



TITLE		REF	VERSION
Assessment Board procedure for Higher Nationals		HEPRO004	1.0
DEPARTMENT	Higher Education		
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# ASSESSMENT BOARD PROCEDURES FOR HIGHER NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

## Procedure Statement

The Assessment Board Procedures for Higher National programmes are designed to safeguard academic standards and the quality of assessment practice for the benefit of learners and to ensure that learners have access to redress if they require it. The procedures for Higher Nationals also have the following aims:

- To create fairness and consistency in the assessment of all our HN programmes
- To ensure that assessment is carried out in line with the requirements of the awarding body as published in the Pearson BTEC Higher Nationals Centre Guide to Quality Assurance and Assessment (level 4 to 7)
- To ensure that assessment is conducted in line with the indicators of sound practice detailed within the Quality Assurance Agency's UK Quality Code for Higher Education (*Part B; Chapter B6: Assessment of students and accreditation of prior learning*)

## Assessment Board and their authority

It is a formal Pearson requirement that we hold Assessment Boards for all of our BTEC Higher National programmes, in order to make recommendations on:

- The grades achieved by students on the individual units
- Mitigating circumstances
- 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
- Arrangements for assessment are consistent and fair

Assessment Boards shall be responsible for determining all assessments that contribute to the granting of an award. Nobody other than an Assessment Board shall have the authority to recommend the conferment of an academic award for a taught programme. Similarly, no other body shall have the right to amend the decision of a properly constituted Assessment Board acting within its approved terms of reference and in accordance with the Assessment Regulations for the particular programme, other than when results are modified as a result of academic offences, successful appeals or on the authority of the awarding organisation (Pearson).

### a) Constitution of Assessment Board

Those attending the Assessment Board must normally include:

- Director of Higher Education (Chair)
- Head of Quality (HE) (Deputy Chair)
- Programme Coordinator
- Unit leaders
- Faculty Manager or Director
- Secretary for minute taking
- plus, if available, the External Examiner for the programme

*N.B. The minutes of the Assessment Board **must** be made available to the External Examiner (EE)*

- All unit staff involved in assessment are expected to attend the Assessment Board. Where a valid reason prevents attendance, a unit report and all results must be passed to the Programme Coordinator in good time and notification of non-attendance should be recorded. In the event of the unavailability of some of those listed above, the Director of Higher Education (or designate) shall have authority to decide if the Assessment Board may take place. Meetings must be quorate in accordance with Pearson's Centre Guide to Quality Assurance and Assessment.
- No student may be a member of an Assessment Board or attend any examiners' meeting other than as a candidate for assessment. If, however, a person who is otherwise qualified to be an examiner for a programme, such as a member of staff or an approved External Examiner, is also registered as a student on another programme, that shall not in itself disqualify that person from carrying out normal examining commitments unless there should be a conflict of interests.
- If a member of an Assessment Board is aware of any potential conflict of interest, for example being related to or a close friend of a student under consideration, this must be declared and recorded in the minutes of the meeting. The person involved shall not take part in any further discussion covering the areas or students concerned. At the discretion of the Chair the member concerned may be permitted to remain in attendance for the duration of these discussions and invited to respond to queries of a factual nature relating to them.
- External examiners should be invited to attend all assessment boards where decisions regarding final awards are made. If they are unable to attend, then a short report should be submitted by the Programme Coordinator summarising the outcomes of the external examiners moderation visit. Minutes from the assessment board(s) should be sent to the external examiner regardless of whether they attend or not.

#### **b) Operation of Assessment Board**

- **Each Faculty Manager** is responsible for ensuring that all Higher National programmes engage with the Assessment Board process. The HE Academic Registrar is responsible for convening an Assessment Board for each Higher National programme within the curriculum area. The agenda, invitations, and rooming should be notified to attendees at least two weeks prior to the meeting.
- There should be a minimum of one Assessment Board per year to confirm student programme results (normally June/July). However, if a programme operates on a semester system there may be Interim Board at the end of the first semester, also where candidates are undertaking Resubmissions over the summer, then a resit board will be constituted (normally in early September).
- All unit staff within the team should forward assessments results to the Programme Coordinator well in advance of the meeting to allow for collation and presentation to Assessment Board. In accordance with the Assessment and Internal Verification procedure these results should have been through the appropriate processes for internal verification. Printouts or electronic copies of the results for all students by unit should be made available at the meeting.
- Each student group within the cohort should be dealt with chronologically. i.e. year 1, year 2 etc. Unit leader will be expected to confirm the accuracy of the results and that the results have been internally verified. Students with any outstanding work or issues will be discussed by the team. Decisions reached by the team, including recommendations on Resubmission/s, should be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.
- The recording of the Assessment Board minutes should be made on the Assessment Board Minutes template.
- Decisions on Resubmissions and Repeat Units should agree a common approach to deadlines for resubmissions in line with this procedure.
- If in attendance, there should be an opportunity for the External Examiner to make comments on the process at the end of the meeting.

- HELP office will notify students of their results after the Assessment Board

### c) Agenda

Each assessment board will include the following standard agenda items:

1. A declaration of Conflicts of Interest
2. Grades achieved by L4 students for each unit
2. Grades achieved by L5 students for each unit
3. Mitigating Circumstances
4. Cases of Plagiarism
5. Progression of students from L4 to L5
6. Confirmation of final awards, resubmission and repeat units

### d) Procedures for Resubmissions and Repeats

- No reassessment of a unit or component shall be allowed for a student to improve upon a grade where the overall Pass level required for a unit has been achieved.
- A student who submits coursework for the summative assessment of a unit, by the published deadline, but who fails to meet the overall Pass criteria for the unit, will be offered a resubmission (R) and allowed **ONE** opportunity to resubmit work. An appropriate deadline within 15 working days of the student being notified should be established prior to the summative assessment board. **The overall unit grade will be capped at a Pass.**
- A student who, for the first opportunity and resubmission opportunity, has still failed to achieve a Pass for one or more unit(s) will be provided with one opportunity to repeat the unit(s). The student must study the unit(s) again with full attendance and payment of the unit fee. **The overall grade for repeated units will be capped at a Pass.**
- A student who does not submit coursework for assessment by the published deadline, and does not have an approved extension, will be provided with one opportunity to repeat the unit(s). The student must study the unit(s) again with full attendance and payment of the unit fee. **The overall grade for a repeated unit will be capped at a Pass.**

*N.B. Level 4/5 students who have applied to progress to a level 5/6 programme should be aware that certification may be delayed if there are any outstanding assessments by the time of the summative assessment board.*

### e) Procedures for Progression

- To progress from year 1 to year 2 (normally level 4 to level 5) of a programme a student must normally have achieved at least the Pass criteria across all of the units for the year as set out in the Programme Specification
- If, by the time of the summative assessment board, a student still has outstanding resubmissions in respect of one or more discrete required units, the student may (at the discretion of the assessment board) be permitted to retrieve the incomplete unit(s) under summer retrieval arrangements. **The overall grade for the unit(s) will be capped at a Pass.**
- If a student has still failed to achieve the Pass criteria in one or more units following the summer retrieval board, the board will have due regard for the degree of non-completion in deciding whether:
  - i. the student be permitted to progress carrying no more than two outstanding units (HND) or one unit (HNC); **or**
  - ii. the student is not permitted to progress but is offered the opportunity to repeat the outstanding units only, for which a fee will be payable. **The overall grade for repeated units will be capped at a Pass**

### Conditions for the award of the HNC

To achieve a Pearson BTEC 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 provisions for the HNC**

Students 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.

### **Conditions for the award of the 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 provisions for HND**

Students can still be awarded a 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 a HNC or HND as per the unit rules of combination of the required qualification.

### **Calculation of the overall qualification grade**

The calculation of the overall qualification grade is based on the student's performance in all units. 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. The overall qualification grade is calculated in the same way for the HNC and for the HND.

All units in valid combination must have been attempted for each qualification. The conditions of award and the compensation provisions will apply as outlined above. All 120 credits count in calculating the grade (at each level, as applicable).

The overall qualification grade for the HND will be calculated based on student performance in Level 5 units only.

The award of a Pass is a defined level of performance and cannot be given solely on the basis of a student completing assignments. Students who do not satisfy the Pass criteria should be reported as Unclassified.

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.

	<b>Points per credit</b>	<b>Point boundaries</b>
<b>Pass</b>	4	420-599
<b>Merit</b>	6	600-839
<b>Distinction</b>	8	840+

### **f) Administration Fee Arrangements**

Exceptionally, a student who has outstanding assessment activities to submit and who has:

- completed the prescribed period of attendance; and
- completed their studies with regard to supervision and advice; and
- has no further requirement to use College facilities

may, at the discretion of the Assessment Board, pay an Administration Fee in order to allow work submitted after the end of the programme to be assessed and processed.

Work reassessed under administrative fee arrangements will be subject to the same assessment regulations as for resubmissions.

Where students fail to achieve sufficient credit for certification at the intended level, Programme Coordinators should make every effort to ensure that alternative accreditation can be claimed (e.g. HNC instead of HND)

## References

[QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education: Assessment](#)  
[BTEC Centre Guide to Quality Assurance and Assessment \(Level 4-7\)](#)

