**Department Assessment Policy 2021-2023**

**Geography A-level**

**The Importance of Feedback and Learning Outside the Classroom – ’50:50’**

Learning will not happen instantly and takes time; attending lessons is not enough (although important!), you also need to be working outside of class, to learn new information and consolidate learning. In the process, you will make mistakes but hopefully feedback will enable you to learn from these mistakes. Better to make a mistake during the year and correct it, than make your first mistake in the final assessment! Feedback is essential for your learning and will consist of whole class (teacher runs a session in lessons), written (teacher marking), peer (where you feedback on someone else’s work in the class) and self (where you assess yourself).

There are 66 weeks of teaching weeks in total at College to help you learn and prepare for your final assessments. The classes are shared between two teachers for Human and Physical Geography with one being the “Lead Subject Tutor” who will be responsible for formalised 1-2-1s, writing your Student Reviews, seeing your parents at parents evening and for writing Action Plans.

In line with the College’s ’50-50’ initiative, each week, homework will be set and could take between 4.5 to 6 hours in total. Each teacher therefore could set you up to 2.25 to 3 hours homework per week. If for a particular week, a homework task from one teacher only takes you 1 hour for a week, then you will have a further 1.25 to 2 hours to conduct further reading and consolidate learning. Perhaps visiting the Library’s Godalming Online page to see the electronic resources or popping in to read a book or a magazine.

**The Final Assessment**

At the end of the two years, students will complete two 2.5 hour exams worth 80% of their final grade and an NEA worth 20%.

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| **PAPER 1: Physical Geography** | **PAPER 2: Human Geography** | **PAPER 3: NEA - Coursework** |
| * Water and Carbon Cycle (36 marks)
* Coastal Systems and Landscapes (36 marks)
* Hazards (48 marks)

The paper comprises a mixture of short answer, data response questions 4, 6 marks, 9 and 20 mark extended prose questions. | * Global Systems and Global Governance (36 marks)
* Changing Places (36 marks)
* Contemporary Urban Environments (48 marks)

The paper comprises a mixture of short answer, data response questions 4, 6 marks, 9 and 20 mark extended prose questions. | * 3000 – 4000 words Geography Fieldwork Investigation.
* Students complete an individual investigation which must include data collected in the field. The individual investigation must be based on a question or issue defined and developed by the student relating to part of the specification content.
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**Types of Assessment (and Feedback)**

**Homework (Weekly):** Homework does not necessarily need to be completed at home! You can use free periods during the day to complete these tasks outside of lessons. To keep a good work/life balance, you might like to treat College as an 0845 to 1615 day and use your free periods in the library completing tasks. This will minimise the work you need to complete at home and might make you more productive. Homework tasks will consist of a variety of types for example; completing class work, review notes, additional reading and research tasks, examination practice. **Not all homework will be marked.** It could be given a quick inspection in class, involve peer and self-assessment or be used as part of a class exercise.

* **Benchmark Assessments:** After a period of teaching, there will be the opportunity to sit a mini ‘mock exam’ which will be an assessment under timed conditions using past exam questions. Or the benchmark checkpoint may consist of several smaller pieces of assessment, culminating in a grade. Any assessment should allow you to access the full grade range from A\* to U grade, given the topics covered so far and exam technique. Benchmarks are an indicator of how well you have understood and can apply the content to questions you will meet in the final exams at the end of the two years. Timed benchmark assessments are extremely important and should be treated like the actual exam. They are an ideal point to see how you are progressing and to get valuable feedback. You will make mistakes in these assessments and so the follow up work is to test whether you have learned from those mistakes to become better at the subject and exam technique.
* **Coursework Assessment (June 2022 to November 2023):** Your coursework will commence during the first year and you will be expected to use the summer holidays to complete a large proportion of your coursework with the final submission being in the Autumn term of year two. The final coursework will be marked, moderated and a final mark (out of 60) will be submitted onto SELF in the Summer Term of the second year.

**Tracking your Progress: Student Reviews, Action Plans and Parents Evenings**

* The College’s policy is to deal with the student first but we also report to your parents at regular intervals to let them know how you are progressing and to inform them of what our expectations are through four Student Reviews (Reports) spread throughout the two years at College and also four parents evenings. If the department feel you are under-performing based on evidence such as benchmark grades and your approach to learning in between these periods, then your Lead Subject Tutor may place you onto a Formal Department Action Plan and we will formally write to your parents after a 1-2-1 with yourself and to try and get you back on track in a supportive way.

**Student Review 2, the ARG and Predicted Grades**

At the end of the first year (June 2022), your Lead Tutor will have a 1-2-1 to discuss your Annual Review Grade (ARG) and also finalise your Predicted Grade which might be used for UCAS applications for University and other destinations.

The ARG is determined by your Lead Tutor, in communication with your other teacher and will rely on the following evidence:

1. **Benchmark Checkpoints Performance Grades (1 to 4).** Benchmark 3 and 4 grading will carry more weight to this grade but Benchmark 2 will also have some influence. Benchmark 1 will have a very little weighting as it was the first time you sat a timed assessment.
2. **Approach to Learning:** How you are engaging in your learning, evidenced by attendance, punctuality, ability to meet weekly deadlines with quality work. How you have pro-actively sought out extra support via workshops and your overall communication with your teachers (perhaps via email/Teams chat?).

The ARG plays a key part in determining the context in which you progress to the second year. Students who receive an A\*-D grade (A-level) are encouraged to continue with their studies into the 2nd year. However, for students who receive a U or E Grade (A-level) as their ARG, it suggests that for whatever reason they have struggled with the transition from Level 2 Courses (GCSE) to Level 3 Courses (A-level/BTEC). This will be evidenced by poor performances throughout their benchmarks and an inconsistent or poor approach to learning in their student reviews and via formal Action Plans. Students who receive an E/U Grade we would be extremely worried about your progress and your ability to pass the course. A comprehensive action plan would be created and we would expect to see improvements over the summer with the work that was set. You could also be required to attend lunchtime workshops for the remainder of the course and we would be in more contact with your parents to ensure that you are staying on track.

The College adopts a consistent and optimistic approach to predicting grades to ensure that they are both aspirational and achievable. A predicted grade is what we believe a student is likely to achieve by the conclusion of their course in positive circumstances and the predicted grade provides universities and colleges with some understanding of a student’s academic potential alongside their Personal Statement and a written Reference from their Personal Tutor. The ARG is important in forming the basis for the predicted grade as well but the predicted grade will also be aspirational for the students’ ambitions although it must remain realistic and cannot be based on the idea that only now will the student start to work harder in the second year! The College policy is that the predicted grade cannot be more than one grade above the ARG.

**Other Considerations**

* *LATE POLICY:* In line with the ‘College Assessment Policy’, the department are under no obligation to provide feedback to a student who does not meet the internal deadlines for weekly independent tasks, benchmark assessments or coursework drafts. Please be warned that a failure to meet the final coursework deadline is the equivalent to missing the exam and it will be recommended that the student should be removed from the course which may mean you have to leave College entirely. Students who fail to prepare adequately for the lesson as requested, maybe excluded for part of the lesson and asked to work independently at the back of the classroom. A failure to meet ‘PREP’ work requirements consistently will result in a reference to the pastoral team and possible contact with parents.
* *RETURNED WORK:* Work will be assessed and returned within 10 working days of it being submitted unless it is the final coursework submission. The exam board stipulates that no feedback or formal grade can be released to students by the teacher with regards to coursework. We will issue you with the coursework mark but the exam board reserve the right to inform you of the final grade in August with your results. Please do not ask the teacher for your final grade as they will be unable to provide it.
* *PLAGIARISIM:*  Plagiarism is submitting another person’s written work as one’s own original work or using someone else’s idea without referencing the source or using pictorial work without permission or referencing the source. If there is a suspicion of plagiarism, the Head of Department and Senior Tutor will be informed and a meeting will take place. If a student is found guilty, they will be subject to disciplinary action by the College and the awarding body will be informed. Students should be aware that the College is subscribed to software designed to detect plagiarism.
* *ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS FOR EXAMS:* These are pre-examination adjustments for candidates based on evidence of need and normal way of working which must approved by the Learning Support department. For example, use of a computer or extra time in the exam. Since these arrangements are your ‘normal way of working’, you must practice them in class and with your homework – please see the Learning Support department for how you might do this. Homework is always set to take between 4.5 to 6 hours to allow students who have extra time for example, more time to complete the homework compared to their peers. Equally, in timed assessments it is vital that we are accommodating any access arrangements you might have. Your teachers will speak to you individually, and in confidence about how they will best be able to support you through your studies with us.
* *ABSENCES:* All absences should be reported (preferably by a parent) to student reception or attendance@godalming.ac.uk. It is your responsibility to catch up with work from your teacher by emailing them on the day you are absent.
* *EXPECTATIONS IN LESSONS:* We expect you to come well prepared, ready to learn with the current teaching materials, paper, pencil case, writing equipment including pens, pencils, highlighters, ruler, calculator and a folder to put your work in.

**Benchmark Checkpoints, Student Reviews (Reports) and Mock Exams 2021-23**

Below is an overview of all the key assessment checkpoints (subject to review)

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| **CHECKPOINT** | **DATE** | **DETAILS** |
| **Benchmark 1 Checkpoint** | Oct 2021 | **Timed Assessment on Coasts and Changing Places** A mix of multiple choice, short answer and data response questions. |
| **Parents Evening (For All)** | Nov 2021 | **Meetings with your parents to discuss how you have settled in and transferred from GCSE to A-level learning based upon:**1. **Approach to learning** (how you are engaging in your learning, evidenced by attendance, punctuality, ability to meet weekly deadlines with quality work, how you have sought out extra support via workshops and your overall communication with your teachers)
2. **Performance Grade** in Benchmark 1 and from your homework tasks
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| **XMAS BREAK** |  |  |
| **Benchmark 2 Checkpoint** | Dec 2021 | **Timed Assessments on Coasts and Changing Places**A mix of multiple choice, short answer, data response and longer answer questions. |
| **Student Review 1** | Jan 2022 | **A review of your progress in the first term (12-13 weeks of teaching) after a 1-2-1 with your Lead Tutor:** 1. **Performance grade (A to U)** (based on benchmark 1 and 2 but also your homework tasks)
2. **Approach to Learning** (how you are engaging in your learning, evidenced by attendance, punctuality, ability to meet weekly deadlines with quality work, how you have sought out extra support via workshops and your overall communication with your teachers).
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| **Benchmark 3 Checkpoint** | Mar2022 | **Timed Assessments on Coasts and Contemporary Urban Environments**A mix of multiple choice, short answer, data response and longer answer questions. |
| **Parents Evening (Targeted)** | Mar 2022 | **Meetings with your parents only where teachers may have a concern about your progress since Student Review 1 in January.** |
| **EASTER BREAK** |  |  |
| **Benchmark 4 Checkpoint** | June 2022 | **Timed Assessments on Coasts and Contemporary Urban Environments** A mix of multiple choice, short answer, data response and longer answer questions. |
| **Student Review 2** | June 2022 | **A review of your progress for the academic year (30-35 weeks of teaching) after a 1-2-1 with your Lead Tutor** 1. Approach to Learning
2. Performance Grade (Annual Review Grade or ‘ARG’ – performance for whole year (see notes above in main doc.)
3. Predicted Grade for UCAS (University Applications)
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| **SUMMER BREAK** |  |  |
| **Benchmark 5 Checkpoint** | Oct 2022 | **Timed Assessments on both sides of the course** A mix of multiple choice, short answer, data response and longer answer questions. |
| **Parents Evening (All)** | Oct 2022 | **Meetings with your parents to discuss how you have settled in to the second phase of learning:**1. **Approach to learning** (how you have engaged since Student Review 2 including completion of summer homework and the first five weeks of teaching – deadlines met, engagement in class and communication with teacher)
2. **Performance** with reference to your BM5.
3. **How to support you:** Discuss how parents can further support you and what is coming up in this year
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| **Benchmark 6 Checkpoint** | Dec 2022 | **Timed Assessments on both sides of the course** A mix of multiple choice, short answer, data response and longer answer questions. |
| **Student Review 3** | Dec 2022 | **A review of your progress for the academic year since last Student Review (July) after a 1-2-1 with your Lead Tutor**1. Approach to Learning
2. Performance Grade (based upon benchmark 6 and homework tasks) compared to Predicted Grade
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| **XMAS BREAK** |  |  |
| **Benchmark 7 Checkpoint** | Mar 2023 | **Mock Exam – content to be confirmed**A mix of short answer, data response and longer answer questions |
| **Student Review 4** | Mar 2023 | **A review of your progress for the academic year (30-35 weeks of teaching) after a 1-2-1 with your Lead Tutor (see above)** 1. Approach to Learning
2. Performance Grade (based upon benchmark 7 Mock Exam only) compared to Predicted Grade
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| **Parents Evening (Targeted)** | Apr 2023 | **Meetings with your parents primarily where teachers may have a concern about your progress since Student Review 4.** |
| **EASTER BREAK** |  |  |

**Rationale for Assessment Programme**

It is really important that when you come to sit your final assessment, you are prepared and able to perform at your highest ability. Therefore, because Geography is predominantly assessed under examination timed conditions, the benchmark assessments are designed to practice the skills needed to sit a timed exam, so that you are ‘exam fit’.

Therefore, the first few benchmarks start with you being able to practice shorter-answer exam questions and we then scaffold support to ensure that you are approaching the important evaluative essays from Benchmark 2 onwards. The big mock exam in the second year is a key assessment and should be treated very carefully – it is perhaps the only time you will be able to sit in an exam hall under timed conditions to complete an assessment. It is positioned there for you to learn from the experience with enough time to correct any issues before you sit the final A-level assessment after Easter.

**Grade Boundaries**

Grade boundaries are set for each benchmark assessment and depend on what is being tested for exampleusing a normal distribution of outcomes, using exam board grade boundaries (e.g. 2019) or using a combination of both.