



# Higher Education Programmes Assessment Regulations for Higher National Awards

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Document Owner	Academic Development & Quality Assurance Committee (ADQC)
Committee Approval	Regulations
Document Type	1.0
Version	AY 2023/24
Review Date	

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## 1. General Principles

- 1.1. All Pearson BTEC Higher National courses will be delivered and assessed in accordance with the guidance and regulations set out by Pearson and published on their website (<http://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/kbtec-higher-nationals/about.html>).
- 1.2. Where work-based or placement learning is an integral part of a course, and unless otherwise stated in the course documentation, neither the College nor the awarding institution(s) shall be responsible for securing a work-based learning experience for students. Such arrangements should operate in accordance with the Work Placement Policy.

These regulations aim to:

- 1.2.1. Provide a framework for the summative assessment of the students' performance
- 1.2.2. Promote opportunities for formative assessment to improve students' performance
- 1.2.3. Ensure consistency, reliability and validity of assessment processes in line with National Standards
- 1.2.4. Establish clear rules for progression and final award
- 1.2.5. Provide guidelines on the action students can take if their achievement is at risk

## 2. Scope

These regulations govern the assessment, progression and awards of registered students of Pearson Higher National Certificates and Diploma Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) awards, full time or part time at West Suffolk College.

## 3. Development: How was this policy developed?

- 3.1. Student engagement
- 3.2. External reference points
  - 3.2.1 BTEC Higher Nationals Centre Guide to Quality Assurance and Assessment [BTEC Higher Nationals Centre Guide to Quality Assurance and Assessment 2020-2021](#)
  - 3.2.2 QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education Part B: Assuring and Enhancing Academic Quality Chapter [B6: Assessment of Students and the Recognition of Prior Learning](#)

## 4. Unit Selection

- 4.1. Within BTEC Higher National awards, course structures are specified in terms of units. The units that can be taken to achieve each award are set out in the relevant Pearson BTEC Course Specification. Some of these units are designated as 'Mandatory Core' and must be passed in order to achieve that award.
- 4.2. The units that will be offered to students will be specified within the student course handbook and the definitive record for that course.

4.3. Normally, a student who is registered for a unit and wishes to transfer to another unit may do so at any time up to the end of the second week of the commencement of delivery of the unit, subject to the agreement of the unit leaders concerned and provided that the alternative unit forms part of the relevant Programme Specification.

## 5. Conditions of the Award

Specific credit requirements for each award are set out in the relevant Pearson BTEC Programme Specification, a student must pass all required units within the period of the programme. The minimum amount and level of credit that must be successfully achieved for an award to be granted is outlined below:

Award	Credit requirement
Higher National Certificate (HNC)	Completed units equivalent to 120 credits at Level 4 Achieved at least a pass in 105 credits at level 4
Higher National Diploma (HND)	Completed units equivalent to 120 credits at Level 5 Achieved at least a pass in 105 credits at level 5 Completed units equivalent to 120 credits at Level 4 Achieved at least a pass in 105 credits at level 4

Students must not accumulate credit in excess of that required to achieve their intended award, except where required as a consequence of a course change or similar circumstance approved by the Course Leader.

## 6. Compensation Provisions for the HNC

A student can still be awarded an HNC if they have not achieved a Pass in one of the 15 credit units completed but have completed and passed the remaining units.

## 7. Compensation Provisions for the HND

A student can still be awarded an HND if they have attempted but not achieved a Pass in one of the 15 credit units completed at Level 4 and similarly if they have attempted but not achieved one of the 15 credit units at Level 5. However, they must complete and pass the remaining units for an HNC or HND as per the unit rules of combination of the required qualification.

## 8. Assessment of Individual Units

- 8.1. Other regulations or procedures which may be read in conjunction with these assessment regulations, or quoted within are:
- 8.1.1. Extenuating Circumstances



- 8.1.2. Academic Appeals and Complaints
- 8.1.3. Complaints
- 8.1.4. Recognition of Prior Learning
- 8.1.5. Academic Misconduct
- 8.1.6. Internal Verification

**8.2.** The methods of assessment will be in accordance with demonstrating the achievement of all intended learning outcomes for a unit. There is a range of assessment methods that can be utilised, such as:

- 8.1.7. presentations, written reports, accounts, surveys
- 8.1.8. log books, production diaries
- 8.1.9. role play
- 8.1.10. observations and reflections on practical tasks or performance
- 8.1.11. articles for journals, press releases
- 8.1.12. production of visual or audio materials, artefacts, products and specimens
- 8.1.13. peer and self-assessment
- 8.1.14. time constrained assessments.

**8.3.** All assessments will have a clear assignment brief so that students understand what they are required to do and what can be achieved.

## 9. Grading of Units

**9.1.** Each unit will be awarded an overall grade as outlined in the table below.

Grade	Description
D	Distinction
M	Merit
P	Pass
Refer	Submitted work not pass standard
NWS	No work submitted
Defer	Submission of work deferred because of approved extenuating circumstances
FL	Fail

**9.2.** A final grade for a unit is determined once all assessment tasks have been completed and this is derived as follows:

- 9.1.1. PASS is achieved by satisfying all the pass criteria for the Learning Outcomes, showing coverage of the unit content and attainment at Level 4 or 5.
- 9.1.2. MERIT is achieved by satisfying all of the merit and pass criteria, demonstrating high performance in the Learning Outcomes.
- 9.1.3. DISTINCTION is achieved by satisfying all of the distinction, merit and pass criteria demonstrating outstanding performance across the unit as a whole.

- 9.1.4. REFER is used to denote when a student has not achieved the pass criteria at the first attempt and will be referred to the Assessment Board for a decision on a resit opportunity and a new deadline.
  - 9.1.5. NWS is used to denote when a student has not submitted work and so has not achieved the pass criteria and will be referred to the Assessment Board for a decision on a resit opportunity and a new deadline.
  - 9.1.6. FAIL is the outcome if a student does not achieve the pass criteria after a reassessment opportunity has been given.
  - 9.1.7. DEFER is recorded by the exam board if a student has been granted Extenuating Circumstances and a further opportunity for assessment, the result of which will not be known at the Assessment Board.
- 9.2.** Students must submit all work for summative assessment by the notified deadline. Failure to submit work by the deadline without valid reason (i.e. without having requested and been granted an extension to the deadline or having presented acceptable extenuating circumstances under the terms of the Extenuating Circumstances Policy) will result in the term NWS (no work submitted) being recorded for the relevant component of assessment and will result in referral in the unit overall.
- 9.3.** Where students, in the opinion of the Examination Board, fail to attend an examination without demonstrating a valid reason in accordance with the terms of the Extenuating Circumstances Policy, the term NWS (no work submitted) will be recorded for the relevant component of assessment and will result in referral in the unit overall.
- 9.4.** Students will receive one formal opportunity for formative feedback and may also have additional verbal formative feedback during the unit delivery to support as individually required. Students can improve work following formative feedback, to consolidate a pass grade, or to improve their work towards a higher grade for their summative assessment.
- 9.5.** Once the student achieves or exceeds the minimum pass criteria for the unit, credit for that unit will be awarded. The student will receive summative feedback and further opportunities to improve the grade are not permitted.
- 9.6.** Reassessment can be granted to resubmit/resit only those assessment tasks which have not achieved a pass grade or higher at the first attempt.
- 9.6.1. Only one reassessment opportunity will be provided for each unit
  - 9.6.2. For coursework this would normally involve the reworking of the original task
  - 9.6.3. For exams a new Exam will be provided.
  - 9.6.4. The grade achieved will be capped at a Pass for the unit
- 9.7.** At the discretion of the Examination Board permission to 'repeat' a unit can be given, subject to the student having demonstrated sufficient engagement with their studies. The grade that can be awarded for the repeated unit will be capped at Pass for the unit.
- 9.7.1. The student must study that unit again with full attendance and payment of the unit fee
  - 9.7.2. Units can only be repeated once
  - 9.7.3. Students work completed as a repeat of a unit will usually be included in the sample of work reviewed by the External Examiner.



## 10. Deferral in a Unit

- 10.1. Consideration of deferral cases is undertaken in accordance with the Extenuating Circumstances Policy.
- 10.2. If the Examination Board, following advice from the Extenuating Circumstances Panel, deems that a student has presented acceptable evidence of extenuating circumstances in relation to one or more components of assessment, those components of assessment will be deemed “deferred” and the student will be given the opportunity to present those assessment(s) without penalty to the range of grades available. The relevant Examination Board will determine the timescale for presentation of these component(s).
- 10.3. Continuation or repetition of deferral status will be considered only if the relevant Examination Board receives what it deems to be further acceptable evidence of extenuating circumstances as advised through the Extenuating Circumstances Panel.

## 11. Examination Board

- 11.1. An Examination Board will be constituted in accordance with the Examination Board Procedure. Schedules for Examination Boards will be published to students along with dates for results publication.
- 11.2. The main purpose Examination Boards will be to make recommendations on:
  - 11.2.1. Grades achieved by students on the individual modules or units
  - 11.2.2. Extenuating circumstances
  - 11.2.3. Cases of academic misconduct
  - 11.2.4. Progression of students onto the next stage of the programme
  - 11.2.5. The awards to be made to students
  - 11.2.6. Referrals and deferrals
- 11.3. In line with the good practice of providing timely feedback to students, the provisional outcomes of marked and moderated assessment may be given to students before the Examination Board has formally approved results. Such feedback must be clearly identified as subject to final ratification by the Examination Board, and therefore subject to potential amendment by the Board.
- 11.4. The early release of unratified marks is to facilitate an early opportunity for students to begin to address referred work that will need to be redeemed after the Examination Board has ratified the result. It is not an opportunity for students to resubmit referred work as a first attempt before the Board ratifies the mark.
- 11.5. The results agreed by the Examination Board will be reported to Pearson in a timely fashion.

## 12. Overall Qualification Grade

- 12.1. HNC and HND awards are awarded Pass, Merit or Distinction using the points gained through all 120 credits, at level 4 for the HNC or Level 5 for the HND, based on unit achievement the criteria for which is set out in the relevant Pearson BTEC Programme Specification.
- 12.2. The overall qualification grade for the HND will be calculated based on student performance in Level 5 units only.
- 12.3. Units that have been attempted but not achieved, and subsequently granted compensation, will appear as 'Unclassified'; i.e. a 'U' grade, on the student's Notification of Performance, that is issued with the student certificate.

## 13. Disclosure of Results

- 13.1. The deliberations of the Examination Boards are confidential except where a student requests information about their own award via an Academic Appeal or Academic Complaint.
- 13.2. 12.2 Students will be formally advised of the outcome of the consideration of their academic performance by an Examination Board in accordance the **Examination Board Procedure**.
- 13.3. As part of an informal or formal Academic Appeal or Academic Complaint the **Executive Dean** may advise an individual student of the discussions of the Board of Examiners as they relate solely to the individual student's academic performance. In this context, minutes of the relevant Examination Board with appropriate redactions can be released by the College to the student who has submitted an Academic Appeal or Academic Complaint, without recourse to the Data Protection Act.

## 14. Academic Appeals

Students have a right to appeal against decisions of the Examination Board in accordance with the Academic Appeals and Complaints Policy.