



Level 3 Diploma in Foundation  
Studies (Art and Design)

**Guidance for  
External Moderators  
2006 – 2007**

## **ABC LEVEL 3 DIPLOMA IN FOUNDATION STUDIES (ART AND DESIGN)**

### **THE QUALIFICATION**

The ABC Diploma in Foundation studies (Art & Design) is a pivotal programme designed to educate candidates to make informed decisions facilitating progression primarily, but not exclusively, to Higher Education in Art and Design. Foundation programmes build on a candidate's prior experience linking skills already acquired with ideas and challenges which will extend candidate's critical independence and enable them to demonstrate a full understanding of the opportunities in art and design relevant to career choice. The scheme is currently delivered at over 40 Centres around the country.

### **THE EXTERNAL MODERATOR**

ABC will appoint an External Moderator to each accredited Centre to confirm the accuracy of the assessment and grading decisions for units 8 and 9 (the Final Major Project) and assist in establishing national standards. All External Moderators will have experience of delivering the award.

The External Moderator monitors the grading decisions of the Centre and confirms to the Awarding Body that the grades awarded are in line with national standards or requires the Centre to take appropriate action as defined in the section **Failure to meet National Standards**. The External Moderator must be familiar with the **Award document** and in particular appendix 2 which defines the assessment and grading criteria.

External Moderators must also familiarise themselves with the annual guidance for Centres and any other policy documents periodically published by ABC.

### **RECEIVING / NEGOTIATING AN ALLOCATION OF CENTRES**

ABC will contact accredited External Moderators in the **autumn term** to confirm the number and location of their Centres. External Moderators will normally work with their Centres for a period of 3 years. This period of time should allow External Moderators to familiarise themselves with the particular features of their allocated Centres and to establish an appropriate professional relationship. To comply with Awarding Body conditions of operation, External Moderators will be rotated to other Centres at the end of the 3 year period.

External Moderators may accept, decline or negotiate their cohort of centres. ABC may if necessary, with due notice and agreement, change a moderator's cohort of Centres. ABC will confirm appointments to External Moderators and Centres and will provide both parties with contact details on form **ME2**

### **EXTERNAL MODERATION: PURPOSE**

The purpose of external moderation is to ensure that programme teams delivering the qualification are assessing accurately and consistently to national standards. This is achieved through external moderation of candidates' work. External moderation is hosted through the third stage of the qualification - the **Confirmatory Stage** encompassing unit 08 (Integrating Theory and Practice) and unit 09 (Personal Confirmatory Study). This stage represents the summation and maturation of the

candidate's experience and development within the context of the Diploma in Foundation Studies (Art and Design). In particular, external moderation focuses on the candidate's **Final Major Project** (the culmination of the Personal Confirmatory Study).

### **EXTERNAL MODERATION: PROCESS FOR CANDIDATES**

Within the external moderation model, candidates are required to produce a written **Statement of Intent** which is submitted to the moderator for external scrutiny. Candidates are required to produce the Statement of Intent prior to commencing their Final Major Project. The Statement of Intent is a mandatory requirement for all candidates and should comprise the candidate's own review of their past experience and achievement, an audit of the present and a projection of the future, specifically the intended scheme of work which will constitute the Final Major Project. The Final Major Project is a discrete body of work resulting from a project brief developed by the candidate, within parameters externally set by ABC. If candidates are subject to special consideration, (**extenuating circumstances**), evidence must be provided to the External Moderator that the appropriate ABC procedure has been followed.

### **EXTERNAL MODERATION: PROCESS FOR CENTRES**

Centres are required to track student progress through units 1 to 7 in order to provide an indication of students' achievement on the programme prior to the commencement of the Confirmatory stage. Based on this knowledge tutors will provide a **forecast grade / projected grade** (University of the Arts London), using the grading criteria for units 8 and 9, of students' potential achievement.

The Statement of Intent and the forecast grade will be used by the External Moderator to make an initial independent and informed judgement concerning the parameters of the cohort to be externally examined. The Statement of Intent should be not less than 500 words and ideally be word processed. The Statement of Intent has several purposes in that it;

- offers initial information in respect of each candidate's understanding of and progress across the Foundation programme,
- helps moderators' familiarisation with the nature of the overall cohort,
- helps to identify how the assessment criteria for units 8/9 have been met and how the grading descriptors have been applied,
- supports the identification of a defined cohort of candidates for external assessment.

Following staff student negotiation prior to the commencement of the confirmatory stage all students independently prepare their Statement of Intent under controlled conditions. Centres are advised to use the student template provided by ABC as this ensures consistency of presentation, although in specific circumstances Centres will be allowed to use their own, internally developed templates, as long as these meet Awarding Body requirements. Students must ensure that their statement covers:

- past achievements, present position and short term plans relating to the student's own learning through the Foundation programme.

- the candidate's proposal for the Final Major Project encompassing evidence of understanding and critical evaluation of their own working and learning processes and their career aspirations.

The External Moderator will confirm to the Centre, within 10 working days (15 working days for the University of the Arts London) of receipt of the statements of intent, if they are acceptable. Although not formally assessed, the Statement of Intent may be deemed unacceptable for the following reasons:

- there is no intent in the statement
- the statement is so concise that it does not sufficiently cover the parameters identified
- the statement is too long and lacks focus.

If, in the professional judgement of the External Moderator, the statement is deemed unacceptable, the Centre will be immediately contacted and informed that a new statement should be resubmitted within 10 working days. If the External Moderator receives no new acceptable statement within that period then the candidate cannot be entered for examination. The External Moderator will inform the Centre.

Each Statement of Intent should be authenticated as the work of the named candidate by the signature of the Course leader.

The completion of the Final Major Project for external moderation represents the summation and maturation of the candidate's experience and development within the context of the Diploma in Foundation Studies (Art and Design). The Final Major Project is not taught and may only be supported through the Centre's normal tutorial process.

The selection, organisation, preparation and display of the Final Major Project work for assessment must be completed by the candidate themselves.

As soon as candidates have completed and displayed the work for the final two units which constitute the Final Major Project, programme teams will carry out internal assessment and standardisation.

To achieve a pass, merit or distinction grade all criteria for a specific grade must be met in full.

Forecast and Proposed grades must not be qualified by the use of plus and minus signs.

It is an important feature of the assessment process that each Centre safeguards the validity of its assessment decisions by ensuring it has a rigorous assessment and verification system. It is also important that all assessment and verification decisions are formally recorded so that the External Moderator can trace their evolution through the system. A formal record should include evidence of the date(s) and staff involved in the assessment and verification process. Although ABC prefers that Centres develop their own assessment and verification tracking systems an annotated example is available for consideration, (**Stage 3 assessment and internal standardisation / verification tracking sheet**).

Once internal assessment, standardisation and verification have been completed Centres are required to prepare **proposed grades** for the final confirmatory stage for presentation to the External Moderator.

### **NEGOTIATING DATE / TIME OF VISIT – THE TIMESCALE**

External moderation must be undertaken within the timescale detailed in the annual moderation calendar. External Moderators will make initial contact with centres, through the Course leader or nominated contact, and negotiate a date and time for their visit which is mutually acceptable. External Moderators should update the ABC Reading office of any changes in personnel or contact details that they encounter although this is the prime responsibility of the Centre itself

### **THE PREVIOUS YEARS REPORT**

ABC will provide External Moderators with copies of the Advisory Moderator's and External Moderator's report from the previous year. External Moderators will make use of these reports to help inform the conduct of their visits. It is important that moderators confirm, where necessary, that action plans have been completed or if not, appropriate explanations are provided.

### **THE EXTERNAL MODERATION VISIT**

The External Moderator will visit the Centre on the agreed date. All candidates must complete, and provide for assessment as necessary, a copy of the ABC Declaration of Authenticity. All candidates must display or appropriately present their Final Major Project and provide access to all contributing and supporting work. Where candidates are displaying, for reasons other than assessment, work in addition to their Final Major Project, then that additional work must be clearly labelled to avoid confusion. External Moderators may not enter into any form of discussion with the candidates. It is appropriate for the Course leader or any other appointed member of staff to show the External Moderator the location and extent of the Final Major Project work but not, at this stage, to enter into a discussion of the grading decisions.

The Centre will provide the External Moderator with a copy of the proposed grades. It is through the comparison of statements of intent and forecast grades (projected) with proposed grades that the moderator can confirm the defined cohort to be externally assessed. The External Moderator will look at all displayed work and have access to all assessment documentation. The cohort for moderation will constitute 10% of the total number of candidates at the Centre plus a further 5% as necessary to clarify grading decisions.

In addition the External Moderator will ensure that the independent cohort contains:

- an appropriate spread of grades across the grade range
- coverage of boundaries of grades
- that the top grade band, the bottom grade and the grade band with the least number of candidates is considered
- that an appropriate range of disciplines, reflecting the range, breadth and depth of the Foundation experience is covered.

External Moderators will confirm the accuracy of programme assessment decisions and internal standardisation procedures and check that national standards are being met. This will be achieved through:

- an independent identification of a defined cohort
- ensuring that unit assessment outcomes and grading criteria have been applied consistently, appropriately and in line with national standards
- identifying and agreeing action where certification cannot be authorised

In completing external moderation the External Moderator will have:

- viewed all Final Major Project work
- focused on the defined cohort
- confirmed the grades with the programme team
- recommended and agreed the action to be taken where assessment decisions have not been agreed.
- provided evaluation and feedback to the programme team and ABC, on assessment decisions and authorised release of certification where appropriate
- highlighted any areas of concern in respect of confirmation of the judgement of the programme team to the National Lead Moderator and ABC.

If the proposed grades are agreed as meeting the national standards by the External Moderator then the result sheets can be completed by the addition of the **confirmed final grade** and the signatures of the External Moderator and the Course leader. As this procedure represents the culmination of the entire assessment process due care and attention should be taken to ensure that the correct agreed grades are entered. The completed forms will be forwarded to ABC by the centre. The Centre may copy the results for internal publication. The External Moderators report will be sent to ABC by the External Moderator

Upon receipt of the confirmed grades certification will be authorised by ABC. Centres will receive a copy of the External Moderator's report within 20 working days.

## **FAILURE TO MEET NATIONAL STANDARDS**

It is important to recognise that External Moderators may not seek to change the grade of an individual student nor require a Centre to change an individual grade. However, the External Moderator may report to the Centre if over/under grading has occurred for an individual student(s).

External Moderators may only require Centres to re-consider their assessment grading within the terms of the procedure listed below.

If in the judgement of the External Moderator, the proposed grades do not meet the national standards then the following procedures will apply. (The External Moderator(s) will at all stages of the procedure explain to the Course team the reasons for the decisions).

- When the grades in aberration are confined to a **small subset of the cohort**, then the Centre team will be required to re-assess and re-submit the grades in question to

the External Moderator for confirmation on the day of the moderation. If the External Moderator is able to confirm that the re-submitted grades are now in line with national standards then the certification can be authorised. If the re-submitted grades are judged by the External Moderator to still be outside the national standards then certification for the entire cohort will be blocked. A second visit, within 10 working days, will then be made by a senior moderator and the original moderator to resolve the situation. If a resolution cannot be reached then the National Lead Moderator will be required to make a final and binding judgement in the matter. In such a case the cost will be borne by the Centre, in addition to any registration or entry fees previously paid.

- Where over/under grading occurs **across the entire cohort**, or there is **substantial inconsistency** in the grading, then the External Moderator will recommend that the Centre team re-assess and re-grade across the entire cohort. If this cannot be done on the day then the Centre will be re-visited by the External Moderator as soon as is possible within 5 working days. If the External Moderator is able to confirm that the re-submitted grades are now in line with national standards then the certification can be authorised. If the re-submitted grades are judged by the External Moderator to still be outside the national standards then certification for the entire cohort will be blocked. A second visit, within 10 working days, will then be made by a senior moderator and the original moderator to resolve the situation. If a resolution cannot be reached then the National Lead Moderator will be required to make a final and binding judgement in the matter. In such a case the cost will be borne by the Centre, in addition to any registration or entry fees previously paid.

## **REFERRALS POLICY**

- The regulations on referrals apply to candidates who expect to achieve a full award/diploma within the academic year of registration.
- The regulations apply to candidates who submit Final Major Projects for external (summative) assessment. Any referrals arising from earlier (formative) assessment must be redeemed before a candidate can be entered for external assessment.
- These regulations do not compromise the right of a candidate to defer external assessment with the agreement of the Awarding Body and the Centre.

### **Referral arising from extenuating circumstances**

- When a candidate cannot complete his/her Final Major Project within the agreed timescale because of extenuating circumstances, the Centre may seek agreement from the Awarding Body to refer the candidate allowing him/her extra time to complete the Final Major Project.
- The request from the Centre seeking to refer a candidate on grounds of extenuating circumstances must be made on the appropriate form obtainable from the Awarding Body.
- The Awarding Body will consider the circumstances of each case and notify the Centre of its decision.
- The final date for late submission of the Final Major Project will normally be mid - September. If it is not possible for this date to be observed, then the Awarding Body will decide a suitable date on a case-by-case basis.

- The Centre will grade the candidate's Final Major Project against the grading criteria and content evidence required in the specification document and then notify the Awarding Body.
- The evidence submitted will determine the grade awarded: Pass, Merit or Distinction.
- If the Centre's appointed External Moderator has confirmed that a Centre has met national standards then no additional visit from an External Moderator is necessary. However, where there are large numbers of referred students or other reasonable concerns, the Awarding Body reserves the right to arrange another visit by the External Moderator. In such a case the cost will be borne by the Centre, in addition to any registration or entry fees previously paid.

### **Referral on academic grounds by the Centre**

- When the work for the Final Major Project submitted by an examination candidate does not meet the Pass criteria the Centre will refer that candidate.
- The Centre, making use of the Statement of Intent, and the work submitted for the Final Major Project will inform the candidate of those grading criteria they have failed to meet and confirm that they have been referred.
- The Centre will agree with the candidate a timeframe and an action plan countersigned by the Course tutor and the candidate for the submission of additional work required for assessment. A copy of the timeframe and action plan will be forwarded to the Foundation Moderator and the Awarding Body. The final date for submission of the required work will normally be mid - September. In exceptional circumstances the Awarding Body may agree an extended timeframe.
- The Centre will grade the candidate's Final Major Project including the referral work against the criteria, the action plan and content evidence required in the specification document. The Awarding Body will then be notified.
- A candidate referred on academic grounds, and who subsequently submits work which redeems that referral, will be awarded a pass grade.
- If the Centre's appointed External Moderator has confirmed that a centre has met national standards then no additional visit from an External Moderator is necessary. However, where there are large numbers of referred students or other reasonable concerns, the Awarding Body reserves the right to arrange another visit by a senior moderator/s. This cost will be borne by the Centre, in addition to any registration or entry fees previously paid.

### **Referral on academic grounds by the Examiner**

- The moderator will refer candidates who have met the Pass criteria during the internal assessment process but who do not meet the national standards during the external assessment process.
- Wherever possible, the assessment team will be given full feedback and asked to re-visit the assessment process. If the cohort is a small one this may take place during this first external assessment visit or within the next five working days.
- Where the cohort that has not met the pass criteria is large or where it is not possible to reach agreement within five working days, the Awarding Body will arrange a second visit by a senior moderator/team of moderators within ten working days. The senior moderator /team will re-grade the entire cohort against

- the grading criteria and content evidence required in the specification document. They will inform the Centre of their decisions and recommendations with regard to internal standardisation.
- If referral grades are confirmed by the senior moderator/team, the Centre will agree with the candidate(s) a timeframe and an action plan countersigned by the Course tutor and the candidate(s) within which they will have an opportunity to submit required work for assessment. A copy of the timeframe and action plan will be forwarded to the senior moderator/team and the Awarding Body. The final date for submission of the required work will normally be mid September. In exceptional circumstances the Awarding Body may agree an extended timeframe.
  - The Centre will grade the candidate's/candidates' Final Major Project(s) including the referral work against the grading criteria, the action plan and content evidence required in the specification document and then notify the senior moderator/team and the Awarding Body.
  - A candidate referred on academic grounds, and who subsequently submits work which redeems that referral, will be awarded a pass grade.
  - The cost of the second visit will be borne by the Centre.

## **APPEALS**

If an individual student appeals against their confirmed grade, previously agreed by the Centre and the External Moderator, then the Centre should use their own internal appeals procedure, (agreed with ABC within the original Centre approval submission), to confirm or deny that appeal. If the internal appeal is unsuccessful then that is the end of the matter. If the internal appeal is successful then the Centre must notify ABC within 15 working days of the date of the successful appeal. A copy of the minutes of the internal appeals process must be provided. The last date by which Centres can formally lodge the results of an appeal is 1<sup>st</sup> September of the same year as the external assessment.

## **THE EXTERNAL MODERATOR'S REPORT FORM**

External Moderators will report their findings on ABC form ME4

Whilst the precise structure of the visit is a matter of professional judgement by the External Moderator, it is important that the visit begins with a clear outline, by the External Moderator to the Course leader, of the reasons for the visit and details of the preferred timetable and structure for the day.

The moderation guidelines will dictate the parameters within which the External Moderator must operate. All Centres and External Moderators must abide by the annually published guidelines.

The form is self explanatory; in addition to Centre details the External Moderator must provide details of all the individual candidates constituting the assessment cohort.

The form also provides External Moderators with an opportunity to summarise their conclusions. At the end of the visit the External Moderator will report his/her conclusions verbally to the Course leader and any relevant staff as circumstances, and the nature of the reports, dictates. It is important that External Moderators conduct the evaluation and

feedback session in a professional manner, allowing reasonable time for explanation and comment by both parties.

The written report, when it is completed, must echo the verbal report made directly to the Course leader. There should be no surprises for the Centre in the final report. The action plan, if necessary, must be agreed with the Course leader. Only actions which improve the quality or operation of the award at the centre should be included.

Where good practice is identified it is important, whenever possible, that details are recorded. Reports of good practice cited in the report also inform the annual report to the Qualification and Curriculum Authority (QCA).

Completed forms should be returned to ABC within **10 working days** of the date of the visit. The completed report will be forwarded to the Principal, or other nominated person, of the centre and to the National Lead Moderator. For the sake of clarity the report must be word processed. Copies of the blank form can be obtained from the ABC website at [www.abcawards.co.uk](http://www.abcawards.co.uk). The completed forms may be emailed to the award administrator at [junea@abcawards.co.uk](mailto:junea@abcawards.co.uk) or despatched by mail.

### **CONDUCT OF THE EXTERNAL MODERATION**

Centres are required to contact ABC directly and immediately after the external moderation if they are dissatisfied with the conduct of the process.

### **CLAIMS FOR PAYMENT AND EXPENSES**

Completed claim forms should be sent to the ABC Reading office.

ABC Building 33 University of Reading London Road Reading RG1 5AQ
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### **CONTACT DETAILS**

**If you have any queries arising from this guidance, or require assistance during or after a visit please contact either:**

June Allen (Qualification Administrator) Tel no. 0118 378 6359 e-mail <a href="mailto:junea@abcawards.co.uk">junea@abcawards.co.uk</a>
Philip Garlick (National Lead Moderator) Tel no. 01752 795681 Mobile no. 07980989144 e-mail: <a href="mailto:philipgarlick@blueyonder.co.uk">philipgarlick@blueyonder.co.uk</a>

## **GLOSSARY OF ABC REFERENCE DOCUMENTS, GUIDANCE NOTES AND FORMS**

**Qualification document** – the definitive document detailing the aims, entry requirements, course organisation, course content, assessment and grading.

**Frame of Reference and Guidelines for Centres** – the definitive document detailing the characteristics, aims, level, duration, admissions, programme planning, programme resourcing, programme design, structure, delivery and assessment.

**Guidance for Centres** – published annually, details the examination process including referrals and appeals.

**Guidelines for Advisory Moderators** – provides detail on the conduct of the advisory process.

**Guidelines for Moderators** – provides detail on the conduct of the external examination process.

**Centre Information (ME2)** – Details the allocation of Advisory Moderators and External Moderators.

**Key Dates document** - lists annually the entire academic and examination cycle.

**Statement of Intent (SI.DOC)** - statement of intent cover sheet for completion by Centre prior to forwarding to the External Moderator.

**Statement of Intent student template (SISTUDENT.DOC)** – details the content required for the completion of the statement of intent.

**Statement of Intent tutor guidelines (SITUT.DOC)** – provides, for the tutor, greater detail on the context and the content required for the completion of the statement of intent.

**Notification of Special Arrangements (E1a)** – formal notification by the Centre to ABC of a request for the consideration of extenuating circumstances.

**Stage 3 assessment and internal standardisation/verification tracking sheet** – sample tracking sheet

**Mark sheet (MS1)** – formally records individual candidate performance, including unit 1-7 achievement, IV, Proposed and Confirmed grades. Forwarded to ABC by the External Moderator. A copy may be retained by the Centre.

**External Moderators report form ME4** – details the External Moderators conclusions at the completion of the visit. Forwarded to ABC who, after due consideration, forward a copy to the Centre.