

Swindon College

HNC/HND Assessment Regulations

Pearson BTEC

1. INTRODUCTION

Scope

1.1 These regulations will apply to all Pearson programmes of Higher National level 4 and 5 (HNC and HND) Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) awards at Swindon College from September 2018.

1.2 These regulations will be reviewed annually, and published in Student Programme Handbooks applicable to that year of enrolment. The college reserves the right to amend the regulations where we are required to do so by external factors such as legislative change, or where it is deemed to be in the best interests of the students. An addendum will be issued in such circumstances to inform students and staff of any changes.

Objectives

1.3 The objectives of the Assessment Regulations are to promote progression and achievement in line with Edexcel guidelines which are referred to throughout this document. These objectives also support the requirements of the UK Quality Code Chapter A3, which states that Higher Education Providers must ensure that the assessment of students is robust, valid and reliable and that the award of qualifications and credit are based on the achievement of the learning outcomes.

The regulations aim to:

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

Relationship to other regulations or procedures

1.4 Other regulations or procedures which may be read in conjunction with these assessment regulations, or quoted within are:

- Mitigating Circumstances
- Academic Appeals
- Complaints
- Prior Learning: Accredited Prior [Experiential] Learning APL/APEL
- Academic Misconduct

Responsibilities

1.5 It is the responsibility of the College to conduct Examination Boards for all Higher National Programmes. The Board's responsibilities include agreeing individual unit grades, making recommendations on progression, and determining awards. The Board will also take account of the overall student attainment in light of student feedback as appropriate.

1.6 Students should ensure that they understand and comply with the assessment regulations, submit work for both formative and summative assessment to set deadlines, and provide evidence of Mitigating Circumstances affecting their ability to meet these deadlines in accordance with the guidance.

2. ASSESSMENT LITERACY

2.1 It is essential that students understand the assessment process and protocols, and can benefit from feedback to continually develop and improve their knowledge and skills. We refer to this as 'Assessment Literacy'. The information below aims to give students clear definitions and expectations in relation to assessment expectations.

2.2 Formative assessment involves the student and their Assessor/s in determining their level of progress towards final submission. This allows the student to receive constructive feedback prior to summative assessment and take action to consolidate a pass grade or to improve work, with the aim of attaining a higher grade.

2.3 This feedback should be prompt so it has meaning and context for the student, and time must be given following the feedback for actions to be completed. Feedback on formative assessment must be constructive and provide clear guidance and actions for improvement.

2.4 One **formal** opportunity to provide formative assessment feedback must be included in each assessment at a point when students will have had the opportunity to provide evidence towards all the assessment criteria targeted. This should be built into the Assessment Plan and be formally recorded.

2.5 We recognise that informal verbal feedback is an ongoing process and is an important part of the Assessor/student relationship. All students should have equal opportunity for both formal and informal feedback, to avoid an advantageous situation for any one student.

2.6 **Summative assessment** is a final assessment decision on assignment tasks in relation to the assessment criteria of each unit. It is the **definitive assessment** and recording of the student's achievement. Students achievement on all criterion will be recorded, in order to determine the outcome of the assessment task and the unit overall.

2.7 Summative feedback will focus on the areas for development and improvement, and will identify areas of good practice within the work. Feedback should make clear reference to the criterion and to what extent these have, or have not, been met within the work. Students

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should use this feedback to set their own targets for improvement, and to seek additional support where they feel appropriate to do so.

2.8 Feedback from summative assessment will be provided within four calendar weeks of the submission deadline, and the grade decision will have been internally verified.

2.9 **Internal verification** is the quality assurance system used to monitor assessment practices and decisions which ensures that:

- assessment plans and schemes of work are in place to ensure full coverage of the qualification
- assessment instruments are fit for purpose
- assessment decisions accurately match student evidence to the unit grading criteria and assessment guidance
- assessors are standardised, and assessment and grading is consistent across the programme and at the appropriate level expected for the programme

2.10 It is essential that internal verification is planned for at the start of a programme. An internal verification schedule must be agreed to ensure that:

- all assignment briefs are internally verified **before** distribution to the students
- a sample of assessment decisions is internally verified, covering every unit, every Assessor and a range of student achievement (e.g. Ungraded/referred, Pass, Merit, Distinction)

2.11 Internal verification of assessment decisions should be carried out by a staff member who is familiar with BTEC assessment at the appropriate level and has subject knowledge of the programme area. The sample should be sufficient to confirm achievement of National Standards, and can include a student who has not achieved.

2.12 Feedback from the Internal Verifier to the Assessor should comment on the quality of feedback given to the students and the effective completion of documentation. Internal verification of assessed work should be clearly recorded. If action is required, the Assessor should complete this action and return the paperwork, demonstrating the action taken to the Internal Verifier for sign off.

2.13 The result of the Internal Verification process must be formally recorded on the appropriate paperwork and records retained for audit purposes.

3. STRUCTURE AND DURATION

3.1 Below is a summary of the usual duration and pathways covered by these regulations

AWARD	Study Mode	Duration	Total credits	Credits per year	Minimum credits at pass or above for award
HNC	Part-time	2 years	120	60	105
HND(top-up)	Part-time	2 years	120	60	105

HND	Full-time	2 years	240	120	210
HND	Part-time	3 years	240	80*	210

**variable depending on Units taken*

3.2 The HNC award (Higher National Certificate) is at Level 4 on the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ). The award is a total of 120 credits, comprising of eight units, each with a value of 15 credits.

3.3 The HND award (Higher National Diploma) is at Level 5 on the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ). The award is a total of 240 credits, comprising of eight units per year, each with a value of 15 credits.

3.4 Students can sometimes present with previous achievements of units, which can lead to a different structure of study, but this must be agreed with the Head of Learning prior to admission, and proof of prior learning checked to ensure the desired outcome and achievement is possible. (See *Recognition of Prior Learning* for further details.)

3.5 Any extension of the students programme through resit, or retake of Modules must be approved by the Board of Examiners.

3.6 The college is obliged to review student registration information on an annual basis, and will remove from Edexcel Online any student not currently active on their programme, unless the student has informed the college of a period of absence which has been approved.

4. AWARDING CREDIT

4.1 Credit is awarded if a student passes a unit achieving a Pass, Merit or Distinction grade. This includes achieving all criterion required in each assessment task, either at the first attempt or through a resit opportunity.

4.2 All awards are decided and recorded at the Board of Examiners.

4.3 In order to pass a unit overall a student must have met all pass criteria, and made a valid attempt at all assessment tasks.

4.4 Teams will present all assessment task outcomes to the Board of Examiners for consideration when recommending overall unit grades.

5. ASSESSMENT AND REASSESSMENT

5.1 Registration onto a unit entitles a student to:

- one delivery of the unit
- access to learning resources
- an opportunity to attempt the assessment for that unit
- one referral opportunity, if required

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

- **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.
- **MERIT** is achieved by satisfying all of the merit and pass criteria, demonstrating high performance in the Learning Outcomes.
- **DISTINCTION** is achieved by satisfying all of the distinction, merit and pass criteria demonstrating outstanding performance across the unit as a whole.
- **REFER** is used to denote when a student has not achieved the pass criteria at the first attempt and therefore has an unclassified grade, and will be referred to the Board of Examiners for a decision on a resit opportunity.
- **RESIT** is granted by the Board of Examiners if a student has not achieved a pass grade, and a new deadline is set.
- **FAIL** is the outcome if a student does not achieve the pass criteria after a resit (reassessment) opportunity has been given.
- **DEFER** is recorded by the exam board if a student has been granted Mitigating Circumstances and a further opportunity for assessment, the result of which will not be known at the Board of Examiners.

5.3 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. (See Section 2-Assessment Literacy)

5.4 Students can improve work following formative feedback, to consolidate a pass grade, or to improve their work towards a higher grade.

5.5 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.**

5.6 **Reassessment** can be granted to resit only those assessment tasks which have not achieved a pass grade or higher at the first attempt.

- Only one reassessment opportunity will be provided for each unit
- For coursework this would normally involve the reworking of the original task
- For exams a new Exam rubric will be provided.
- The grade achieved will be capped at a Pass for the unit
- Reassessment deadlines will normally be five calendar weeks from the Board of Examiners
- Students will be notified of reassessment decisions and deadlines by letter

5.7 Repeat unit/s may be offered to a student who, for the first assessment opportunity and reassessment opportunity, still failed to achieve a Pass for that unit specification:

- At the discretion of the Board of Examiners decisions can be made to permit a 'retake' of a unit
- The student must study that unit/s again with full attendance and payment of the unit/s fee
- The overall unit grade for a successfully completed repeat unit is capped at a Pass for that unit
- A student will be offered a reassessment (resit) in that unit if they fail at the first attempt of the repeat
- Units can only be repeated once
- Students work completed as a repeat of a unit will usually be included in the sample of work reviewed by the External Examiner.

6. LATE SUBMISSIONS

6.1 Deadlines for summative assessment are published in advance and must be adhered to in order that all students are treated fairly and not advantaged by additional time to complete assessment tasks.

6.2 Any changes to deadlines made by staff must be discussed with the course team to consider the impact on student workload and approved by the Head of Learning, and/or HE Manager before being communicated to the students and recorded in writing.

6.3 Good time management is a valuable skill in the workplace and as such penalties for late submissions will be applied as follows:

- Work submitted after the published deadline shall be assessed without penalty in the first instance
- Work shall be marked as 'late' and the student informed of this
- Work marked as 'late' shall then be capped at a pass grade by the Board of Examiners
- Students having difficulties which are affecting their ability to meet deadlines should be supported with extensions (up to one week) at the discretion of the Unit Tutor
OR
Be advised to apply for Mitigating Circumstances, and if accepted the grade would not be capped, but a full range of grades made available, providing the revised deadlines are met.

7. MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES AND EXTENSIONS

7.1 Students who are having difficulties meeting deadlines may qualify for an Extension or Mitigating Circumstances. There is a Mitigating Circumstances process which must be followed in order to grant an extension to a deadline of longer than one week. This aims to allow the student to have back the period of time leading up to assessment, which was lost due to the circumstances which had impaired their performance at that time. These circumstances could be medical, or personal; in all cases evidence must be provided to the HE Office in order for the panel to decide on the outcome of the application, and where successful to inform the student of the revised deadline for their assessment.

7.2 The completed application form for Mitigating Circumstance and accompanying evidence provided by the student, will be presented to the Mitigating Circumstances Panel (MCP), who will make a decision to either:

- a. support the application and agree any extensions to deadlines of up to five weeks or
- b. allow the student to re-sit the examination (or, in certain situations only, an entire unit)
- c. decline the application as it falls outside of the remit of mitigating circumstances and as such an extension cannot be granted
- d. Decline the application pending the provision of acceptable/further evidence from the student

7.3 **Extensions of up to one week** may be granted by the unit tutor; the HE office should be notified, and all paperwork should be retained and produced at the Board of Examiners if the extension deadline was not met. The Board will then make a decision based on individual circumstances.

7.4 Students should be supported with extensions where possible to avoid non-submission. If a student is finding it challenging to meet a deadline, tutors should advise them to submit incomplete work in favour of a non-submission.

7.5 The College does not increase grades on the basis of mitigating circumstances. This is because the student should be given opportunity to demonstrate their full potential in assessments – if it is agreed that the student was affected by mitigating circumstances then they may be granted more time to complete the assessment, or the Exam Board may recommend resubmission following consideration of the individual circumstances.

8. FAILURE OF A UNIT

8.1 Failure of a unit can occur in the following circumstances:

- The student has not made a valid attempt in one or more assessment tasks at the first attempt, or reassessment
- The student has not achieved a pass in one or more assessments required to pass the unit overall following a reassessment opportunity

- As a result of the penalty imposed by an investigation of Academic Misconduct

8.2 Following the recording of a fail at the Board of Examiners a student can be:

- Offered one opportunity to repeat/retake the unit/s
- Offered one opportunity to repeat/retake an alternative unit/s (if not core and if approved by the Course Team)
- Asked to withdraw from the course if appropriate to the penalty imposed as a result of academic misconduct

9. PROGRESSION

9.1 In order to progress to the next year of a programme a student must normally pass all required units for the year of study, as set out in the Programme Handbook.

9.2 If, at the end of the year, a student has failed to satisfy the Board of Examiners in respect of one or more assessments of a unit, the student may be permitted, on the recommendation of the Board, to retrieve the incomplete unit(s) during the reassessment/resit period. Providing the student then passes the assessment/s, a decision of pass and progress will be made at the Retrieval (or supplementary Board).

9.3 Where the student has failed to satisfy the requirements in more than 50% of the total credit value of a year of study, the Board of Examiners will discuss and consider the amount of assessment outstanding in each unit to determine if it is feasible for the student to complete such outstanding work before the start of the next academic year.

9.4 The Board, will have due regard for the amount of non-completion when deciding whether retrieval is appropriate or whether it is in the best interests of the student to retake a unit/units, with all associated assessment before progressing on their next year of study.

10. COMPLETION OF THE PROGRAMME AND FINAL AWARD

10.1 In order to complete the programme a student must pass all required units within the period of the programme, or when awarded retake/repeating unit/s.

10.2 Conditions which must be met to achieve an award for Higher National Certificate are:

- completion of units equivalent to 120 credits at level 4
- minimum of a pass in 105 credits at level 4

10.3 The conditions which must be met to achieve an award for Higher National Diploma are:

- completion of units equivalent to 120 credits at level 4
- minimum of a pass in 105 credits at level 4
- completion of units equivalent to 120 credits at level 5
- minimum of a pass in 105 credits at level 5

11. COMPENSATION PROVISIONS

11.1 A student can still be awarded an HND if they have attempted but not achieved a minimum of a Pass in one of the 15 credit units at level 4, and similarly if they attempted but not achieved one of the 15 credit units at level 5 but they have otherwise fulfilled all the conditions in Section 10 above.

11.2 A student can still be awarded an HNC if they have attempted but not achieved a minimum of a Pass in one of the 15 credit units but they have otherwise fulfilled all the above conditions.

11.3 The calculation of the **overall qualification grade** is based on the student's performance in all units to the value of 120 credits. Students are awarded a Pass, Merit or Distinction qualification grade using the points gained through all 120 credits, at level 4 for the HNC or Level 5 for the HND, based on unit achievement.

12. THE RIGHT OF APPEAL

12.1 Students may request that the Board of Examiners reconsider a decision relating to a referred unit or the failure to be able to progress to the next stage of the programme.

12.2. Students may not challenge an academic decision made on achievement unless it falls under the grounds set out in 12.3 below.

12.3 The following are the grounds under which such an appeal may be permitted:

- a) the assessment was not conducted in accordance with the regulations for the programme;
- b) the judgement of an examiner(s) was affected by personal bias
- c) there was an administrative error or some other irregularity in the conduct of the assessment causing the assessment decision to be significantly different;

12.4 Given the existence of college procedures for complaint and redress during the study period (which should normally be dealt with as and when they arise), alleged inadequacy of tuition, supervisory arrangements or any other arrangements during the period of study will **not** constitute grounds for appeal **unless** there is a satisfactory reason for the matter/s were not the subject of earlier complaint.

12.5 Appeals should be submitted in writing to the HE Manager, including all relevant evidence and indicating the grounds on which the appeal is being submitted (See 12.3)

12.6 Please read the full guidance on Academic Appeals in Higher Education for full details regarding raising an appeal, and the timeframe for appeals and response from the College.

13. MEMBERSHIP AND PURPOSE OF THE BOARD OF EXAMINERS

Board of Examiners for Units (BEU)

13.1 The purpose of the Board is to consider and confirm all individual marks for the units delivered in that Semester or year.

13.2 Evaluation and comments are provided by each unit convenor, which are taken into account when examining the overall attainment for that unit.

13.3 The Board must satisfy itself that all units have been delivered in accordance with the requirements of the awarding body.

13.4 The Board of Examiners for Units will then make recommendations to the Board of Examiners for Programmes.

13.5 Membership of the BEU:

- Chair- HE Manager
- Head of Learning
- Programme Leader
- Unit Convenors
- Secretary- HE Officer

13.6 Quorum requirement: 50% (3)

13.7 Board of Examiners for Programmes (BEP)

13.8 The purpose of the Board is to receive the Unit results from the Board of Examiners for Units on which to make decisions.

13.9 The Board will consider any students with Mitigation or other particular circumstances, and consider the overall achievement of each individual student in making decisions for progression or award.

13.10 The Board will also decide on students' eligibility for supplementary assessment, to re-sit or retake where they did not achieve a pass standard based on the Swindon College Regulations for HNC/D.

13.11 Membership of the BEP:

- Chair- HE Manager
- Head of Learning
- Programme Leaders
- Unit Convenors
- Secretary- HE Officer

13.12 Quorum requirement: 50% (3)