BORDERS
COLLEGE

Regionally Focused – Globally Engaged

Assessment Procedure

March 2021

History of Changes

Version	Description of Change	Authored by	Date
1	New Rules for BTEC First and Nationals from 1 Sept 2014. 4.4.2 Retention of Evidence Clarification	H Anderson/JCC	20 June 2014
1.1	Assessments to include reference to Professional Conduct between Staff and Students. Inclusion of Lead IV for BTEC awards. Reference to Malpractice policy included. Inclusion of internal appeals process and more detailed guidance on the principles of assessment and on creating assessments	H Anderson/D Killean	July 2015
1.2	Minor clarifications in the text	D Killean	May 2016
1.3	Inclusion of a section relating to specific awarding body appeals processes. Inclusion of guidance on digital assessment. Inclusion of a flow diagram for reassessment and remediation	D Killean	May 2017
1.4	Updated awarding body related documents and minor changes to role titles. Policy now a separate document	C Elliott	May 2018
1.5	Appendices removed; readers directed to relevant websites where the information will always be current	J Robertson	September 2019
1.5.1	Minor typo	J Robertson	November 2019

1.5.2	BHSQ request: additional wording to clarify role of SQA Accreditation	J Robertson	March 2020
1.6	Revision of roles and hyperlinks	J Gracie	March 2021

Assessment Procedure

1. Assessments

1.1 Principles of Assessment

All assessments must be valid, reliable, practicable, fair and equitable. When producing or quality assuring assessment instruments the SQA Guide to Assessment provides very useful guidance on ensuring assessments meet these principles.

1.1.1 Validity of Assessment

Each assessment – whether it is a question paper or a project brief – will be designed in such a way that it provides students with an opportunity to produce the evidence that shows they have the knowledge and skills to satisfy the requirements of the qualification.

An assessment is valid when it:

- is appropriate for its purpose (e.g. a practical assessment will be used to assess practical skills)

- allows the production of evidence of students' skills, knowledge and understanding which can be measured against the standards of the qualification

- allows lecturers to make reliable judgements about the student's performance

- allows the interpretation and inferences which can be drawn from the assessment outcomes to be meaningful and justifiable

Validity has to be ensured at each stage of the assessment process. There are two key aspects of validity – **content** and **construct**.

Content validity is the measure of how closely the content of an assessment matches the content of the Unit Specification. It is concerned with the level of knowledge, understanding and skills that are required to meet the standard of the qualification.

Construct validity concerns the extent to which an assessment actually measures what the Unit Specification states it is intended to measure. For example, an assessment that asked a student to write about a skill rather than demonstrate it would have low construct validity.

Both types of validity are achieved by subject experts choosing appropriate assessment methods, developing the assessment, and evaluating it against the Unit Specification.

1.1.2 Practicability

For assessments to be practicable (i.e. capable of being carried out both efficiently and cost effectively) there has to be adequate resources and time. Examples of this are:

• for oral assessments or interviews, balancing the need for assessment reliability with considerations of staff and student time and potential stress

• for assessing practical skills, keeping in mind any resource implications

1.1.3 Reliability

To be reliable, assessment decisions (based on the standards in a qualification) on students' performance must be consistent across all assessors and all students undertaking the same assessment task. The College ensures this through its internal verification processes.

Assessment decisions are reliable when they are based on evidence that:

• is generated by valid assessments provided under consistently-applied conditions of assessment (e.g. open book, supervised or invigilated)

• the work is that of the students being assessed

and when they are:

• based on clearly-defined performance and/or grade-related criteria

• consistent across the range of assessors applying the assessment in different situations, contexts and with different students

• consistent over time

1.1.4 Fair & Accessible

All assessments must avoid any language or representation of people or peoples that could be viewed as stereotyping or unfairly discriminatory. Content must comply with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 to promote the general duty.

Assessment instrument content should be written in straightforward, understandable English (foreign language and Gaelic language assessment excluded) and follow the College's clear print policy.

Assessment Arrangements for students with a disability or learning difficulty should be applied where necessary and where approved by the awarding body.

Exceptional arrangements may also be applied where appropriate when a student is unable to attend an assessment.

The assessment system should be flexible to meet the needs of all students.

1.2   Types of Assessment

1.2.1 Formative Assessment

Staff should develop a range of both formal and informal methods for gauging students' progress with their knowledge, understanding and skills. This will assist when making judgements as to when a student is ready for summative assessment.

1.2.2 Summative Assessment

A summative assessment is used to measure and record a student's attainment. This can either be internal (conducted by the college) or external (conducted by an awarding body e.g. exam).

All summative assessments must be current and have been internally verified.

Awarding body regulations for summative assessment vary from organisation to organisation. It is particularly important that lecturers familiarise themselves with the regulations that govern the summative assessment of the qualification they teach. From time-to-time awarding bodies revise their regulations. These are publicised on their websites. Again, it is important that lecturers use the awarding body websites to remain current with these regulations.

Guides to assessment types and question types are provided in the current SQA Guide to Assessment available in the [Publications area of the SQA website](#).

1.3   Professional Conduct

Staff should follow the procedures for Professional Conduct between Staff and Students, when a pre-existing relationship exists between the assessor and a student.

1.4   Security of Assessments

All assessment instruments and students' assessed work must be stored securely. Electronic files must be password protected and paper copies stored in a locked cupboard or room.

All closed book assessment instruments must be returned at the end of the assessment to the lecturer and the resulting assessed work destroyed once past the awarding body's disposal date.

Access to awarding body secure sites containing assessment exemplars and national devised assessment instruments is made by the Quality Assurance Coordinator. The Quality Assurance Coordinator monitors the distribution of these assessment instruments. Material made available through the awarding body secure sites must be stored securely at all times and access controlled to those who have a legitimate purpose.

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Any breaches in the security of assessment instruments must be reported to the Assistant Principal Quality and Development and to the Quality Assurance Coordinator. The Quality Assurance Coordinator will report the breach to the awarding body and act on their instruction to limit the impact.

1.5 Assessment Using Digital Means

The integrity of assessments must be maintained when using a digital medium for summative assessment. This means that careful consideration must be given to the digital tools used for assessment purposes to ensure security, access, validity, reliability and practicability are maintained.

With open book assessments, such as evidence portfolios or project work, digital tools can benefit the method of assessment, helping with gathering and storing evidence, referencing and mapping. E-portfolio should be considered to support evidence gathering for vocational qualifications such as SVQs.

Awarding bodies are now offering access to their own online assessment tools. These have the advantage of the necessary security and controls being in place to ensure the integrity of the assessment. They can also allow for randomising of questions, therefore also providing access to a different, valid version of the assessment instrument. The awarding body provides clear guidance on the use of their online assessment tools, which must be followed. There are advantages to this approach as they are relatively easy to use; quality assurance is provided by the awarding body as is marking and standardisation. They ensure consistency across presenting centres.

Where College staff wish to create their own summative assessments tools for assessment by digital means, they must consider how they will ensure the integrity of the assessment.

For closed book assessments staff must ensure the security of the instrument of assessment and be able to restrict access to other files, drives and network during the period of assessment. Staff must contact ISLT to ensure that the necessary level of security can operate for the digital instrument of assessment to be used. This includes the use of exam logins which can be obtained from ISLT and restrict access during the exam.

Staff must not use Word documents or similar formats for closed book assessments delivered digitally that can be easily copied. Security cannot be maintained using these formats. Please seek advice from ISLT.

The digital assessment instrument should be created within a secure virtual learning environment such as Moodle. The Quality and Development team can provide detailed support for creating the instrument of assessment for use in the Moodle virtual learning environment and should be contacted at an early stage. Training is available on how to create assessment and how to control access using the Moodle site.

Internal Verifiers must approve the use of all assessments undertaken digitally and satisfy themselves that the integrity of the assessment is not compromised by using this medium. They must ensure that the chosen method of assessment complies with the awarding bodies regulations for digital assessment.

2. Feedback

All students receive feedback on a summative assessment in written format, with the rare exception of those for whom verbal feedback is more appropriate e.g. ESOL students. Copies of the Student Feedback Forms are available from the Publications Department and on the Intranet.

3. Assessment Arrangements

Individual assessment arrangements can be put in place for students with additional support needs. Course Tutors/lecturers/assessors must liaise with the Learning Support Specialists to provide this support.

4. Quality Assurance

4.1 Assessment and Internal Verification

4.1.1 Each Verification Group will be allocated to, and managed by, the most appropriate Assistant Principal.

4.1.2 Each Assistant Principal will ensure that at least one internal verifier is appointed to every Verification Group. Where the internal verifier is also an assessor, a second internal verifier must be appointed. A lead Internal Verifier will be identified for BTEC awards.

4.1.3 Assessment and internal verification must be undertaken as set out in the College's Internal Verification Policy and Procedure.

4.1.4 Evidence of maladministration/malpractice/plagiarism may lead to disciplinary procedures as per the Malpractice Policy.

4.1.5 Lecturers must use Internally Verified assessments only, whether paper or online, in line with the College's Internal Verification Procedure and IV Security Process.

4.1.6 All assessments must be undertaken in English.

4.1.7 Students should normally be given an assessment timetable for each unit or course. A minimum notice of 5 working days should be given.

4.2   Internal Assessment

For BTEC awards, please check the [BTEC website](#) for Internal Assessment Guidelines.

For all other awarding bodies, the following Internal Assessment rules apply.

4.2.1 When a student is given a date to submit an assessment, the student is expected to submit the assessment on or before that date. Students who miss assessment deadlines either written or online without a valid reason will be allocated a second attempt, thereafter the student may be charged for a third attempt.

Exceptional circumstances will be taken into consideration (see 4.2.3).

4.2.2 Where students have been unsuccessful in demonstrating their attainment of skills and knowledge or competence, they may be asked to either re-submit their evidence or be re-assessed at the assessor's discretion.

Re-submission (may be referred to as remediation by some awarding bodies) should be offered where there is a minor shortfall in the evidence submitted. Clarification, extension, correction or additional evidence to cover a range statement may be required to meet the assessment criteria. There should normally be one or, in exceptional circumstances, two re-submission opportunities.

Re-assessment (where appropriate) should be undertaken where there is insufficient evidence to support achievement. An alternative assessment should be used. There should normally be one or, in exceptional circumstances, two re-assessment opportunities. The date for re-submission will be provided by the lecturer/assessor.

4.2.3 Exceptional circumstances should fall into one of the following categories and must be authorised by the Assistant Principal.

• student absence supported by doctor's letter/self-certificate

• mitigating circumstances e.g. personal issues, recognition of special assessment requirements

• lack of appropriate facilities or equipment

• staff failure to follow the assessment policy/procedures.

Any student wishing to claim an exceptional circumstances appeal should do so through their Course Tutor, who makes a recommendation to the Curriculum and Learning Manager(CLM).

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4.2.4 Where the candidate evidence for VQ's demonstrates knowledge and understanding, a holistic approach to assessment should be adopted.

Where the candidate evidence demonstrates skills competence, the existing individual performance criteria approach should be retained, unless arrangements documents indicate otherwise.

4.2.5 Where open book assessment is used, the following procedure should apply:
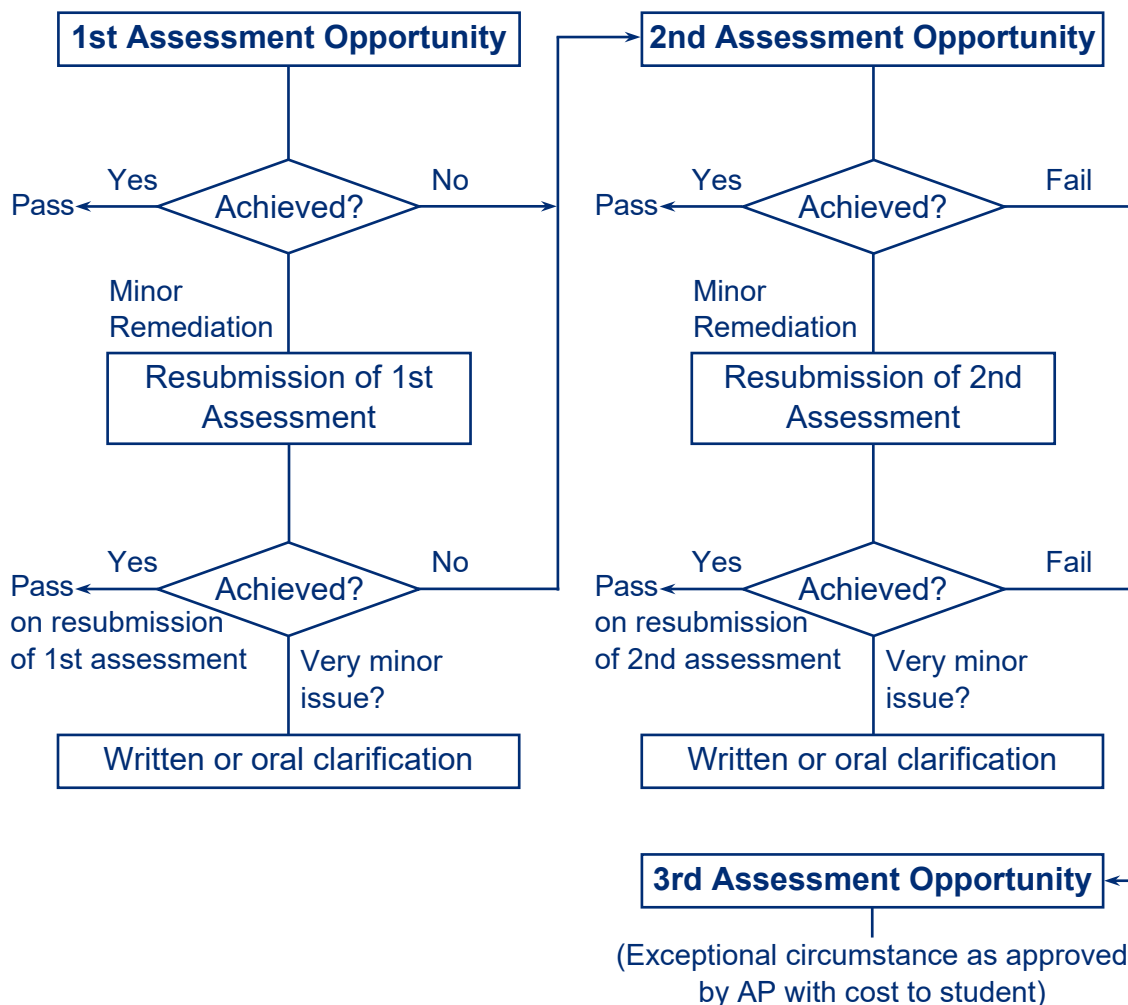
- the research can be undertaken within or outwith the College

- the assessor may clarify points raised by a student but may not give instruction on how to complete the assessment

- deadlines for completion should be adhered to and only amended by mutual agreement in advance of the deadline date.

4.2.6 Higher National Qualifications – The Graded Unit will be internally marked and may be Externally Verified. The unit will be graded following an Exam Board meeting prior to the end of the Academic Year.

4.2.7 Where summative e-assessment is used, students will be briefed in advance of the assessment. Briefings will include information on:

- the date and duration of the assessment authentication procedures and any ID required

- the work that will be included in the assessment

- the nature of the assessments (number and types of questions in the assessments)

- any permitted, non-permitted or provided data or aids, such as data sheets or calculators (physical or software)

- any provision made for candidates with special needs

- what to do in the event of technical problems.

Assessment Procedure

Flow Diagram of Assessment, Resubmission and Reassessment

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  1st Assessment Opportunity          2nd Assessment Opportunity

Yes            No                   Yes                Fail
Pass◄── Achieved? ──►          Pass◄── Achieved? ──►

Minor                               Minor
Remediation                         Remediation
   Resubmission of 1st                 Resubmission of 2nd
       Assessment                          Assessment

Yes            No                   Yes                Fail
Pass◄── Achieved?             Pass◄── Achieved? ──►
on resubmission                     on resubmission
of 1st assessment  Very minor       of 2nd assessment  Very minor
                   issue?                              issue?
   Written or oral clarification       Written or oral clarification

                    3rd Assessment Opportunity ◄──

                 (Exceptional circumstance as approved
                     by AP with cost to student)
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4.3   External Verification

4.3.1 There are three types of external verification:

- visiting - where the candidate evidence is bulky or ephemeral (such as performance) used for all SVQs and HN units
- central verification - where evidence is sent to the Awarding Body offices for verification. For SQA, where the finish date of an NQ unit is later than March, verification is retrospective
- postal/remote verification - evidence will be sent from central offices to the verifier's home.

4.3.2 All central and postal/remote verification will be on completed candidate evidence.

4.3.3 Visiting verification takes place throughout the year with the College agreeing an appropriate time and date with the external verifier.

Visiting verifiers will verify both complete and incomplete candidate evidence.

4.4 Retention of Evidence

4.4.1 Where units are a component of an NQ Course, the evidence should be retained for possible use in support of an exceptional circumstances submission to the SQA NQ Results Service, relating to the external assessment of the course.

4.4.2 All other NQ awards are externally verified after the completion date.

Please note that the completion date is the date given to the MIS Department by Assistant Principals usually via electronic timetables.

Evidence retention requirements for SQA are available from the Quality Assurance area of the SQA website.

For units that are part of a group award, the completion date must be for the award and not the individual unit.

Candidate records and IV records must be kept for 3 years after the completion date.

4.4.3 For VQs, External Verification will occur on one or two occasions during the delivery of the award. It is important to retain all student evidence until after the final verification event or until the date indicated by the awarding body.

4.4.4 HN units can be subject to visiting verification prior to the completion date of the unit and student evidence must be retained for a further academic year.

4.4.5 Written examinations or closed book assessment should be destroyed after the disposal date. Other assessment evidence such as projects, dissertations, case studies and VQ portfolios may be returned to students after the disposal date if requested by individual students.

4.4.6 Records of any appeal, including all materials and evidence must be kept for 5 years after the date of the appeal.

4.5 External Assessment

4.5.1 The assessment instruments most commonly used for external assessment are:
- written examinations or tests (question papers)
- projects or course-work (including investigations, assignments, reports and case studies)

4.5.2 Guidance on national standards is provided in the arrangements documents on the awarding body website.

4.5.3 The arrangements document for each subject area also clearly states the conditions for external assessment that must be adhered to.

4.5.4 Where external assessment evidence is generated within the College and sent to the awarding body, students are required to sign a statement that all assessment evidence produced is their own work.

4.5.5 Course estimates for each student undertaking National Qualifications, are required to be submitted to SQA. The actual date will be provided by the MIS Department. The assessment instruments on which lecturers base their estimates should be as similar as possible to the issued assessments guidelines for the Course.

4.5.6 The Awarding Bodies policies on assessment arrangements for candidates with disabilities and/or additional support needs allows for reasonable adjustments to be made to its published assessment arrangements for candidates when they are placed at a substantial disadvantage. The College must inform the awarding body if a candidate requires alternative assessment arrangements.

Contact the Quality Assurance Coordinator for further details of other awarding bodies' arrangements.

5. Internal and External Assessment Appeals

5.1 Internal Appeals

All students have the right to appeal an internal assessment using the College procedure detailed in the Student Handbook and Student Guide to Assessment and Making Appeals.

The following range of circumstances can be the subject of appeal:

- Appeal against marks or grades awarded
- Appeal against a finding of malpractice/plagiarism
- Appeal against special arrangements being refused
- Appeal against exceptional circumstances being refused

The grounds for appeal are:

- Inaccurate marking leading to the incorrect assessment decision or grade awarded
- The College not following the malpractice policy in making a judgement of malpractice or plagiarism
- The College not following its own processes for special arrangements or exceptional circumstances requests

Internal Appeals should be completed prior to final results being sent to the relevant Awarding Body.

The student must first discuss any circumstances relating to their assessment that has led to their dissatisfaction with the lecturer before commencing with the appeals procedure set out below. Appeals made without an initial discussion with the lecturer will be referred back to the lecturer by the Assistant Principal.

STAGE 1

The student must appeal in writing within 7 days of the issue arising to the Curriculum & Learning Manager/DEBI Manager setting out their grounds for appeal. The Manager conducts an investigation of the evidence and considers any actions (such as remarking or accuracy checks of assessed work) required to help come to a conclusion. These actions must be taken prior to the Manager reaching a conclusion.

The Manager will write to the student within 14 days of receiving the appeal setting out the findings of the investigation, any subsequent actions and the conclusions.

STAGE 2

Students remaining dissatisfied with the outcome of the appeal can further appeal to the Assistant Principal.

The grounds for appeal at this stage are that the academic appeals process has not been followed accurately in coming to a judgement about the initial appeal.

The student must write to the Assistant Principal setting out their grounds for appeal. The Assistant Principal will consider whether the initial judgement was made following the procedure set out above and whether all available evidence was considered.

The Assistant Principal will write to the student within 14 days of receiving the appeal setting out the findings of the investigation, any subsequent actions and the conclusions.

This is the final decision of the Internal Academic Appeals process. Once the internal process has been exhausted, students can refer to the External Awarding body guidelines on appeals. In the case of regulated awards (VQs) the student has a further option to appeal to the regulator (SQA Accreditation or Ofqual) if the awarding body finds against the individual. (SQA Accreditation is unable to overturn assessment decisions or academic judgements.)

5.2   Awarding Body External Appeals Process

There are limited circumstances under which the College can appeal to an awarding body on behalf of a student, or where a student can appeal directly to the awarding body. Reference must be made to the awarding bodies' own procedures when preparing an appeal. Where a student wishes to appeal a decision directly to the awarding body then the College will support and advise the student in completing the appeals process.

The Principal or designated deputy may appeal to the awarding body on behalf of students, in line with the awarding body's procedures, where:

- The College disagrees with an external verification decision
- The College disagrees with an assessment arrangement for students with disabilities and/or additional support needs
- The College disagrees with an exceptional circumstances decision
- The College disagrees with an awarding body decision of malpractice or maladministration of assessments

A student can appeal to an awarding body where he/she disagrees with a College decision, in line with the awarding body's procedures, on:

- Malpractice on the part of the student
- An assessment decision by the College. In the case of VQs this can be also appealed to the regulator once the awarding body appeals decision has been exhausted.

Records of any appeal, including all materials and evidence must be kept for 5 years after the date of the appeal.

5.2.1 The Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)

SQA National Qualifications Results Service

There are two Results Services:

Exceptional Circumstances Consideration Service

The Exceptional Circumstances Consideration Service supports candidates who have been unable to attend an exam, or those whose performance in the exam may have been affected by a personal circumstance or unplanned incident on the day, which is outwith their control. This must be an unplanned circumstance that affects a candidate's ability to attend or perform in an exam.

It is only available *before* the results are published, and exists to support only those students who have suffered an exceptional circumstance, such as bereavement or a medical condition.

This service is available for all examinations that appear in the examination timetable. If the College believes a student has been affected by exceptional circumstances it will inform SQA and submit alternative evidence of attainment demonstrated by the student such as coursework, class assessments or mock exams.

It is always recommended that a student sits the examination where possible. Sitting the examination does not exclude the student from having an exceptional circumstances request submitted on their behalf.

Post-results Service

This service operates *after* students receive their exam results. If the College is concerned by a student's result and believes the final mark does not reflect expectations then they can request a clerical check or a marking review of the exam paper and other externally assessed components, such as a portfolio. A priority marking review can be requested if the candidate requires a result to secure a conditional place at university or college.

If the clerical check or marking review leads to a change of grade (either up or down), this will be amended and a new certificate will be issued to the student.

There will be no consideration of 'alternative evidence' with this service. The service is based solely on a review of the candidate's original materials which were marked by SQA.

5.2.2 The British Computer Society (BCS)

If the College is unable to resolve an appeal through its internal appeals procedure, then the Learner has the right to submit an appeal directly to BCS. Learner appeals must be made within 20 days of the date of the assessment and will incur a fee of £10. This fee will be refunded if the Learner's result improves following the appeal. Appeals should be sent to qualityassuranceteam@bcs.uk

Following an initial review of an appeal BCS write to the appellant with details of their decision to either:

• Amend the decision in light of the new rationale/evidence being put forward and which has now been reviewed.

• Confirm we stand by the original decision.

The Learner will then have the right to seek an independent review. This will be carried out by someone who is not an employee of BCS or otherwise connected to BCS.

Assessment Procedure

Status: Noted at JCCP
Policy Dated: March 2021
Author: Assistant Principal Quality and Development
Review Date: March 2024
Equality Impact Assessed: May 2017

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