Guidelines for Assessment at the BISC

Background:

See the Faculty of Arts and Science grading policies and regulations here:
http://www.queensu.ca/artsci/staff-and-faculty/teaching/grading

The guidelines outlined in this document align the Faculty of Arts and Science regulations with the specific needs of the BISC.

What you need to know about assessment at the BISC:

1. Written assignments are to be submitted via onQ Dropbox.
2. It is BISC policy that late submissions are to be penalised at 5% per day for five days; thereafter, the assignment will not be accepted for evaluation.¹
3. Assignments are to be evaluated with a numerical grade (usually a percentage) that conforms to the broad expectations set out by the Queen’s grade designators.²
4. Grades and feedback are to be provided to students on onQ³ within 14 days of the assignment deadline.⁴
5. Students have the right to appeal a grade within 21 days of receiving it.⁵

Additional considerations:

¹ onQ timestamps submissions, and the late submission penalty should be applied without fail based on this timestamp. In exceptional circumstances, students may have legitimate reasons for not being able to complete an assignment on time. Such students must complete a Declaration of Extenuating Circumstances form and submit it to the Deputy Academic Director who will in turn inform the instructor of any resulting academic considerations.
² Document AS01 (Grade Designators and Queen’s Official Conversion Scale)
³ Even if online submission was not used (e.g. for oral presentations), the feedback should nonetheless be entered into onQ’s grades section so that students and administrators can view it throughout the term.
⁴ In large team-taught courses, it may take longer to return assignments due to double-marking procedures. In that case, students must be given an indication of when they will receive their grades and feedback.
⁵ Please note that the first stage of any appeals process is a discussion between student and instructor. It is advised that such discussions are minute; see document AS04 (Guidelines for Appeals at the BISC).
• Because the numerical mark is the value used to calculate the course average, students are always to be told what that numerical mark is, and it must be visible to them on OnQ.
• At the end of term, the numeric course average is converted into a letter grade and only the letter grade is used to calculate the GPA and to determine students’ academic status. So, if an instructor submits a final grade of 80% for one student and 84% for another, both receive a course grade of A- and both respective GPAs are calculated using the identical earned grade point of 3.7.
• Increasingly, students appeal grades when the assignment expectations are not sufficiently clear. There are two main considerations here:
  - Assignment guidelines. These will clearly indicate the topic, format, word length, citation style, type and quantity of sources required, and any other expectations of the assignment.
  - Assignment rubrics. Rubrics are crucial for students to understand the academic criteria required to achieve each grade category. Rubrics will be discipline-specific and will fit within the framework of the Queen’s grade descriptors. Increasingly, students appeal grades when the academic expectations are not transparent as they argue they cannot achieve an A if they don’t know what is expected for an A.

Other academic entries which may be assigned by an instructor are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IN</th>
<th>Incomplete</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GD</td>
<td>Grade Deferred</td>
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INCOMPLETE (IN):

Incomplete standing is a temporary designation reserved for a course in which a student who, because of extenuating circumstances beyond his or her control, has not completed all term work for a course or requests permission to defer the writing of a final assessment. A student seeking incomplete standing may be requested to provide professional documentation that demonstrates extenuating circumstances, and must arrange to complete a "Permission for an Incomplete Mark" form.

Students and instructors in this situation should discuss the matter with the Deputy Academic Director.

The "Permission for an Incomplete Mark" form indicates the current letter grade for the course based on the work completed, the specific work yet to be finished, and a date by which the outstanding work will be submitted. The date for the work to be completed will be reached by mutual agreement between the instructor and student and can be no later than the end of the subsequent term.

• In cases where a student will receive a failing grade if all outstanding work is not completed or the exam is not written, an IN grade is submitted by the instructor. A grade of IN is not included in the determination of a student’s GPA, and any course
with an IN designation cannot be counted for credit towards a degree program. If the outstanding work is not submitted by the agreed date, the IN grade will lapse to an F (Fail) which will be included in the student’s GPA.

- In cases where a student will pass the course even if the outstanding work is not completed or the exam is not written, the actual earned letter grade is submitted at the end of term. The letter grade is included in the student’s GPA and can be counted for credit towards a degree program. If the outstanding work is not submitted by the agreed date, the original letter grade shall stand.

Once the agreed work has been submitted, instructors will submit a signed “Change of Grade” form to the Deputy Academic Director, who will countersign the form and action the change.

**Required forms:**

Permission for an Incomplete Mark form:
http://www.queensu.ca/artsci/sites/default/files/permission_for_an_incomplete_grade1.pdf

Official grade change form:

**GRADE DEFERRED (GD):**

A mark of GD may be entered in the following special circumstances:

- When a student has submitted all the work in a course, but the final grade is not available (e.g. late assignments not yet marked)
- When the final mark cannot be determined until the resolution of a pending academic integrity investigation, appeal, or hearing

**Academic entries that may be assigned only upon successful formal appeal are:**

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<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AG</td>
<td>Aegrotat grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CR</td>
<td>Credit standing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All formal appeals are submitted via the Queen’s online appeals portal:
http://www.queensu.ca/artsci/students-at-queens/academic-appeals

Instructors may be contacted for information if a student submits a formal appeal but they are not formally involved in the decision-making process. More information about appeals at the BISC can be found in document AS04 (Guidelines for Appeals at the BISC).