

# HE PEARSON HIGHER NATIONALS ASSESSMENT REGULATIONS

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# HE PEARSON HIGHER NATIONAL ASSESSMENT REGULATIONS

## 1. Policy Statement

Capital City College Group is committed to ensuring that standards of assessment are reliable, consistent, fair and valid, meeting the requirements and expectations of the awarding organisations concerned explicitly and transparently. Assessments should also be inclusive and equitable.

## 2. Scope

These assessment regulations apply to all Higher National Certificate (HNC) and Higher National Diploma (HND) courses of study leading to an award from Pearson Edexcel. These regulations are based on the Pearson BTEC Higher Nationals Enhanced Quality Assurance and Assessment Handbook 2023-24.

Foundation Degree courses of study along with any other HE courses of study (e.g. Professional qualifications at Level 4 and above) that are currently offered by the Capital City College Group (CCCG) in conjunction with a validating Higher Education institution or other awarding organisations are covered by the Academic Regulations and regulatory frameworks of those institutions.

These HE HN Assessment Regulations need to be read in conjunction with the ancillary policies and procedures for more detailed guidance. These include:

- Assessment Malpractice and Maladministration Policy
- Mitigating Circumstances & Coursework Extensions Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Assessment Appeals Policy Break in Study Guidance
- HE Student Transfer Policy
- Recognised Prior Learning Policy
- Examination Access Arrangement Process

All HE policies and procedures are located on CCCG website and MyDay under the Policies tabs. CCCG will ensure that they remain fully accessible to HE students.

## 3. Assessment Roles and Responsibilities

### 3.1 Course/Curriculum Manager/ Programme Leader

This is the person who has responsibility for the effective delivery and assessment of the programme. They may also act as an Assessor and/or Internal Verifier. They ensure that programme requirements are published. This will include:

- A student programme handbook, including assessment schedule
- A Programme Specification including learning aims and outcomes, programme structure, rationale for sequencing of units and an outline of the assessment methods used for each unit.

### 3.2 Personal Tutor

This is the person who has responsibility for acting as the Personal Tutor for individual students and/or small groups of students providing pastoral and academic support.

### 3.3 Internal Verifier

Internal Verifiers (IV) conduct quality checks on assessment processes and practice to ensure that they meet national standards and that all students have been judged fairly and consistently.

This is achieved by:

- Working with assessment team to ensure standardisation
- Ensuring that an assessment and internal verification plan is in place
- Confirming the quality of assessment instruments are fit for purpose
- Approving and signing the programme assessment plan, assignment briefs and the assessment decisions
- Maintaining records of all internal verification undertaken
- Ensuring an effective system of recording student achievement is in place and maintained
- Taking part in the formal stages of any appeal
- Approving requested additional assessment opportunities for students.

Anyone involved in the delivery and assessment of the programme who is able to give an expert “second opinion” can be an Internal Verifier. Where there is a team of Assessors, Pearson states that it is good practice for all Assessors to be involved in internally verifying each other. Please note that Internal Verifiers cannot internally verify their own assignments or assessment decisions. There is no requirement for a Lead Internal Verifier (LIV) to be registered for BTEC higher level programmes.

### **3.4 Assessor**

An Assessor is anyone responsible for the assessment of students and acts under the guidance of the Programme Leader, who will direct Assessors to appropriate training, support and standardisation. Typically, Assessors will devise assignment briefs, deliver the programme of study and assess the evidence produced by students against the assessment criteria in the programme specification.

Pearson considers it to be good practice for all assessors to act as internal verifiers for assignments they have not assessed.

Assessor responsibilities include:

- Deliver content using effective approaches
- Assess student work according to the agreed assessment plan and against national standards
- Provide constructive formative feedback and guidance to students to enhance assessment
- Provide summative assessment decisions
- Track student achievement and maintain accurate records
- Oversee any permitted resubmissions

### **3.5 Student**

Student responsibilities include:

- Agrees to abide by CCCG Pearson regulations on Higher Nationals assessment and ancillary policies and procedures
- Produces work for assessment to meet national standards as set out in assignments
- Meets deadlines for assessment
- Confirms authenticity of own work
- Submits any relevant information on extenuating circumstances which they believe may have affected their performance, in accordance with the Extenuating Circumstances policy
- Informs their tutor of any reasonable adjustments that they might reasonably require or are permitted to have in good time
- Responds to formative feedback

### **3.6 External Examiner (EE)**

The External Examiner (EE) is allocated by Pearson, according to BTEC programme requirements. EE responsibilities include:

- Contacts CCCG to negotiate arrangements for external examination visit and sampling of students' work
- Prepares visit schedule covering allocated programmes
- Checks management of the programmes is effective and meets Pearson requirements and those of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education
- Undertakes sampling in line with current requirements
- Checks consistency of the interpretation of national standards by each Assessor
- Identifies whether assessment decisions meet national standards
- Confirms that student evidence meets the grading criteria awarded
- Confirms student work has been accepted as authentic by the Assessor
- Checks that timely and effective internal verification has been carried out on assignments, assessment decisions and feedback to students
- Gives verbal feedback to the programme team or other CCCG-nominated person on decisions made
- Completes online report clearly identifying whether national standards are being met
- Where required, identifies any remedial action required for re-sampling and conducts re- sample

#### 4. Programme Duration and Specification

The Pearson HNC Diploma is a 120-credit level 4 qualification normally one year.

The Pearson HND Diploma is a 240-credit level 5 qualification normally lasting two years.

The Programme Specification for each course should provide detailed information on the programme structure (how and when units are assessed), programme content and assessment grading methods etc. The Programme Specifications should be available from the CCCG website, made available to students at induction and complement the Student HE handbooks. Any modifications to Programme Specification content eg in-year module changes must be formally approved by the CCCG HE Curriculum & Quality Group and follow student consultation processes.

#### 5. Break in Study

It may be necessary for a student to require a break in study (interruption to enrolment) for up to one calendar year (364 days) on the grounds of illness or other good cause, or a permanent withdrawal if circumstances prevent them from continuing their studies. It is important that this is discussed as soon as possible with the student and the Programme Leader /Curriculum Manager and that the correct procedure is followed as there are financial and academic implications for the student. Please refer to the CCCG HE Break in Study Guidance on the College website as well as the HE Student Contract for essential information on financial implications. A student who has interrupted his/her enrolment remains registered for a course of study.

#### 6. Achievement and Unit Certification

Pearson HNC/D grades cover a 'Pass', 'Merit' and 'Distinction'.

To achieve a Pass, a student must have **satisfied** all the Pass criteria for the learning outcomes, showing coverage of the unit content and therefore attainment at Level 4 or 5 of the national framework.

To achieve a Merit, a student must have satisfied all the Merit criteria (and the Pass criteria) through **high performance in each learning outcome**.

To achieve a Distinction, a student must have satisfied all the Distinction criteria (and the Pass and Merit criteria), and these define **outstanding performance across the unit as a whole**.

Students who do not satisfy the Pass criteria should be reported as Unclassified.

All grades will be confirmed by the Assessment Board.

## **7. Assessment Tracking and Recording**

It is essential to track and record student achievement throughout the programme. All assessment must be recorded in such a way that:

- Assessment evidence is clearly measured against national standards
- Student progress can be accurately tracked
- The assessment process can be reliably verified
- There is clear evidence of the safety of certification

An assessment plan must be in place before the start of the programme with clearly identified evidence requirements and target completion dates that includes both summative and formative assessments. The Internal verification of the assessment plan and assignment briefs before distribution to students must be included.

It is the responsibility of all the programme team (Curriculum Manager/Programme Leader/Assessors) to keep and maintain assessment tracking to record all assessment activities for the qualification on a unit-by- unit basis at criterion level. Time for regular formative feedback should be incorporated as this helps motivate students and provide learning targets and goals.

Tracking of student progress therefore should record what each student has achieved and what still has to be done. This helps to ensure full coverage of the units and provide opportunities for grading. It also helps enable internal verification and provide samples for External Examiners (EEs) and other external audits as required.

All CCCG devised internal assessment materials must be internally verified before being issued to students.

## **8. Formative and Summative Assessments**

Assessment is the process of evidencing and evaluating the extent to which a student has met the learning outcomes. Assessments can include projects, essays, exams, presentations, portfolios and practical tests. Formative assessments are used to provide developmental feedback so the student can improve for their future summative assessment.

### **8.1 Formative Assessment**

Students working at higher levels should be capable of undertaking independent study and research, developing strategies to improve their own performance, supported by teaching staff. Formative assessment is therefore an integral part of the BTEC Higher National assessment process.

It is good practice for students to receive written formative assessment feedback at least once before submitting their final assignment for summative (graded) assessment.

Formative assessment should be scheduled in the Assessment plan and implemented with sufficient time for students to revisit their draft assignment tasks and make changes or further improvements to their work. Therefore, formative feedback should be constructive to allow the student to reflect on their learning and improve their performance.

Formative feedback does not confirm achievement of grades.

Staff must ensure that they do not create an advantageous situation for one student. Records should be available for auditing.

## **8.2 Summative Assessment**

Summative assessment is a final assessment decision on an assignment in relation to the assessment criteria of each unit and the recording of that decision. Students should be made aware that summative assessment grades remain provisional until confirmed by the Assessment Board.

## **9. Marking Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar**

It is important that student assessment evidence demonstrates quality written communication; that is appropriate and professional to convey information clearly for different purposes and audiences. Student written communication should be clear, grammatically correct and properly punctuated. It is good practice for Assessors to 'mark' spelling and grammar on student work with the expectation that students will correct them at the formative feedback stage or note them at the summative feedback stage. Staff should not accept student work for marking that has consistently poor spelling, grammar or language until it has been corrected. The student must be given a deadline by which to correct the work.

If assignments are accepted by the Assessor where either:

- The mistakes are so problematic that they undermine the evidence of student understanding
- Specific assessment criteria require good communication, spelling and grammar and/or correct use of technical language, then the outcome from external examination will be to class assignment as an incorrect assessment decision, and a release of certification would not be agreed.

## **10. Resubmission**

Pearson rules and procedures regarding resubmissions (RQF) must be adhered to at all times. Contravention of HN resubmission rules may result in a block to certification due to incorrect assessment decisions being made. Each programme must publish each unit's assessment issue, submission and resubmission dates.

The Assessment Board will delegate the authority to the Curriculum Manager/Programme Leader to authorise resubmissions.

A student who, for the first assessment opportunity, has failed to achieve a Pass for that unit specification shall be expected to undertake a reassessment.

- Only one opportunity for reassessment of the unit will be permitted
- Reassessment for course work, project or portfolio-based assessments shall normally involve the reworking of the original task
- For examinations, reassessment shall involve completion of a new task
- A student who undertakes a reassessment will have their grade capped at a Pass for that unit
- A student will not be entitled to be reassessed in any component of assessment for which a Pass grade or higher has already been awarded

When splitting units across more than one assignment brief, it is recommended practice to wait until all assignments have been assessed before offering the student resubmission(s).

Although the student may not have achieved all of the targeted assessment criteria and learning outcomes within one assignment, they may have achieved the missing assessment criteria and learning outcomes in a later assignment, even if that assignment did not directly target the assessment criteria and learning outcomes in question.

Assessors should assess the student's performance holistically for the entire unit.

## **10.1 Procedure for Resubmissions (RQF)**

If the Curriculum Manager/Programme Leader/Assessment Board does authorise a resubmission, the following conditions apply:

- The resubmission must be recorded in the relevant assessment documentation
- The student must be given a clear and realistic deadline for resubmission that is consistent across all students granted a resubmission. Students should resubmit work within 15 working days of the student being notified that a resubmission has been authorised
- The resubmission must be undertaken by the student with no further guidance
- The original evidence submitted for the assessment can remain valid and be extended or may need to be replaced partially or in full
- The assessors/IV should make arrangements for resubmitting the assessment in such a way that does not adversely affect other assessments and does not give the student an unfair advantage over others

## **11. Late Submissions of Assessment**

The development of employability skills, such as the meeting of deadlines, is an important part of the Higher National programmes.

When submission of a piece of coursework is received after the pre-defined hand in date. If a claim for Extenuation Circumstances has not been made in time, a late submission will be treated as a non-submission.

Assessors must not accept any late assignment submissions, especially when an extension was not requested and approved by the published deadline.

It is important that students should not be advantaged by having additional time or the opportunity to learn from others to complete assignments.

Each programme must publish the units' assessment issue, submission and resubmission dates. Students can only be given authorised extensions for valid reasons and extenuating circumstances. Where an assessment is submitted after the published deadline and where an extenuating circumstances form has not been submitted, this will be treated as a non-submission.

Students will be offered a reassessment at the next available opportunity.

## **12. Extenuating Circumstances Panel**

An Extenuating Circumstances Panel will consider extenuating circumstances relating to assessment performance, the non-submission of coursework and other extenuating circumstances affecting the academic year. The panel will make appropriate recommendations to the Assessment Board or Progression Board against the guidance.

The outcomes of the extenuating circumstances panel may include an agreed extension to a coursework deadline, deferral of assessment to the next opportunity or not uphold a claim. The Extenuating Circumstances Panel membership normally comprises the Director of Quality (or quality nominee), Assistant Principal and an Academic Staff member.

## **13. Coursework Extension**

An agreed extension to a pre-defined assessment date. Requests for an extension must be supported by a mitigating circumstance claim.



A request for an extension can only be considered in exceptional circumstances. This is to be made by a student submitting a Mitigating Circumstances and Coursework Extension Request form directly to the Programme Leader, 2 weeks prior to the assessment deadline or up to 24 hours following the deadline. Poor time management or pressure of work is not considered a good enough reason for the non-submission of an assignment.

An extension of up to one week (5 working calendar days) can be granted at their discretion within the terms of the HE Mitigating Circumstances & Coursework Extension Policy. The duration of extensions should be consistent across all students and should not be after summative feedback has been issued to the other students on the programme.

If students have eligible evidence to support a request for longer than one week's extension, they should apply for Mitigating Circumstances using the claim form. [See the Mitigating Circumstances & Coursework Extension Policy.]

The College will refuse to mark work received after the submission date unless either an extension approval or mitigating circumstances request has been made. A decision will be referred to the Assessment Board.

Students can only be given authorised extensions for valid reasons, and extenuating circumstances. A claim for extenuating circumstances will be rejected for any of the following reasons:

- The claim is not supported by appropriate documentary evidence.
- The claim does not relate, in terms of timing, to the submission or examinations dates concerned
- The claim relates to an ongoing or long-term condition, unless the condition unexpectedly deteriorates immediately before or during the assessment period.
- There are reasonable grounds to believe that the circumstances could have been avoided by the student, or the student could reasonably have been expected to take steps to limit the impact of the circumstances. Examples include: leaving coursework to the last minute; missing the deadline because of computer problems or late transport; failure to make alternative travel plans when disruptions were known in advance; losing work which had not been backed up ( e g on usb/cloud).
- Personal disruptions or events which could have been anticipated; such as holidays, weddings, changing address or employment, religious holidays or festivals which are usually known in advance.
- The claim results from misreading or ignorance of the examination timetable or instructions regarding the submission of coursework.
- There are reasonable grounds to believe that the circumstances described would not have prevented the student from taking the examination(s) and/or submitting the assignment(s) by the published assignment deadline date(s).

The examples listed above are not exhaustive but refer to the most common reasons for invalidation or rejection of a claim.

**Please note:** Where an assessment is submitted after the published deadline and where neither a short extension request NOR an extenuating circumstances form has been submitted, this will be treated as a non-submission.

Where a short extension or mitigating circumstance has been accepted by the College and the work submitted to the new deadline, the grade will not be capped unless the task is already referred (failed).

Where the result of assessment may be capped, the student should be given an indication of their uncapped mark in order to recognise the learning that has been achieved, and assessment feedback should be provided in relation to the uncapped achievement.

As with all assessment results, both the uncapped and capped marks should be recorded and ratified by the Assessment Board, taking into account any mitigating/extenuating circumstances that may have been submitted.

All extensions formally granted must be recorded and new deadlines adhered to and made available at the Assessment Board and to the External Examiner (EE). Recording details of extensions enables the Assessment Board and the EE to confirm that the programme is operating consistently in accordance with CCCG's and Pearson's policies and guidance.

Please refer to the [Mitigating Circumstances and Coursework Extension Policy](#) for full details of the claims process.

#### **14. Repeat Units**

If a student does not achieve a pass grade after a resubmission opportunity, the unit grade will be recorded as 'Not Achieved'.

The student may be able to repeat up to two units at the College and Assessment Board's discretion. The student must study the units again with full attendance and pay the unit fees.

Overall unit grades for the repeated units will be capped at a 'Pass'. Units are allowed to be repeated only once.

All information and records should be stored safely for the External Examiner's sample.

The following applies to a student who, for the first assessment opportunity and resubmission opportunity, still failed to achieve a Pass for that unit specification:

- At CCCG's and Assessment Board discretion, students can be permitted to repeat a unit.
- The student must study the unit again with full attendance and (if required) payment of the unit fee.
- The overall unit grade for a successfully completed repeat unit is capped at a Pass for that unit
- Units can only be repeated once.

If a student repeats an RQF unit and still does not achieve a Pass, they will be required to either complete a different unit in full or take the unit as compensation. In either instance, the College must make sure that the relevant rules of combination and requirements have been met.

#### **15. Failure of a Unit**

A student who does not achieve the requirements to pass a unit has failed that unit. The circumstances in which a unit can be failed are:

- Following first attempt and referral, the student has not made any valid attempt in one or more assessment tasks i.e. non submission.
- Following referral, the student does not achieve the minimum overall pass criteria in a unit
- Where failure in a unit is the sanction set by an academic misconduct offence.

#### **16. Progression**

Where a student passes all units for a given academic year, the student will normally progress to the next stage or level. Students must meet Pearson rules of combination in terms of units completed and/or passed.

Where a student has not passed all the units but has had extenuating circumstances accepted at either the first assessment or a reassessment point (deferral), then they will be allowed to progress with a further opportunity at reassessment, at the discretion of the Assessment Board.

Where a student has been referred (failed) a number of units, the student will not be allowed to progress until these units have been passed - subject to the Programme Specification unit compensation terms.

### **16.1 Conditions for the award of the HNC:**

To achieve Pearson Higher National Certificate qualification, a student must have:

- Completed units equivalent to 120 credits at Level 4
- Achieved at least a pass in 105 credits at Level 4.

**Compensation:** students can still be awarded an HNC if they have not achieved a Pass in one of the 15 credit units (including core units) completed but have completed and passed the remaining units.

### **16.2 Conditions for the award of HND:**

To achieve a Pearson BTEC Higher National Diploma qualification, a student must have:

- 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.

**Compensation:** Students can still be awarded an HND if they have completed but not achieved a Pass in one of the 15 credit units (including core units) completed at Level 4 and similarly if they have attempted but not achieved one of the 15 credit units at Level 5 (including core units). 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.

## **17. Assessment Board / Exam Board / Progression Board**

Assessment Boards (or Exam Board/ Progression Board) for provision awarded by a university partner (principally foundation degrees and level 6 'top-up' programmes) fall under the remit of the Academic Regulations of that partner institution. These Pearson/ CCCG regulations for Assessment Boards apply to Pearson HNC/D provision only.

Assessment boards meet at least once each academic year to confirm module grades and final awards.

Departments are recommended to hold a pre-board to ensure that all the required information is available to the Assessment Board. Dates for Assessment Boards will be scheduled at the end of the academic year.

The main purpose of an Assessment Board is to make recommendations on:

- The grades achieved by students on the individual modules or units, including the award of academic credit where applicable.
- Claims for extenuating/mitigating circumstances (on receipt of recommendations by the EC Panel)
- Cases of cheating and plagiarism
- Progression of students onto the next stage of the programme
- The awards to be made to students
- Referrals and deferrals
- Withdrawals
- Initial comments from the External Examiner in advance of receiving their written report
- Delegation of responsibility to authorise resubmissions to Programme Leaders/ Curriculum

## Managers

- Monitor academic standards and report any recommendations concerning the content, operation and assessment of the programme to the course management team.

The membership of the Assessment Board shall be as follows:

- The Chair – Senior Manager responsible for the programme or his/her nominated representative provided they are not involved in the delivery of the programme
- Head of School/ Curriculum Manager
- CCCG Director of Quality or delegated Quality Manager
- Course Manager/Programme Leader
- Internal Verifiers for the unit(s) being considered
- External Examiner.

A full list of members of the Assessment Board must be recorded. Attendance at the Assessment Board is compulsory for all members unless their absence is approved by the Chair. External Examiners have a right to attend Assessment Boards.

Student marks and awards confirmed by the Assessment Board must be notified to CCCG's Exam Team.

The Chair is responsible for the conduct of the Assessment Board and for ensuring that CCCG's HE Assessment Regulations and Pearson regulations (as set out in the approved programme specification) are adhered to. The Chair is also responsible for ensuring that, where applicable, security procedures for examination question papers for the course of study are sufficiently rigorous. The Chair should clearly identify the programmes of action open to the Assessment Board. The Assessment Board should exercise discretion in a consistent manner in relation to extenuating circumstances and borderline cases.

Consideration of individual results should be conducted as follows:

- The grades of each student should be considered
- The consideration of extenuating circumstances should be conducted
- Any amendments to the grades will be agreed and recorded on the Unit tracking sheet
- The overall unit results for the student will be agreed
- The decisions of the Assessment Board will be formally recorded in the minutes.

Exceptionally, where circumstances mean that it was not possible for the results of a student to be considered at the meeting. Normally in this instance, the Chair will consult with the Course Manager as appropriate prior to taking action.

Only designated staff are authorised to disclose results and give guidance to individual students on required actions in accordance with CCCG's practice of discretion and considerations of the confidentiality of the proceedings.

## **18. Right of Appeal**

CCCG has a single formal appeal process for students who wish to appeal against an outcome arising from:

- Decisions relating to academic misconduct
- Decisions relating to Assessment grades
- Decisions of Assessment Boards (progression, awards, termination of registration) Please refer to the CCCG Assessment Appeals Policy for more details
- Students may appeal an outcome on the basis of evidence or procedure, but not on the basis of disagreement with academic judgement

It is the responsibility of the Programme leader, assessors and internal verifiers to ensure that the HE student induction programme, student HE handbooks and tutorials support student understanding of assessment regulations, appeals and academic misconduct (malpractice) issues whereby associated policies are signposted, and their key features made clear.

Students must also be made aware of the possible outcomes from these processes, such as an investigation into academic misconduct, as well as the consequences to them resulting from internal and external processes.

If students are not satisfied with the result of their appeal after exhausting CCCG's procedures, they must also be made aware that they have the right to escalate their appeal externally to both Pearson and the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) to review their complaint.

## **19. Plagiarism**

In addition to the CCCG Assessment Malpractice and Maladministration Policy, Pearson strongly recommends that all student work is checked for plagiarism by staff and by anti-plagiarism software. Students are not permitted to include text boxes in their submissions as these can deceive plagiarism detection software. Tutors should not accept submissions which include text boxes, asking the student to submit in the correct format. Assignments accepted with the text boxes will be considered as incorrect assessment decisions and the EE will not release certification for a programme. The College follows the JCQ guidance on [AI Use in Assessments](#). For further details, please refer to the CCCG Assessment Policy.