



Study Guide

Tutor Marked Assignments

After enrolling on your chosen course, you will receive an email with your login details. Upon receiving these you will be able to login to the student portal to access your course materials, submit your work and contact your tutor.

We suggest that you spend some time reading through your course materials first in order to give you an understanding of the course structure, content and assignment requirements.

Your tutor marked assignments can be found within your course materials. Please check the index at the front of your materials to find out where these are located as they may be at the back of your course, or at the end of each unit. You must also check that you submit your assignments in the correct way as this can vary depending on your course.

Assignments not correctly submitted will not be marked. Some courses have additional self- assessment questions which you will not need to submit to your tutor.

Each assignment you complete will be awarded the following form of grade:

»PASS

You have met the assessment criteria

»REFER

You have not met the assessment criteria and will need to resubmit your work after making the amendments specified by your tutor.

Unless specified within the assignments, there is no set word limit. You need however, to write enough to demonstrate to your tutor that you have understood the question and can apply what you have learned in the course to your answer.

Certificates

To be awarded your certificate you will need to complete and pass all of the tutor marked assignments and / or projects included within your course materials. We recommend that you submit your assignments one at a time and wait for feedback before submitting further work. This allows you to receive feedback from your tutor and take on board any recommendations which you can apply to your future assignments.

Study Suggestions

Before you start to work through the assignments, you should read through all of the course material; this will help you to develop a better understanding of the subject and will help you to include more content in your written assignments.

It is important that you take your time with your assignments and do not rush them. We suggest that you spend between 5 and 7 hours a week on your studies. You will have a much better understanding of the topics and overall subject if you work at a pace that suits you and this will ensure that you produce a much higher standard of work. Taking regular breaks is also necessary to maintain concentration – you should work for no more than 45 minutes at a time.

Please let us know if English is not your first language, or if you have a disability which may affect your studies so that we can take this into consideration when marking your work.

Understanding the Levels

»ENTRY LEVEL

These qualifications provide a basis for progression to further learning

»LEVEL 1

At this level you would only be expected to provide basic information in response to the assignment questions or tasks. Acceptable responses at Level 1 would not be acceptable at Level 2.

»LEVEL 2

At this level you will be required to write in sentences and it would not be enough to write a few brief remarks or to use bullet points (unless you are asked to do this).

»LEVEL 3

At this level it is expected that your answers will be much more detailed than responses you would give at Level 2. You would be expected to include evidence in your answers and factual details where necessary.

»LEVEL 4

At this level you would be expected to provide evidence of research and a much deeper analysis of the assignment questions. Your answers, unless specifically asked to do otherwise, must be written in full sentences and paragraphs, giving as full explanations as possible.

Completing your Assignments

Please ensure your assignments are completed as follows:

1. All assignments must be completed in Microsoft Word or Works format. If using Microsoft Works, you will need to change the page setup to A4 and not the standard letter format. Work submitted in a different format will not be marked. If you are using Pages, please 'export' your work into Microsoft Word format.
2. The first page of your assignment must be the assignment submission sheet. A copy of this is available for you to download on the student portal. Please ensure you fully complete this sheet with the following details:
 - a. Full name
 - b. Student number
 - c. Course
 - d. Assignment number
 - e. Full postal address

f. Date of submission

Assignments without this information will be returned unmarked.

3. Subsequent pages should be numbered and display your name and student number.
4. Your work should be written using Arial, size 12 font, 1.5 line spacing and be fully justified (even margins on both sides).
5. Ensure that you number the question exactly as it is written in the course and write out the question fully above each answer.
6. Unless otherwise stated, your answers must be written in full sentences and paragraphs and avoid using bullet points / lists.
7. Keep a backup copy of all of your work in case it gets lost in cyberspace.
8. When submitting your work through the online system, each assignment must be uploaded as one attachment in the correct format. You will not be able to submit more than one attachment for marking. You will receive confirmation of your submission once the file has been uploaded.
9. There are no required textbooks for most of our courses, however, any wider reading that you do will be an advantage as you will be able to apply more in-depth knowledge to your assignments.
10. Any material that you quote from books, websites or other sources must be referenced at the end of the question or in a reference section at the end of your assignment. The college takes plagiarism very seriously; students who are found to copy material without referencing will have their work returned unmarked and may be excluded from the course without refund. A guide to referencing your assignments can be found later in this guide. Please note that copying work from other students is also plagiarism.

Terminology

There are a number of terms used within the assignment questions which you will need to understand in order to correctly answer the questions set:

»**ANALYSE** – to consider and explain a particular topic in detail to see an outcome / meaning.

»**CRITICALLY ANALYSE** – consider a particular topic / surrounding issue in detail looking at both the benefits and limitations.

»**DESCRIBE** – to give a written / spoken account of a particular topic.

»**DISCUSS** – to explain and explore an issue in detail.

»**EVALUATE** – explain a particular object / topics worth or value (considering benefits and limitations).

»**IDENTIFY** – naming an object / topic and explaining this in relation to the question.

»**OUTLINE** – this is simply an organised description of a particular topic / object, picking up on the main points.

»**SUMMARISE** – to give concise / overall explanation surrounding a particular topic.

Referencing your Work

Throughout your studies it is important that you read around the course materials – this could be anything from relevant newspaper articles, websites, books or journals. This wider reading will help you to give more detail in your assignments to demonstrate that you understand the topics and wider subject.

When you write your assignments, you may want to make reference to something you have read. To do this, you must clearly acknowledge the source. Failure to do this may constitute as malpractice and you may be penalised; not acknowledging a source is referred to as 'plagiarism'. The Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) defines this as:

"Unacknowledged copying from published sources (including the Internet) or incomplete referencing" (JCQ, 2008:28).

How to Reference your Work

Within your Assignment

»BOOK

If you directly quote, or use another author's ideas in your work you must make this clear. Within your assignment, you only need to include the author's surname, the date of publication and the page number (where necessary). For example:

»DIRECT QUOTE:

"Cognitive therapy was developed by Aaron T. Beck at the University of Pennsylvania in the early 1960's as a structured, short-term, present- orientated psychotherapy for depression" (Beck, 1995: 1)

»PARAPHRASING:

Beck (1995: 1) discusses how cognitive therapy was developed in the early 1960's as a short-term treatment for depression.

»WEBSITE:

Similarly, if you quote or paraphrase from a website, you only need to give the author's surname and the date of publication. The website address only needs to be given within your reference list or bibliography at the end of your assignment.

Within a Reference List or Bibliography

A reference list contains all the sources you have made direct reference to within your assignment; a bibliography is similar to this but also includes any other material you may have read but not directly made reference to within your work.

A reference list and bibliography are always presented in alphabetical order by the author's surname and does not need to be divided into books, websites, etc.

»**BOOK:**

Within your reference list or bibliography, a book should be presented in the following way:

Author (surname, initial), year of publication (in brackets), title (in italics), full stop, place of publication, publisher.

»**EXAMPLE:**

Beck, J. (1995) *Cognitive Therapy: Basics and Beyond*. New York: The Guilford Press.

»**WEBSITE:**

Similarly, a website should be presented within your reference list or bibliography as follows: Author (surname, initial), year of publication, webpage title (in italics), the URL (address) of the webpage, the date you visited the website (in brackets).

»**EXAMPLE:**

Blenkiron, P. (2009) *Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)*. Available at: <http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/mentalhealthinfoforall/treatments/cbt.aspx> (Accessed: 2 August 2010).

Please remember that your assignments must be your own work. Whilst wider reading is important, any material you cite must be used to support, rather than form your answers. Any assignments received which simply contain large amounts of copied and pasted material will be given a 'refer' mark. Assignments which contain material which has been copied without being referenced will be dealt with via our plagiarism policy, which could ultimately lead to your student status being revoked without refund.

Feedback

Assignments are marked and feedback returned to students within 10 working days from receipt. However, if you need to obtain your certificate quickly in order to apply for university or it is required by your employer for example, you can upgrade to our Fast-Track service. This costs £100 and will guarantee your feedback within 2 working days.

Please be aware that between July and September, and over the Christmas period, staff are usually on annual leave and feedback therefore may take an additional 7 working days. Your tutor will post an announcement on the student portal to notify you of any annual leave they will be taking.

If you have not received your feedback within the stated timescale, please contact your tutor with the following information:

- a. The date your work was submitted
- b. Full name
- c. Student number
- d. Course
- e. Assignment number

Contacting Us

You can contact your tutor through the helpdesk located on the student portal. Your tutor will not contact you when you enrol; it is up to you to make contact with your tutor as and when required.

Please do not telephone the college with assignment or support-related queries; these must be directed to your tutor or the Student Support team through the helpdesk on the student portal. Our telephone sales team will be unable to assist you with support-related queries and will refer you back to the helpdesk.

If you are unsure of the requirements for an assignment, don't hesitate to contact your tutor. They are there to support you with your studies and it will save both of you time if

you contact them before writing your answers. Your tutor is there to mark your assignments and will be able to handle queries related to the assignment questions. They will not however:

- Preview or check your assignments before you submit them for marking.
- Handle queries which are not related to the tutoring elements of your course.
- Provide references.
- Handle administrative aspects of your course.

The Student Support team can be contacted via the student portal; they are there to help you with queries relating to the administrative aspects of your course, can help you with any technical queries that you have, and can assist you with queries regarding your monthly payments if you opted to pay for your course by instalments.

We aim to answer all queries within 48 hours, although it may take up to 72 hours if your query is not straightforward or if insufficient information has been provided.

Period of Tuition and Extensions

Details of your tutor support time can be found on your welcome letter. Your tutor support period may be between 6 and 24 months, so it is important that you check these details carefully. You will be required to complete all of the required tutor-marked assignments within this time; should you have not done so, you will need to pay for additional tuition. There are a number of options available, so please check the 'Expired & Additional Services' section of the student portal for details.

Accreditation on Completion

When you have completed all of the assessed tasks, your tutor will send your work to the college for moderation.

If you are enrolled on a non-regulated endorsed qualification, your work will be internally moderated and upon successfully passing this stage, your certificate will be requested from the Awarding Organisation.

If you are enrolled on a QCF qualification, your work will be internally moderated and then forwarded to the Awarding Organisation for external moderation and certification.

It can take 6-8 weeks to process your work and have your certificate prepared. This is not a process we can speed up as the issuing of certificates is down to the Awarding Organisation and therefore out of our control.

Please do not contact the college about your certificate unless the 8 weeks has elapsed as we will be unable to help you. We can however, issue a letter of completion for potential employers or places of further study.

Complaints

1. Policy

The college places a significant emphasis on customer feedback and views the complaints process as a valuable tool for driving improvements in the quality of our services. The policy of the college is to respond to all suggestions, whether positive or negative, in a prompt and courteous manner. All complaints will be treated seriously.

2. Minimum Expectations

- a. All complaints will be acknowledged within five working days of receipt.
- b. We will try to resolve complaints to the satisfaction of all parties within 28 working days of receipt.

3. Protocol for Responding to Complaints

- a. Formal acknowledgement of the complaint, with, where relevant, a copy of the Complaints Policy and Procedures, will be confirmed within five working days of receiving the complaint. This communication will inform the complainant that they will receive a full response within 28 working days.
- b. The administrator responsible for complaints will copy the complaint to the Head of Centre and to the appropriate head of faculty. All complaints will be treated as confidential and will be handled with sensitivity by the investigating manager.

c. Every communication, either from the complainant or from the College, will be copied to the Head of Centre in electronic format, where possible. Notes will be kept of meetings and telephone calls and will also be copied to the Head of Centre for filing with the original complaint.

d. The manager or senior manager responsible for the area about which a complaint has been made will ensure that a full response to the complaint is provided within 28 working days wherever possible. When this is not possible, explanation will be given to the complainant within 28 working days; this will include a proposed schedule for response.

4. Responsibilities

a. The manager or senior manager responsible for the area about which a complaint has been made is responsible for investigating and responding to the complainant.

b. The manager or senior manager who receives the complaint is responsible for copying information on the response to the complainant and to the Head of Centre.

c. The Head of Centre will be responsible for monitoring the timely and effective implementation of the complaints policy and procedure.

5. Protocol for Complainants

a. Students, employers, members of the public and members of staff are able to complain by sending their grievances in writing and posting their complaint addressed for the attention of the department head.

b. If the complainant remains dissatisfied following the response from the relevant manager, they are able to take it further by contacting the Head of Centre.

The decision of the Head of Centre is final.

6. Receipt of Complaints

a. Complaints received will be forwarded to the relevant head of department on the same day it is received.

b. If a complaint is received directly by a member of the student support team, or a tutor, copies of all correspondence and notes of telephone calls or meetings will be forwarded to the head of department.

Appeals

We are committed to dealing with any appeals quickly and efficiently so they can continue to offer students the best possible support.

If you are unhappy with an assessment decision, you should address this in the first instance with your tutor within seven days of receiving the feedback. The tutor will respond with further information within a further seven days.

If you are still not happy you may appeal to the Internal Quality Assurer (IQA) at our head office within seven days of your previous response from your tutor.

The relevant Internal Quality Assurer for that course will respond in writing to your appeal within ten working days. The decision of the Internal Quality Assurer is final.

College and Author Note

We have tried to apply the latest information to enable you to gain a thorough understanding of the knowledge and skills for the course to meet the requirements of the accreditation board.

However, the college and the course authors cannot be held responsible for any information that is deemed changeable in regards to the latest requirements under UK and EU law.

Good luck, we hope you enjoy your studies with us.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. I have received my login details. What do I do now?

Once you have access to your course materials, we would recommend that you first spend some time reading through them, like you would a book. This will help to give you an understanding of all the topics covered within your course and how it flows. If you want to have the assignments out beside you as you do this, you may find it helpful to go through and highlight, or make notes in the sections that will help you answer the assignment questions.

2. How do I set out my work?

Please see the 'Completing your Assignments' section of this booklet for details of the assignment formatting requirements.

3. Do I need to answer all of the assignment questions?

Yes, unless otherwise stated, you will need to answer all of the questions within each assignment. You should answer each question separately (i.e. not as 1 long essay covering all of the questions), with the question included in full, above each of your answers.

4. What is the word limit?

Unless otherwise stated, there are no specific word limits for the assignment questions, but we would generally suggest that you aim for around a page per question.

For those assignments that do have a specified word count, we would suggest that you stay within 10% either side of the word count (i.e. on a 1000 word limit, you should have a minimum of 900 words and a maximum of 1100 words).

5. Do I need to do any research, or will all the answers be in the course materials?

Although you will find the answers to the assignment questions within the materials, your tutors will also want to see that you have carried out some wider reading and that you can apply what you have gained from this to your answers. Be careful here though. People often resort to copying and pasting large amounts from the internet or other sources. Your answers need to be your own - your tutor wants to see what YOU know, so it is important that any wider reading you quote, is used to support your work and not purely form your answers.

REMEMBER - any wider reading that you do quote, must be referenced. You'll find a guide to referencing your work in this booklet.

6. Can I answer the assignments in any order?

No, your answers will need to be submitted one at a time, in numerical order. If your assignments are not submitted in order, your tutor will automatically give you a 'refer' mark.

7. What happens if I do not pass an assignment?

Don't panic. If you do not pass an assignment, you will be able to resubmit your work - it will not affect your final certificate. If you're unsure how to improve your work, please contact your tutor - they will be able to point you in the right direction.

8. Is there any recommended reading for my course?

There is no need to go out and purchase additional reading materials. Although wider reading is important, there are many free sources you can use (websites, books from your local library, relevant articles from your local newspaper etc.) Google Books can be particularly useful as you can read chapters from books online - if you are only looking for a quote to use within an assignment, this is very useful! If you have a Kindle (or the Kindle App on your iPhone / iPad or Android device), there are many free or very cheap titles available on Amazon.

9. How do I contact my tutor?

You can contact your tutor through the 'Help Centre'. You can also speak to a member of the Student Support team here too with any queries relating to submitting your work, technical issues, etc.

10. Fast-Track Marking...

The standard turnaround time for feedback is 10 working days (it can be 6 weeks+ at university with each tutor supporting far less students!). However, we do also offer a fast-track service which provides a 2 working day turnaround. This costs £100+ VAT and will apply all assignments for the duration of your course. On the 'Services' page, you will also see options for 1, 3 and 12 months of tutor support - these are completely separate from the fast-track service. If you have reached the end of your tutor support period (either 6 months, or 12 months depending on your course), and have not finished your studies, you

can extend your support so that you can continue submitting your work and receiving feedback from your tutor.

11. When can I start submitting my work? Are there any deadlines?

You can start your assignments whenever you are ready. There are no specific deadlines for each one, so don't worry if life gets in the way of your studies for a while - it happens. Your welcome letter will specify the period of tutor support time you have available, so you can submit your work at any point within that period. We do however, suggest that you avoid trying to submit all of your work at the last minute, so that you have some time to allow for any resubmissions if necessary.

12. I do not have Microsoft Office installed on my PC. What should I do?

If you do not have Office, there are free alternatives available. The one we would recommend is Open Office. For those of you using a Mac, we are unable to open files saved in .pages format, so please save your work in either .doc or .pdf format for submission to your tutor for marking.