**GERMAN A-level Department Assessment Policy 2021-2023**

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

Learning will not happen instantly and takes time; attending lessons is not enough, 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 exam! Feedback is essential for students’ 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 German Department is run by one member of staff (part-time, 6 double lessons spread over three days for maximum contact time), who will be responsible for formalised 1-2-1s, writing your Student Reviews, seeing your parents at parents’ evening and for writing Action Plans. There is support from the FLA (12 hours per week), with whom the students (mostly in pairs) have 45 min of conversation class per week.

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. The emphasis is on taking responsibility for your own learning. If a piece of homework takes you less than the allocated time, then you should conduct further reading and consolidate learning.

**The Final Assessment**

**ACTUAL EXAM AT THE END OF TWO YEARS**

At the end of the 2 years of study, students will be taking three exams:

**PAPER 1: Listening, Reading and Writing 2hours, 30 min (100 marks, 50% of A-level)**

* Aspects of German speaking society
* Artistic culture in the German speaking world
* Multiculturalism in German speaking society
* Grammar

**PAPER 2: Writing 2 hours (80 marks, 20% of A-level)**

* Two essays (one film and one text)
* Grammar

**PAPER 3: Speaking 21-23 min (60 marks, 30% of A-level)**

* Individual Research Project
* One of four sub-themes i.e. Aspects of the German speaking society or Artistic Culture or Multiculturalism or Aspects of Political Life in the German speaking society

**Lessons, Homework and Assessment**

Lessons consist of as much student interaction as is possible. Every exercise involves some sort of student discussion or debate with interactive class feedback at the end. Current affairs are referred to constantly as an historical context is vital to the students’ understanding of the subject. Students are encouraged to speak German in lessons.

**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, e.g. in the library. To keep a good work/life balance, you might like to treat College as an 8.45 to 16.15 day. This will minimise the work you need to complete at home and might make you more productive. Homework tasks will consist of three types:

* **PREP WORK:** This is prior reading and understanding of texts related to a topic on hand. It is hard and will push and challenge the student, because it requires looking up and learning of new words and constantly expanding the vocabulary. We emphasise to students that learning is not easy and takes time and perseverance. This work will be assessed in class by a brief inspection by the teacher, a class discussion or peer assessment and weekly vocabulary tests.
* **HOMEWORK** (written): This can be an essay as consolidation for work covered in class, a reading or listening exercise and a mind map at the end of a topic. For grammar and translation exercises the students have a grammar workbook, out of which homework is set. For the film and literary text homework could be any exercise from the accompanying workbook. Written work is collected in and marked according to the AQA specification assessment criteria. It is returned to the student with corrections and/or guidance on how to correct the mistakes. The correction of essays is then re-marked. The expectation is set that the students should make use of the support offered by the staff, the department workshop and resources provided to make sure they maximize the benefits of learning from mistakes. For longer pieces of written homework plenty of time (over the weekend) is given and therefore it is also expected that work is handed in on time.
* **REVISION:** This should be an on-going process (see homework timetable). The best way to revise is to spend 50% of time going over mind maps, notes, exercises, old essays to ensure the content of the course and the material covered are understood. The remaining 50% of time should be spent completing additional reading, listening and translation tasks and past paper questions.
* **MOCK EAMS AND BENCHMARKS:** Students will face a benchmark exam every half-term. This will consist of a test (at least two hours under timed conditions) and a mock speaking exam. Each mock exam should allow students to access the full grade range from A\* to U grade, given the topics covered up to that point and exam techniques. They are an indicator of how well the students have understood and can apply the content to questions they will meet in the final exams at the end of the two years. Mock exams are extremely important and should be treated like the actual exam. They are an ideal point to see progress and to get valuable feedback. Mistakes in these assessments are inevitable, hence the follow up work is to test whether students have learned from those mistakes to become better at the subject and exam techniques.

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

The College’s policy is to deal with the student first, but we also report to parents at regular intervals to inform them about the students’ progress and our expectations through four Student Reviews (Reports) spread throughout the two years at College and also four parents’ evenings.

If the department feels a student is under-performing based on evidence such as benchmark grades and the approach to learning in between these periods, then the Head of Department may place the student onto a Formal Department Action Plan and will formally write to the parents after a 1-2-1 with the student to try and get the student back on track in a supportive way.

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

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

The ARG is determined by the Head of Department in communication with the language assistant and will rely on the following evidence base:

1. **Benchmark Checkpoints Performance Grades (1 to 4**
2. **Approach to Learning:** How well is the student engaging in the learning, evidenced by

attendance, punctuality, and the ability to meet weekly deadlines with quality work. Has the student sought out extra support via workshops and how efficient is the overall communication with the teachers.

The ARG plays a key part in determining the context in which the student progresses 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 if students 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). 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 a U Grade would not be advised to continue with the course, they would need to speak to a Senior Tutor about alternative pathways.

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, which will 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!

**Other Considerations**

* *LATE POLICY:* In line with the ‘College Assessment Policy’, the department is 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. 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 continued failure to meet ‘PREP’ work requirements will result in a reference to the pastoral team and a phone call home to parents.
* *RETURNED WORK:* Work will be assessed and returned within 10 working days of it being submitted.
* *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. This is particularly relevant for the Independent Research Project. 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.

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

Below is an overview of all the key assessment checkpoints

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| **CHECKPOINT** | **DATE** | **DETAILS** |
| **Benchmark 1 Checkpoint** | Oct 2021 | **Listening, Reading, Writing & Grammar, 1h 30min Practice Paper on Topic 1 and Grammar covered so far****Speaking 7 min (1 Stimulus Card)** |
| **Parents Evening (For All)** | Nov 2021 | **Meetings with parents to discuss how the student has settled in and transferred from GCSE to A-level learning based upon:**1. **Approach to learning** (Engagement in learning, evidenced by attendance, punctuality, ability to meet weekly deadlines with quality work, Has the student sought out extra support via workshops? Is the overall communication with teachers efficient?)
2. **Performance Grade** in Benchmark 1 and from the student’s homework tasks
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| **XMAS BREAK** |  |  |
| **Benchmark 2 Checkpoint** | Dec 2021 | **Grammar, Translation, 1h 30min Practice Paper on Topics 1 &2** **Speaking 14 min (2 stimuli**) |
| **Student Review 1** | Jan 2022 | **A review of the student’s progress in the first term (12-13 weeks of teaching) after a 1-2-1 with the Head of Department:** 1. **Performance grade (A to U)** (based on benchmark 1 and 2 but also on homework tasks)
2. **Approach to Learning** (Engagement in learning, evidenced by attendance, punctuality, ability to meet weekly deadlines with quality work, Has the student sought out extra support via workshops? Is the overall communication with teachers efficient?)
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| **Benchmark 3 Checkpoint** | March 2022 | **Year 1 PRACTICE PAPER Paper 1 (1h 45min)& Paper 2 (1h 30min)**  **Paper 3 / Speaking 14min (2 Stimuli)** |
| **Parents Evening (Targeted)** | Mar 2022 | **Meetings with parents primarily where teachers may have a concern about the student’s progress since Student Review 1 in January.** |
| **EASTER BREAK** |  |  |
| **Benchmark 4 Checkpoint** | June 2022 | **Year 1 PRACTICE PAPER Paper 1 (1h 45min)& Paper 2 (1h 30min)**  **Paper 3 / Speaking 14min (2 Stimuli)** |
| **Student Review 2** | June 2022 | **A review of the student’s progress for the academic year (30-35 weeks of teaching) after a 1-2-1 with the Head of Department** 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
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| **SUMMER BREAK** |  |  |
| **Benchmark 5 Checkpoint** | Oct 2022 | **Year 1 PRACTICE PAPER Paper 1 (1h 45min)**  **Paper 3 /Speaking 21min** |
| **Parents Evening (All)** | Oct 2022 | **Meetings with parents to discuss how well the student has settled in to the second phase of learning:**1. **Approach to learning** (Engagement 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 the student’s draft Independent Research Project mark and to talk about the final deadline for after half-term.
3. **How to support the student:** Discuss how parents can further support the student and what is coming up in this year
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| **Benchmark 6 Checkpoint** | Dec 2022 | **A- LEVEL PRACTICE PAPER Paper 1 (2h 30min) & Paper 2 (2h)** **Paper 3 / Speaking 21min** |
| **Student Review 3** | Dec 2022 | **A review of the student’s progress for the academic year since last Student Review (July) after a 1-2-1 with the Head of Department**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** | Feb 2023 | **A LEVEL MOCK EXAM Paper 1 (2h) in Hall**  **Paper 1 (30min) & Paper 2 (2h) Paper 3 / Speaking 21min in lesson time** |
| **Student Review 4** | Mar 2023 | **A review of the student’s progress for the academic year (30-35 weeks of teaching) after a 1-2-1 with the Head of Department( 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)** | Mar 2023 | **Meetings with parents primarily where teachers may have a concern about the student’s progress since Student Review 4.** |
| **EASTER BREAK** |  |  |

**Rationale for Assessment Programme**

It is really important that when students come to sit their final assessment, they are prepared and able to perform at Their highest ability. Therefore, because languages are assessed under examination timed conditions, the benchmark assessments are designed to practise the skills needed to sit a timed exam, so that students are ‘exam fit’.

Therefore, the first few benchmarks start with the students being able to practise shorter-answer exam questions and we then scaffold support to ensure that students are able to write evaluative essays from Benchmark 3 onwards.

The Benchmark 4 exam is very important, because is assesses everything learnt in Year 1 and forms the basis for the grade prediction. The big mock exam in the second year is a key assessment and should be treated very carefully – it is perhaps the only time students will be able to sit in an exam hall under timed conditions to complete an assessment. It is positioned in such a way that students can learn from the experience with enough time to correct any issues before the final A-level assessment after Easter.

**Grade Boundaries**

The standard distribution of outcomes for grade boundaries is the basis for benchmark AQA papers throughout the course, with some flexibility. The same goes for essays, however, learning how to write them is a process and the marking reflects that.