social sciences and arts and humanities. It explores connections between histories of empire and contemporary social formations and inequalities in the UK and considers how local debates on ‘race’ and racism are shaped by the global geopolitics of the twenty-first century. The module explores the ‘discovery’ of the ‘New World’, histories of enslavement and colonisation and the concept of ‘race’ and the invention of ‘the West’. It then turns to debates on the human sciences, ‘progress’ and ‘race’ in ‘the age of Enlightenment’ before exploring discussions on colonial cultures, class, ‘respectability’ and the invention of ‘whiteness’ and modernity, the holocaust and ‘racial science’.

The module then considers the legacies of earlier work on ‘race relations’, ‘new ethnicities’ and anti-racist political resistance and debates on ‘identity’, ‘race’ and feminisms and ‘race’, psychoanalysis and postcoloniality. It further explores postcolonial, psychosocial perspectives on racialisation and returns to debates on the ethics, traditional boundaries, silences and political contradictions of work on postcoloniality.

Special Subject Option Module 1

Full-time students choose two special subject optional modules (30 credits each) and part-time students choose one special subject option module each year. The options available for students to take will be confirmed at the beginning of each academic year. Details of optional modules are available in a separate document. Please email the Programme Administrator Edel Quinn if you don’t receive one. Students must complete a form which details their choice of option module(s) which must be returned electronically to Edel Quinn at edel.quinn@bbk.ac.uk before the beginning of each academic year.
**Spring Term 2015 | Core Module 2 | ‘Culture, Community, Identity’**

This module draws from postcolonial sociology, cultural studies, history, law, literary studies, psychosocial studies and urban studies and explores postcolonial cultures, communities and identities. It is framed by debates on the civil unrest in British cities in 2011, the mass unemployment of the young and the politics of austerity, the ‘war on terror’ and ‘radicalisation’ and the re-emergence of the far right across the U.K and Europe. It explores discussions on the ethics of work on ‘race’ and postcoloniality; orientalism and nationalism; theorising ‘culture’, ‘community’ and creolisation and postcolonial belonging, ‘urban cultures’ and diaspora. The module then considers debates on contemporary global multiculturalism, cultural syncretism, ‘race’ and ‘beauty’ and ‘cultural appropriation’ before turning to discussions on religious revivals and contemporary possibilities of political community; the imperial histories of ‘western feminism’, ‘homonationalism’ and ‘the war on terror’; ‘mixedness’, ‘whiteness’ and postcoloniality.

**Spring 2015 | ‘A Postcolonial Imagination’: Researching ‘Race’ and Contemporary Culture**

The module *A Postcolonial Imagination* provides students with a cartography of contemporary approaches to analysing postcolonial social and cultural formations. It draws from sociology, cultural studies, urban studies, psychosocial studies and anthropology and considers debates on methods and methodologies, the connections between research methods, research ethics, local ‘racial’ formations and global geopolitics and on crafting ‘a postcolonial imagination’. The module then turns to discussions on discourse analysis, interviews, semiotics, reading and writing culture, the politics of representation, urban and visual ethnography and developing a postcolonial/border research practice. The module explores the politics and poetics of researching and representing ‘race’, contemporary culture and postcoloniality.

**Special Subject Option module 2**
Summer 2015 | Dissertation Workshop

This workshop series explores the processes and practices of crafting a dissertation and incorporates composing a literature review, writing a methodology chapter, debates on research ethics and the analysis and representation of empirical data.

Dissertation

The dissertation is 10,000-12,000 words in length. Full-time students submit this at the end of the academic year at the beginning of September. Part-time students submit their dissertation at the end of Year 2 at the beginning of September. You will work closely with a dissertation supervisor.

Part-Time Students

Year 1

Autumn 2014 | Core Module 1 | 'Race', Racism, Postcoloniality

This interdisciplinary, introductory module stretches across the social sciences and arts and humanities. It explores connections between histories of empire and contemporary social formations and inequalities in the UK and considers how local debates on 'race' and racism are shaped by the global geopolitics of the twenty-first century. The module explores the 'discovery' of the 'New World', histories of enslavement and colonisation, the concept of 'race' and the invention of 'the West'. It then turns to debates on the human sciences, 'progress' and 'race' in 'the age of Enlightenment' before exploring discussions on colonial cultures, class, 'respectability' and the invention of 'whiteness' and modernity, the holocaust and 'racial science'.

The module then considers the legacies of earlier work on 'race relations', 'new ethnicities' and anti-racist political resistance and debates on 'identity', 'race' and feminisms and 'race', psychoanalysis and postcoloniality. It further explores postcolonial, psychosocial perspectives on
racialisation and returns to debates on the ethics, traditional boundaries, silences and political contradictions of work on postcoloniality.

**Special Subject Option Module 1**

Full-time students choose two special subject optional modules (30 credits each) and part-time students choose one special subject option module each year. The options available for students to take will be confirmed at the beginning of each academic year. Details of optional modules are available in a separate document. Please email the Programme Administrator if you don’t receive one. Students must complete a form which details their choice of option module(s) which must be returned electronically to Edel at edelquinn@bbk.ac.uk before the beginning of each academic year.

**Spring 2015 | ‘A Postcolonial Imagination’: Researching ‘Race’ and Contemporary Culture**

The module *A Postcolonial Imagination* provides students with a cartography of contemporary approaches to analysing postcolonial social and cultural formations. It draws from sociology, cultural studies, urban studies, psychosocial studies and anthropology and considers debates on methods and methodologies, the connections between research methods, ethics, local ‘racial’ formations and global geopolitics and on crafting ‘a postcolonial imagination’. The module then turns to discussions on discourse analysis, interviews, semiotics, reading and writing culture, the politics of representation, urban and visual ethnography and developing a postcolonial/border research practice. The module explores the politics and poetics of researching and representing ‘race’, contemporary culture and postcoloniality.

**Summer 2015 | Dissertation Workshop**

This workshop series explores the processes and practices of crafting a dissertation and incorporates composing a literature review, writing a methodology chapter, debates on research ethics and the analysis and representation of empirical data.
Year 2

Special Subject Option module 2

Spring Term 2016 | Core Module 2 | ‘Culture, Community, Identity’

This module draws from postcolonial sociology, cultural studies, history, law, literary studies, psychosocial studies and urban studies and explores postcolonial cultures, communities and identities. It is framed by debates on the civil unrest in British cities in 2011, the mass unemployment of the young and the politics of austerity, the ‘war on terror’ and ‘radicalisation’ and the re-emergence of the far right across the U.K and Europe. It explores discussions on the ethics of work on ‘race’ and postcoloniality; orientalism and nationalism; theorising ‘culture’, ‘community’ and creolisation and postcolonial belonging, ‘urban cultures’ and diaspora. The module then considers debates on contemporary global multiculture, cultural syncretism, ‘race’ and ‘beauty’ and ‘cultural appropriation’ before turning to discussions on religious revivalisms and contemporary possibilities of political community; the imperial histories of ‘western feminism’, ‘homonationalism’ and ‘the war on terror’; ‘mixedness’, ‘whiteness’ and postcoloniality.

Summer Term 2016 | Dissertation Workshops

Year 2 students may wish to re-attend particular sessions on, for example, composing a literature review, writing a methodology chapter, on research ethics or on how to analyse and represent empirical data. We do however ask Year 2 students to attend to present and discuss their work-in-progress.

Dissertation

The dissertation is 10,000-12,000 words in length. Full-time students submit this at the end of the academic year at the beginning of September. Part-time students submit their dissertation at the end of Year 2 at the beginning of September. You will work closely with a dissertation supervisor.
Assessment

*Each core module* is assessed by a **4000 word essay**. Please observe the word count which can be -/+ **10%**. Essay titles may be selected from the list of questions in the module handbooks or students may formulate their own title subject to approval. Forms of assessment vary across special subject option modules. Core module lecturers cannot read full drafts of essays but can look at essay plans. If the option module lecturer is unavailable to meet for a tutorial or to look at an essay plan, please meet with your Personal Tutor.

Please submit an electronic copy of your essays for the core modules via the Virtual Learning Environment/Moodle on or before the deadline. Ensure that you are aware of the submission instructions for each special subject option module.

**Essay Guidelines**

Guidance on how to write and present essays will be discussed during study skills sessions. You can also meet with your Personal Tutor to further discuss essay writing skills.

**Content**

Essays should always present an *argument* in answer to the chosen question.

*An essay should provide an analysis of the subject and not a simply a description or summary of the arguments of others.*
The argument should be presented coherently, substantiated by the arguments of others and soberly presented in clear, formal language. It should respond precisely to the question posed. Your argument should be sustained from the first paragraph to the last, with each paragraph contributing in some way to the support or elucidation of your argument. The first paragraph is particularly important in organising your essay. It should address the question directly and crisply, and introduce the argument that you intend to make. Simplicity of expression throughout is strongly preferred. Marks will be awarded according to the quality, clarity and coherence of the argument presented in the essay; the essay’s structure; how well the main claims of the essay are supported by evidence and whether reference is made to the relevant literature.

All essays should be typed and double-spaced and printed in a font of a readable size. Remember to number the pages of your assignment. Each page should have your student ID no. in the top right hand corner. Do not print your name or your programme title on your essay.

Writing an Essay

• **Beginning**

  1. Why has the question been set?

  2. What specific areas of the module or programme does it relate to?

  3. Why is this topic important?

• **What are you expected to demonstrate?**

  1. Subject specific knowledge

  2. Understanding of theory and its potential practical application

  3. Writing skills
• **Getting started**

1. Plan timetable
2. What are the main issues?
3. What will you draw on?
4. What will the main points of your argument be?
5. What illustrations, references and quotes will be useful?
6. What conclusions will you reach?
7. Are there any theoretical/practical implications in your conclusions?

• **Make a list/brainstorm**

1. Write down ideas and words on separate pieces of paper or on one piece of paper
2. Draw a mind map

• **Starting to write**

• Further clarification of focus of essay (discuss with other students, check back with tutor)

• **First draft**

• **Establish arguments and key sequences as follows:**

1. Make a claim
2. Define terms: put them in context
3. Use specific information from other sources to support your argument
4. Conclusion: What is your position?
• **Support your argument by**
  1. Using reasoning
  2. Citing authorities
  3. Drawing on research findings or other empirical evidence

• **Acknowledging sources and referencing for core modules**
  1. Use quotations (cite publication date and page number)
  2. Summarise/explain ideas (cite surname of author and year of publication in brackets)
  3. Refer to specific idea or information (cite page number)
  4. Mention writer in text

• **Edit overall structure**
  1. Introduction
  2. Main body of essay (argument, evidence and analysis, ideas in a logical sequence)
  3. Conclusion: summary of ideas directly relating them to the essay title
  4. Discuss wider political and theoretical relevance
  5. Implications for further research
  6. References

• **Evaluating your argument: have you?**
  1. Answered the question
2. Written a clear introduction
3. Clearly signposted your argument in the main body
4. Made sure that the information is relevant
5. Made sure your conclusion is relevant, summarises your argument and follows logically
6. Indicated what the implications of the argument are

- **Being critical**

This means questioning ideas, information and research findings as well as underlying presuppositions and discussing them in your essay. Ask yourself:

1. What is my own position?
2. What would opposing positions include?
3. What would they consider that I have not considered?
4. What are the political issues at stake?

- **Rereading your essay**

1. Read it aloud. Is it clear and coherent?
2. Ask someone else to read it. Do they find your argument clear, coherent and persuasive?
3. Have you included all the points of argument that you wanted to?
4. Are your ideas in clear order?
5. Is evidence used accurate?
• **Editing**
  1. Check spelling, grammar
  2. Punctuation
  3. Presentation

• **Using feedback**
  1. Do ask for clarification if required
  2. Discuss areas for development in your next essay
  3. Categorise comments made
  4. Compare feedback with your own assessment of your essay
  5. Re-read feedback before completing next essay

Do check with the Option Module Lecturers on required style of referencing.
Bibliography for Core Modules – The Harvard System

Include all texts you have referred to in your essay in the Bibliography.

- **Book References**
  1. surname, initial
  2. year of publication
  3. title (*underline or use italics for titles of books*)
  4. publisher
  5. place of publication

- **Article References**
  1. surname, initial
  2. year of publication
  3. article’s title
  4. journal’s title (*underline or use italics for titles of journals*)
  5. volume and issue number
  6. page number(s)
Examples


Bhabha, H. (1983) 'The Other Question...' in *Screen*, volume 24, number 6 November/December, 18-36


Web References

As with books or journals, but with the internet address appended.

**Example**


Examples of Referencing in the Essay

When you have used, quoted or paraphrased a source, acknowledge it. Either in the sentence, or at the end of the sentence, write the author's name, the date of publication and the page number(s). Fuller details of the source should be given in the bibliography.

- Example 1: Introducing a quotation:
Nonetheless, the film was deliberately inaccurate about the life of Jose Marti. Jesus Colon pointed this out when he wrote, 'Jose Marti never had a mansion or a hut of his own. Needless to say, he never had slaves' (Colon 1982, p.82).

- Example 2: Acknowledging a paraphrased source:

Nonetheless, the film was deliberately inaccurate about Jose Marti, who, contrary to the image depicted in American films, spent much of his life in poverty (Colon, 1982, pp81-82).

- Example 3: Indent quotes longer than fifty words:

   Angry at Hollywood versions of Latin American History, Colon wrote:

   'After pictures like 'Zapata' and 'Santiago' we can only hope that these Hollywood vulgarisers and distorters, without the least bit of respect for the history and culture of our Latin American nations, won't lay their bovine eyes upon epic themes like the Aztec struggle against Cortes' conquest of Mexico, or Sandino's against American Imperialism... (Colon 1982, p.84)'.

Books for Study and Research

- Northedge, A. Good Study Guide (OUP)
- Drew, S and Bingham, R 1997 The Student Skills Guide (Gower)
- Denscombe, M (1998): The Good Research Guide for small-scale social research projects (OUP)
Marking Guide for Core Modules

All essays are double-marked internally and may be submitted to the external examiner for moderation. All essays will be returned to students via Moodle with a provisional mark and written comments. The provisional mark may be revised by the external examiner following the Examination Board meeting. We hope to return essays submitted on time within four weeks. It may not always be possible to return essays submitted late within four weeks. Marked dissertations will only be returned after the November Examination Board meeting where marks are confirmed.

Marking Schema

70% and above (Distinction)

60-69% (Merit)

50-59% (Pass)
A satisfactory answer. Approach and content gives some evidence of reading and awareness of debate but may be too descriptive or generalized and needs a clearer focus. May have some gaps

40-49% (Fail)

Work which shows some knowledge of the literature and addresses the question but lacks organisation or coherence. Maybe wholly descriptive with uncritical coverage of debates and issues of experience. Needs to develop understanding of concepts. Skills of planning, structuring and presentation are weak. Insufficient understanding and scarce use of reading and sources, which may be inadequately cited.

0-39% (Fail)

Work which requires substantial development which does not address the question and shows little or no knowledge of the subject, and fails to engage with any of the key issues.
Dissertation

The dissertation gives students the opportunity to conduct an independent and original piece of research which will reflect an advanced knowledge of particular theoretical and political debates in a specialist subject area. It allows students to build upon and apply the knowledge and understanding gained in earlier core and specialist subject optional modules and to demonstrate the ability to plan and complete an independent research project over a specific period of time. It should make an original contribution in that it presents new data, offers a new analysis of existing data or a new interpretation of existing literature or debates. Students can undertake either an empirical research project or a theoretical research project.

Students undertaking empirical research will need to submit an ethics form for approval by the School ethics committee prior to undertaking any research. Please see http://www.bbk.ac.uk/sshp/our-research/sshp-ethics-committee-and-procedures-1.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the dissertation, you will

- have gained practical skills in designing and planning an independent research project
- have further developed your skills in research methods
- be able to identify the problems and limitations of specific research methodologies
- have further developed your ability to critically assess arguments and to select appropriate supporting evidence
- be able to present your findings in a clear and well-structured manner
- be able to advance a rigorous and persuasive argument
- have developed your knowledge of theoretical and political debates relevant to the specialist subject area
Dissertation Supervisor

Once you have submitted your dissertation proposal, you will be allocated a dissertation supervisor. Their role is to help you clarify your dissertation topic and focus it into a project of an appropriate scale, to suggest any further reading or lines of library research, to advise you on methods of research, and to read one full draft of the dissertation and provide feedback prior to final submission.

You are responsible for arranging appointments with your dissertation supervisor and for agreeing a date for submitting a full draft for comment. You are entitled to have three one-hour meetings with your dissertation supervisor. Please remember that you need to have completed a substantial amount of work before the summer break. Dissertation supervisors are not normally available during the summer. It is your responsibility to ensure that you have received feedback on a draft of your dissertation before the end of the summer term.

Timetable

This timetable below is for Year 2 part-time students and full-time students only and is provided for information only for Year 1 part-time students to help you plan the following academic year. It is also solely a guide to help you plan your independent research project. The dates are flexible with the exception of the final submission date.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Tasks/Submission Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 November 2014</td>
<td>Submit dissertation proposal for Year 2 part-time students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Tasks/Submission Dates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 November 2014</td>
<td>Dissertation Supervisors allocated for <strong>Year 2</strong> part-time students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 December 2014</td>
<td>Draft Literature Review of 2000 words to be submitted to Dissertation Supervisor for <strong>Year 2</strong> part-time students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 February 2015</td>
<td><strong>Full-Time</strong> students to submit their provisional dissertation proposals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring Term 2015</td>
<td>1(^{st}) supervision meeting (to discuss dissertation proposal, to set up a timetable of work and ethics approval if undertaking empirical research) for both <strong>full-time</strong> and <strong>Year 2</strong> part-time students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2(^{nd}) supervision meeting (to monitor progress of work)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td><strong>Tasks/Submission Dates</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer Term 2015</td>
<td>Writing and review of whole draft of dissertation by <strong>full-time</strong> and <strong>Year 2</strong> students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3(^{rd}) supervision meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 September 2015</td>
<td>Dissertation Submission Deadline</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Submission

An electronic copy must be submitted via Moodle on 1 September 2015.

Dissertations must be typed using double line spacing throughout on A4 sized paper. Pages should be numbered consecutively.

Dissertation Length

The dissertation should be 10,000 – 12,000 words. Footnotes are included in the word count but the word count does not include the bibliography or appendices. Material should not be included in an appendix that has not been referred to in some detail and quoted from in the main text.
Title Page

The title page should state the following information:

Title

Name

This dissertation is submitted as partial fulfilment for the Degree of

MA Culture Diaspora Ethnicity,

Birkbeck, University of London

Research Dissertation

Word count

I certify that the work submitted herewith is my own and that I have duly acknowledged any quotation from the published or unpublished work of other persons.

Date:
Dissertation Structure

The word count accorded to each section below is only an approximation and is provided as a rough guide to the proportion of words that should be dedicated to each section:

**Title:** This should clearly reflect the subject of your dissertation. Please see sample dissertations on Moodle for guidance.

**Acknowledgements:** If included.

**Abstract:** This should be 250-300 words in length. It should clearly state the aims of the study, the research methods you have employed and a summary of your argument. Do refer to other dissertations and research articles for guidance.

**Table of contents:** Including page references as well as titles for introduction, chapters, conclusion, bibliography, and, where appropriate, appendices.

**Introduction:** 1000

This should be concise and should include why you decided upon this topic, a clear statement of the aims of the study, the research questions you have explored and a brief summary of your argument. It should also include a brief description of each of the chapters that follow.

**Literature Review:** 2000

This should be comprehensive but not exhaustive and should clearly locate your study in relation to existing bodies of work. For an empirical study the literature review is usually no more than
two thousand words. For theoretical dissertations, the literature review and analysis in the main body of the dissertation may be more closely integrated.

**Methodology:** 1500

There should be a careful and thorough description of the methodological approach taken in the study and full information on how the research was conducted. This should include information such as the process of recruiting respondents or selecting images, speeches or texts, procedures of collecting data and methods of analysis employed. Theoretical dissertations should provide a brief description of how the study was planned and executed. This may include a range of material you looked at beyond the literature directly relevant to your study and the collection and use of other illustrative material. You should critically reflect on the research process to include a consideration of the strengths and limitations of your methodological approach and what you might do differently when you conduct research in the future.

**Findings/Analysis:** 4500 – 6500

This should be a narrative of your analysis. You should begin with a brief overview so that the reader can see the structure of the argument that follows. For empirical studies, there should be an analytic commentary in dialogue with empirical data such as extracts from interviews or ethnographic observations. You should present enough data so that the reader is able to critically assess your argument. Do not assume that the data speaks for itself. It is important to provide a narrative and a clear and persuasive argument based on your interpretation of the data. You should also examine your findings and formulate your analysis in light of existing relevant bodies of literature.

**Conclusion:** 1000

Your conclusion should include a persuasive and rigorous restatement of your argument and a succinct reflection on the main outcomes of your dissertation. Identify the significance and relevance of this particular subject area to both academic and wider public debates and incorporate a discussion of both the local and global significance of your study.
Bibliography

The bibliography should be composed of a full list of the sources to which you have made reference in the text. The guidelines for referencing are the same as for other essays.

Appendices

An appendix contains data (e.g. statistics, full interview transcripts, the full transcript of a speech, unpublished reports or other illustrative material) which supports your argument yet may be too large to include in your main text and which may be otherwise unavailable to the reader.

Appendices can also include copies of letters, interview schedules, questionnaires and any other material used in the data collection process. Only include relevant material. Often a quotation from the material and a supporting reference in your main text will be sufficient and no appendix is necessary.
Empirical and Theoretical Dissertations

Empirical and theoretical dissertations are marked according to the criteria specified below:

**Empirical dissertation:**

**Introduction and literature review**

- A clear and coherent research question(s) and set of aims
- Appropriately comprehensive review of the relevant extant literature

**Methodology**

Discussion of the methodological options considered, the appropriateness of the chosen method and detail of research procedures such as recruiting respondents, collecting data and methods of analysing data.

**Results and discussion**

- Quality of data analysis
- Quality of the interpretation of the findings in light of the extant literature
- Critical reflection on the issues raised by the study (e.g. ethical issues) and on the research process itself.
Literary quality and overall impression

- Literary quality of the dissertation including the use of footnotes, figures and tables, appendices and references
- Overall scholarly quality of the dissertation, including reflections on the research process
**Theoretical dissertation:**

**Introduction and literature review**

- A clear and coherent set of aims associated with a specific thesis or argument.
- Appropriate and comprehensive (not exhaustive) coverage of relevant literature or theoretical material, and a rationale given for its selection.

**Theoretical argument and discussion**

- Accuracy with which theoretical material is described.
- Demonstration that the material examined has been critically understood.
- Extent to which a clear and logical argument is presented, supported or backed up the source material or other additional material.
- Quality of the arguments presented.

**Literary quality and overall impression**

- Literary quality of the dissertation including the use of footnotes, appendices and references.
- Overall scholarly quality of the dissertation, including critical reflections on the research process.
There are four grades: Distinction (70-100), Merit (60-69), Pass (50-59) and Fail (0-49). Below is a description of each grade:

**Distinction (70-100)**

An excellent dissertation that excels on most if not all of the specified criteria. Specific criteria includes comprehensive and accurate coverage, evidence of comprehensive reading and the use of a wide range of resources, theoretical insight, clarity of argument and expression, critical evaluation of evidence, sophisticated analysis and interpretation, evidence of independent thinking both in terms of the research question and the research process.

**Merit (60-69)**

A very good dissertation that fulfils most if not all of the specified criteria. Specific criteria includes reasonably comprehensive and accurate coverage, some evidence of comprehensive reading and the use of a range of resources, good understanding of material and theory, development of a coherent argument, consistent and appropriate use of evidence to support/challenge arguments and theory, critical awareness of the implications of the research; some evaluation of evidence.

**Pass (50-59)**

An adequate dissertation with an acceptable level of competence that fulfils most if not all the specified criteria. Specific criteria includes basic coverage that is generally accurate, adequate understanding of material, some use of evidence to support/challenge arguments and theory, clear presentation, sensibly organized with some potential for the development of an argument, appropriate analysis, some awareness of the implications of the research, some evaluation of the material, an attempt to evaluate the evidence.
Fail (40-49)

A weak dissertation that shows some understanding and knowledge but is characterized by the following: sparse coverage of material which misses important information and contains inaccuracies, assertions not supported by evidence, poor understanding of the material and no evidence of wider reading, inappropriate or incomplete analysis, poor structure and little development of argument.
Dissertation Proposal Form

Please submit the following form by 1 November 2014 for Year 2 part-time students or by 1 February 2015 for full-time students.

Please complete this form using as much space as required.

**Student Name**

**Title** | Provide a provisional or working title for your thesis. This should briefly describe the subject area of the dissertation

**Research Questions** | A list of specific research questions.

**Relevant Literature and Debates** | A brief description of bodies of literature and debates relevant to your dissertation.

**Methods** | A description of methods to be used and why these research methods are the most appropriate.

**Analysis** | A short summary of how the data will be analysed

**Ethical Issues** | A brief description of ethical issues that will be addressed
**Timetable** | A week by week outline of when each section of the dissertation will be completed.

References

This form will be used as a starting point for discussion between supervisor and supervisee.
Common Awards Scheme

Postgraduate Programmes

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 other programmes across the College (subject to programme regulations and timetable constraints).

2. This paper gives a brief introduction to the Common Awards Scheme. Further details on regulations and policies that form the Common Awards Scheme can be accessed via:

http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/rules

Structure of Programmes

3. All programmes offered as part of the Common Awards Scheme consist of modules, each of which are “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</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>150 level 7</td>
<td>30 level 6 (not)</td>
<td>4 modules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree</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>-------------------------------</td>
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<td>-------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate Diploma</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.

Modules may also be designated as pre-requisite modules, meaning they must be taken and passed to allow for progression to a specified follow-up module.

Degree Classification

6. 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. A Merit is normally awarded to students who achieve an average result of 60% or more, but less than 70% 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

7. 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" (ie 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 8) or whether you will be able to attempt a re-assessment (see paragraph 9)
8. For any module on a postgraduate programme, if you fail to pass at the first attempt then any subsequent attempt will either be a “re-take” or a “re-assessment”. A re-take requires attendance at the module’s lectures and seminars as well as another attempt at the assessment, whereas “re-assessment” is where a student attempts only the failed element(s) of a failed module. The decision on whether you will be offered a re-take or re-assessment will be made by your sub-board of examiners.

9. A Sub-board of Examiners may offer an alternative form of assessment for failed elements as part of a re-assessment regime.

10. The timing of any re-assessment will be at the discretion of the Sub-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.

11. 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 12) 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.

12. If your module result is between 40 and 49% your Sub-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/mybirkbeck/services/rules

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 the Programme Administrator. 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 two stages in the process for dealing with assessment offences (which include plagiarism, collusion, examination offences and other offences). The first stage allows for a formal school investigation into the alleged offence. Stage 2 involves a centrally convened panel for more 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.

The College statement on the subject 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 essays 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 lecturer 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, the College and the School 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 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.

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 mark of zero on the assessed work in question and at most to 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 need to do?

1. 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, either in a footnote or endnote, or in the text using the 'Harvard system' of text references.

2. 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.

3. 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 fall of the Berlin Wall, 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 well as the sources for any quantitative data you might use.

4. Include a reference to any source used in a paragraph in that paragraph. 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 (1997:285-79).’ You then need only provide additional references for those points in the description of EU policy-making taken from sources other than Kassim (1997).

5. Remember that a full bibliography is necessary. 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 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 practice: *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.

6. Do not copy and paste from other essays you have written as this is also counted as plagiarism.

**Mitigating Circumstances**

1. The College Policy on Mitigating Circumstances determines how Sub-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).

2. 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.

3. 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 2a, 2b and 2c 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.

4. 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 Departmental 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).

5. Discussing your claim with a member of staff does not constitute a submission of a claim of mitigating circumstances.
6. 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 Department. Where possible, claims should be submitted using the standard College Mitigating Circumstances claim form. Please see http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/administration/assessment/exams/mitigating-circumstances. The form should be submitted in accordance with the procedure for submission published by your Department. Claims should always be supported by appropriate documentary evidence.

7. You should be aware that individual marks will rarely 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 a Sub-board of Examiners 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.

8. Guidance on what may constitute acceptable mitigating circumstances is available as an appendix to the policy, available from http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/rules or your Departmental 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.

9. You should note that decisions on mitigating circumstances are the responsibility of the sub-board for your programme. Where you are taking an elective or other module offered by another department or school, any application for mitigating circumstances should be to your ‘home’ department.
Break-in-Studies Policy

1. 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 18) that add up to a total of two years or less.

2. 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.

3. 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.

4. 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.

5. 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.

6. 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

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

Accredited Prior Learning

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

Feedback on Assessment

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

http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/rules

The College also operates a Procedure for Appeals Against Decisions of Boards of Examiners; this is also available from this website.
Disability Statement

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

The Disability Office

The College has a Disability Office located in room G12 on the ground floor of the Malet Street building. We have a Disability Service Manager, Mark Pimm, a Disability Administrator, John Muya and a Mental Health Advisor, Elizabeth Hughes. We will shortly be appointing an SpLD Advisor.

All enquiries should come to the Disability office, who will determine the appropriate referral to specialist staff. 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 come to our drop in session where we can discuss support and make follow up appointments as necessary. The drop in sessions are between 4pm and 6pm Monday to Friday.

The Disability Office can also complete an Individual Student Support Agreement form with you, confirming your support requirements and send this to your School and relevant Departments at the College so they are informed of your needs.

Access at Birkbeck

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 can all be arranged by the Disability Office.
The Disabled Students Allowance

UK and most EU students with disabilities on undergraduate and postgraduate courses are eligible to apply for the Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA). The DSA usually provides thousands of pounds worth of support and all the evidence shows that students who receive it are more likely to complete their courses successfully. The Disability Office can provide further information on the DSA and can assist you in applying to Student Finance England for this support.

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 a specialist agency to recruit Personal Assistants and they can assist you with recruiting, training and paying your personal assistant. Please contact the Disability Office 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 Students with Disabilities. This is available from the Disability Office and on 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 in the School of Arts also has a Student Disability Liaison Officer. If you
experience any difficulties or require additional support from the School then they may also be able to assist you. They may be contacted through the School Office or the Disability Office.

**Support in IT Services and Library Services**

There is a comprehensive range of specialist equipment for students with disabilities in IT Services. This includes software packages for dyslexic students (e.g. Claroread 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 Disability IT Support. 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 the Disability Office who can screen you and where appropriate refer you to an Educational Psychologist for a dyslexia assessment. These assessments cost £225. Some students can receive assistance in meeting this cost from their employer. In exceptional cases students may receive assistance from the Access to Learning 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 a student must provide medical evidence of their disability (or an Educational Psychologists report if you are dyslexic) to the Disability Office. 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. 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.

**Further information**

Full information on disability support can be found at: [http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/facilities/disability](http://www.bbk.ac.uk/mybirkbeck/services/facilities/disability)

For further information or to make an appointment to see the Disability office, please call the Student Centre on 020 7631 6316 or email disability@bbk.ac.uk. Alternatively you can go to the Disability Office in room G12 between 4pm and 6pm Monday – Thursday for during their drop-in hours.