

Submitting Your Assignments



Plus communicating with your tutor, and how to handle re-submissions

Please refer back to this regularly!

Submitting Your Assignments - A Guide

Communicating with Your Tutor

Please ensure that all communication with your tutor is made via the *message board* in your study room, not by Ping (Basecamp's private messaging system) or any other means. This is because it is crucial that all course communications are searchable and accountable, in case of unforeseen problems arising. Pings, private emails and other forms of communication outside of the Basecamp message board environment cannot be searched and should therefore be avoided. It's really straightforward - just use the message board and all will be well! Please create a new message for each new subject, and give it a clear title so that as your course goes on, it is easy to search for previous information and conversations.

Completion of Modules

You will find your course timetable in your Study Room both in the docs & files area and all dates replicated under the Schedule tab. The Schedule sends you automated notifications for each date.

Each module has three dates attached to it:

* The due date

* The extension date

* The terminal date

Under most circumstances you are expected to complete your work by the due date - and we strongly advise that you try to, especially at the beginning of your course - but we understand that sometimes this is not possible. For this reason we have an 'honour system' for extensions, which means that you are told what the extension date will be in advance, and you are trusted not to use the extension time unless you really need it. Remember that ***assignments cannot be submitted past the terminal date.***

All of our *module specifications* are laid out in exactly the same way. If, on receipt of a module specification, you have any questions or are unsure as to what to do, then please consult your Personal Tutor via your study room Message Board, and he or she will be happy to guide and advise you. However, each Module contains details of exactly what is required.

We very strongly advise that you **read the entire module specification before starting work on it!** Students often start Assignment 1, only to find that they have inadvertently covered work that is specified for another assignment later on in the Module, so please read the Module Specification thoroughly before starting work on the assignments.

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While working on each assignment, you should keep referring back to that assignment's requirements just to make sure that you're on track. When the assignment is complete, we advise doing a final check before moving on to the next, and so forth. You may find that you notice errors and omissions more easily if you print the work out before proof-reading it.

If you wish to check that you are completing a module or assignment in the correct way, just contact your Personal Tutor via the study room Message Board and ask him or her to glance through a first-page draft / in-progress version of your work. This should be done early on in the process. Please don't expect to give your Personal Tutor an entire assignment or set of assignments to "glance through" just before you formally submit them! It's too late by then. Instead, send a first-page draft of an assignment just to check that you are on the right lines, sooner rather than later. This is not the same as asking specific, technical questions related to the work, which can be done at any time, via the study room Message Board.

Once all of the assignments for a module have been completed, you should inform your Personal Tutor that your work is ready for assessment. Again, this should take place via the study room message board.

Please don't submit any given module for assessment until you have completed all of the assignments for that module. Your Personal Tutor will not be able to assess it unless it is complete – we do not award grades for partially-completed work.

Please be aware that in Distance Learning, the onus is on you, the student, to manage your time and adhere to deadlines. Your Personal Tutor will not chase you for work.

Please ensure that at the head of each assignment, you have written your name, student number, course name and the full assignment title / question / requirements. It is also important that all files, attachments or documents created in Basecamp are properly labelled and easily identifiable.

Finally, please make sure that you tell your Personal Tutor that your assignments are ready for assessment, in a specific, stand-alone post on your Message Board.

Simply uploading an assignment, or set of assignments, is *not* the same thing as telling your tutor that those are the final versions and that you are happy for them to be assessed. We work with a lot of students, and a lot of files are being uploaded and amended every day, so unless you confirm in writing that these are your final uploads and that you want us to assess them, we won't!

Allow 3 weeks for your tutor to assess your work and write a feedback report. We take assessment very seriously and you will find that your feedback is detailed. For this reason, it takes time. (And of course, your tutor is working with many other students at the same time)!

Please feel free to carry on with your next module while you await feedback on the one you have just completed.

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Time Management

As we said above, we strongly recommend that you stick to the course timetable's due dates, and pay particular attention to the 'Terminal dates' on your Course Timetable, as any module submitted after its Terminal Date will not be marked, and this will have a significant impact on your final qualification.

Each module specification contains a guide to the amount of time that it takes the average student to complete that module. As a rough guide, a single module (3 credits) will take about 4 weeks to complete; a double module (6 credits) will take approximately 8 weeks., and a triple, 12 weeks. This is based on 9 -12 study hours per week – thus, a single module will nominally take 36-40 hours of study over a four-week period.

The Due Date for a module is the one that you should work to. All of our modules can be completed within the time set for them if you put in the study hours. If for some reason you get a bit behind, then there's an automatic two-week extension period for each module, that you can make use of without compromising the rest of your course. That two week extension represents another 18 - 24 hours of study, so it should be plenty to allow you to catch up.

The danger comes if you go past the extension period and start eating up the time between the end of the extension, and the *Terminal Date*. In our experience, students who go past the extension dates early on in their courses almost always end up having problems, and the closer you get to that terminal date, the less wiggle room you have for the rest of the course. Time management is crucial, and especially so in the first few months of a course.

The Voice College's modules are often more demanding than they appear at first glance, and many students tend to waste time at the beginning of their registration period, thinking that they have got plenty of time to catch up. In reality that is rarely the case! We urge you to try to stick to your timetable.

Please remember that our courses are *not* open-ended. When you embark on a tutored distance-learning course you are paying for an experienced and knowledgeable tutor's time (among other things) for a fixed period. We offer a huge amount of flexibility with the built-in extension dates and then a considerable period beyond that, leading up to the terminal date for every single module that you study. It is up to you to manage your time within that flexible framework.

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Finally, please be aware that if your timetable crosses over the Christmas and New Year period, we *always* allow an extra 2 - 3 weeks (depending on where the holidays fall) in addition to your standard registration period. This is because we don't expect you - or our team - to have to work over the holiday period, so we make the assumption that everyone will be enjoying some "down time". You will retain access to your study room, of course, and if you want to work then that's up to you! But effectively the college closes over the Christmas period, just like any regular brick-built college would.

Referencing

We require all academic work to be properly referenced. If you are not familiar with referencing, it has to do with a set of rules regarding how you set out your work, and - importantly - how you credit the work of others. For example, if you wish to quote from an existing book, journal, website or scholarly paper, there are universally accepted ways in which you should do it. Referencing is expected for *all* academic modules on each of our distance-learning courses. However, we expect far more detailed referencing and wider background reading for Diploma-level courses than we do for Certificate-level courses.

For example, if you wish to quote from an existing book, journal, website or scholarly paper, there are universally accepted ways in which you should do it. All academic institutions employ a referencing system, and there are two major referencing systems in common use, one being the APA system and the other being the Harvard system. Below you will find links to a comprehensive guide to the APA system, and a really easy 'reference generator' for the Harvard style:

[APA Referencing Guide](#)

[Harvard reference generator](#)

These links provide all of the information that you need to help you to reference your work in the correct way, and the Harvard reference generator actually does the hard work for you! Referencing is a vital component of academic work, and is absolutely essential if you are going to be quoting the words of others to support your arguments (which you should be)!

Using other people's work or words without referencing them is considered theft in the academic world, and we take it very seriously. Any student found to be plagiarising other people's work will be immediately withdrawn from the course that they are taking, with no entitlement to a refund of fees.

Pitch referencing / Note Names

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When making reference to specific pitches in the voice, please adhere to the system that is used throughout The Voice College, and which is in common use worldwide:

Middle C is numbered C4, and the numbers change on C, so...

A below Middle C is A3

A above Middle C is A4

Please do not submit assignments using a different pitch-naming system (for example, with numbers changing on A, or with Middle C being C3).

The Grading System

In our dealings with students, we like to be open and honest regarding all policies and practices. To this end, please find below a guide to our Grading System. This is the benchmark by which all submitted work is graded, and is employed by all of our Personal Tutors, in order that all students are graded via the same principles and to the same standards.

A Grading Rubric, showing detailed breakdowns of what you need to accomplish for each grade, is available in your Study Room.

Your Personal Tutor is responsible for grading individual assignments and overall modules. On completion of your course, these grades will be submitted to staff at Head Office for verification and final evaluation. The only exception to this is *Sing 4 Health*, which is awarded a straightforward Pass or Fail at the end of the course.

Please note, although some of the modules deal with quite technical subject matter, it is often the case that there is no 'right or wrong' answer to an assignment. Sometimes you will be studying the work of a particular pedagogue or academic, and find that his or her theories conflict with something that you have learned before, or indeed something that you are studying in another module. This is both the joy and the frustration of singing pedagogy; there is a good deal of conflict between leading pedagogies, and when you add into the mix the fact that singing is an art form, not a pure science, the scope for disagreement becomes enormous!

Thus it is that we encourage you to study with your mind wide open. Those students who seek the 'one correct way' to do something, or to carry on doing what they always done despite evidence that casts reasonable doubt on their methodology will often be frustrated, as there is always more than one way to approach any art form.

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You may find that you have an opinion that conflicts with that of your Personal Tutor and that is absolutely fine. We ask only that you are able to back up your opinion with fully-referenced and current research. You will not be marked down for having a different opinion to your tutor - only for not constructing the argument well, or not providing evidence from recognised sources.

Some courses and modules are assessed via portfolio and automated online exam, and if your study path includes these elements you will receive separate, detailed information as to how all that works.

Our grades for the vast majority of our Distance Learning courses are:

- * Distinction (A)
- * Upper Merit (A-)
- * Merit (B+ / B / B-)
- * Pass (C+ / C / C-)
- * NYA (Not yet achieved - work requires revision & resubmission)
- * F (Failed, following resubmission that is still not to Pass standard)

What To Do If You Don't Pass a Module 1st Time

In order to pass any of our distance-learning courses (other than *Sing 4 Health* which is a straight Pass / Fail course) you must achieve a Pass grade or higher for *all* of the modules that you study. Don't worry, you'll be given plenty of guidance throughout; we want you to succeed!

If any submitted Module initially fails to meet Pass standard, it will be graded "not yet achieved" and you will then have the opportunity to re-submit the work on one occasion during the Registration Period (i.e. one possible re-submission for each module that you take).

Should your work be graded "not yet achieved" on first submission, your Personal Tutor will give you in-depth advice as to how it could be improved in order to achieve a Pass grade or better.

If, after re-submission, your work has still not achieved a Pass grade, then it will be deemed that the Module has been failed, and at that point the course as a whole cannot be passed. In this event (which is unusual), you would receive a Certificate of Completion for the modules which you have passed, showing which grades were achieved - or in some cases it may be possible to award you a different qualification, at the discretion of the Principal.

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The Re-submissions Process

Re-submissions are a normal part of the learning process. In fact, very few people get through a course without having to re-submit work at one point or another. Of course, re-submitting work takes time, but the extra time allowed on all courses - anything from 4 weeks on the Foundation certificate course to three full months on the Advanced Professional Diploma - is there to give you some wiggle room for those occasions when work has to be re-submitted. If you stick to your timetable, you will always have time to re-do the assignments that don't quite hit the mark first time round.

In the event that a re-submission is necessary your tutor will tell you exactly what needs to be done, in your initial feedback report. If you are unsure about anything relating to the re-submission requirements, please ask your tutor via the study room Message Board.

Here are the steps towards successful re-submissions:

- Re-do your work in line with your tutor's feedback
- Create a sub-folder in the relevant module's main folder, named "Re-submissions"
- Do NOT delete the original files. They are required for cross-referencing
- Name your re-submitted files as re-submissions (for example *TO4 Assignment 2 Re-submission*) so that it's clear which one is the original and which the new work.
- Upload the new files to the re-submissions folder that you have created
- **Highlight the new or changed passages.** This is crucial, as your tutor will need to see at a glance which parts of the assignment have been changed.
- **Tell your tutor** that the re-submissions are complete and ready to be assessed.

Once your re-submissions have been uploaded, your tutor will schedule some time to re-assess your work. If the re-submissions bring your work up to at least a Pass grade - as is by far the norm - then the module will then awarded an overall grade.

We hope that this makes the re-submissions process as simple as possible. If you follow these steps, everything should be just fine! But as with everything else on your course, if you're not sure *ask your tutor*. That's what they're there for.