

Higher Nationals Coursework Policy
Version I
July 2017

Next Review in July 2019

Key Purpose and Objectives

This document outlines the processes and procedures that must be adhered to in the assessment of students studying for Higher Nationals at Moulton College. The Policy allows the College to assure itself that it has in place a robust, valid and open system of assessment that provides all students with an equal opportunity to demonstrate their learning and achievements.

For further advice on how the code of practice works, you should contact the HE Office.

Key Responsibilities

Head of HE

- Establish and review policy
- Advise on guidelines and procedures
- Facilitate the Academic Board

Senior Lecturers

- To assure that curriculum teams follow the examination board procedures

Course Managers & Teaching Staff

- Follow guidelines and procedures regarding preparation leading up to and upon completion of a board of examiners

Policy and Legislative Connections

Additional guidance can be obtained by visiting www.qaa.ac.uk and referring to UK Quality Code: Chapter B6: Assessment of Students (2011).

Higher Education Appeals Policy

Review cycle	Annually
New review	July 2019
Next review by	Head of HE
Distribution	All HE staff and tutors
Approving body	HE Academic Board
Policy Reference	HEQHD2

Higher Education Higher Nationals Coursework Policy

1. Scope of the regulations

- 1.1 These regulations apply to all students registered on Pearson Higher Nationals, with effect from the 2017/18 academic session.

Introductory note

Separate regulations are available Foundation Degrees validated by universities

- 1.2 Unless specific mention is made, the regulations do not distinguish between students on different modes of attendance.

2. Changes to the regulations

- 2.1 The College reserves the right to alter its courses without prior notice, and to modify from time to time its regulations for the admission and progression of students and for the conferment of awards. Where these changes affect the title of an award or cause a student to be unable to complete the named award for which they are registered, they will be consulted and the board (including external examiners) informed. Where the named award cannot be offered or completed, the College will describe the title and modular components of an alternative award which can be made available to the student.
- 2.2 The regulations will be reviewed and updated periodically in line with developments in College policy and practice. There may be differences in regulations as they apply to different cohorts of students registered for the same award. Every effort will be made to inform students about proposed changes and, if educationally appropriate, introduce such changes for all cohorts of students.
- 2.3 A student cannot demand reassessment in a unit that is no longer offered.

3. Consultation on making changes

- 3.1 While the College reserves the right to modify its assessment regulations at any time, particular thought has to be given to the timescale for introducing changes and the effect on current cohorts of students. Changes will not normally be introduced for implementation in the current year of study but would take effect in the following academic year.
- 3.2 Changes to the regulations are normally made after appropriate consultation. At College level, proposed changes will be discussed with staff – who will be given the opportunity to comment on such changes. Students and external examiners will also have an opportunity to comment. Proposed changes may be modified in the light of feedback.

Specific requirements

4. Course requirements

- 4.1 Course specific requirements should be set out in course documentation on Interact and include:
 - a. the approved awards to which the course leads;
 - b. the approved title(s) of the course awards;

- c. the course outcomes;
- d. the curriculum map showing where the course outcomes are assessed;
- e. the assessment schedule;

Guidance note 4.1

A curriculum map charts each unit against the course outcomes. The map is used by the course team to assure itself that the course outcomes are adequately assessed across the units offered.

5. Students with disabilities

- 5.1 Reasonable adjustments to assessment arrangements will be made to ensure that students with disabilities are not substantially disadvantaged. The course leader will ensure that students are made aware of the procedures for requesting adjustments, will consider such requests and will agree arrangements. Any agreed adjustments will be notified to the board.

Guidance note 5.1

It is important to ensure that assessment of placement learning conforms to any arrangements made in relation to assessment on the rest of the course.

Awards and titles

6. Awards

- 6.1 Normally, all courses incorporate the awards set out below and the outcomes for each will be set out in course documentation. Each has a credit definition:
 - a. Higher National Certificate – successful completion of 120 credits at level 4 in the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ level 4);
 - b. Higher National Diploma – successful completion of 120 credits at level 5 in the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ level 5);

7. Available classifications

- 7.1 Course documentation will set out the criteria used in determining the classification of awards.
- 7.2 Higher Nationals are classified (Distinction, Merit, Pass). The specific criteria for each classification will be set out in course documentation.

External examiners

8. Requirements

- 8.1 A course must have an external examiner(s) approved and appointed by Pearson.

Guidance note 8.1

Further information on external examiners can be found in the Quality Handbook, External Examiners Code of Practice

- 8.2 An external examiner must normally be present at a board meeting that agrees final awards. If unavoidable circumstances result in the external examiner being absent from such a meeting, then external representation from another institution providing higher education is acceptable.

9. Purpose and powers

- 9.1 A course must have a board. It will:
- make decisions on the progress of students;
 - ensure there are consistent and fair arrangements for assessment;
 - take decisions about the conferment of awards;
 - consider any case of student performance that is giving cause for concern.
- 9.2 The board will be appointed in accordance with the regulations contained in the Exam Board procedures.
- 9.3 The board or an approved sub-group e.g. a referral board will determine all course awards.
- 9.4 The Higher Education Appeals Policy details policy and procedure relating to appeals against Exam Board decisions.

10. Schedule of meetings

- 10.1 All award and unit results (including referral results) will be considered and agreed by the board.

Guidance note 10.1

Boards normally meet shortly after the end of the academic year, with a referral board in September (for full-time courses following the conventional academic year).

- 10.2 A board – or sub-group of it – may be held following first half-year assessments. A board is required if there are reasons to consider the termination of a student's studies on the course.

11. Decision making and delegation

- 11.1 All of the assessed marks contributing to a unit or an award remain provisional until confirmed by the board.

12. Referral boards

- 12.1 The board is responsible for the referred or deferred assessment of students. The board may delegate that responsibility to a smaller referral board, which must involve at least one external examiner in the process but not necessarily through attendance.

Submission of coursework

13. Unit assessment plan

- 13.1 A student must submit work for assessment in the required form(s) by a specified time on the dates indicated in the unit assessment plan using the Turnitin portal. Neither Merit nor Distinction grades are permissible for work that is handed in late.
- 13.2 Where a student is making a first attempt and submits work by the deadline but fails to achieve Pass criteria, a referral opportunity (to achieve Pass criteria only) may be given by the Course Manager.

14 Late submission

- 14.1 In respect of students submitting summative assessments after the specified time, rules will apply.
- a. Where a student is taking a first attempt at a unit or unit and submits assessed work after the 'official deadline' (specified time) indicated in the assessment plan, the work will be marked if submitted within seven days of the 'official deadline' but any Merit or Distinctions gained for that unit will be invalidated (see guidance notes below).

Guidance note 14.1a

*Where a student is making a first attempt and submits assessed work by this second deadline (i.e. seven days after the official deadline), only the Pass criteria will be assessed (the effective approach to study/meeting of deadlines required of Merit level work and above will not have been demonstrated). Where the Pass learning outcomes remain unachieved this will be recorded and a **referral** opportunity may be provided to achieve missing pass-level criteria by the Course Manager. No further attempts to achieve Merit or Distinction criteria will be allowed.*

Students who have been granted a 'time extension' for the first attempt (due to a request for mitigating circumstances) will have the same second deadline (i.e. five working days after the agreed extended deadline). (See note ii below regarding the granting of a time extension).

*Where a student is making a first attempt at a unit and submits work after the second deadline (i.e. seven days after the official deadline), no grade will be awarded and examiners must only comment on the work for learning purposes and return it to the student with a zero or nul grade. The Examination Board may allow a further opportunity for an assessment **retake** involving a new assignment brief which will not include opportunities for the achievement of Merit or Distinction criteria. The retake assessment may be carried out under supervised conditions. The maximum number of attempts at an assessment will be two (initial deadline and referral or initial deadline and retake).*

- b. Where a student is making a referred or retake attempt at a unit they must submit work by the 'official deadline' and they will not be allowed a second deadline as indicated in the guidance note above. Work received after the 'official deadline' without a 'time extension' will not be graded or will be awarded a zero grade (numerical equivalent 0). Examiners must only

comment on the work for learning purposes and return it to the student with a *zero or nul* grade.

Guidance note 14.1b

*In exceptional circumstances, you may be granted an extension for internal assessments. You may request an extension through completing the **Mitigating Circumstances Form**, (available on Interact) which should include details and supporting evidence as to why you are unable to meet the assessment deadline. You should normally submit your Mitigating Circumstances Form to your assessor a minimum of five working days before the assessment deadline in order to be eligible for an extension. If granted, your assessor may give you a five or ten day extension, and will record the new assessment deadline on the extension request form. Coursework extensions will not under any circumstances be considered on the day of the assessment.*

- *If you do not meet your assessment deadline and have insufficient evidence of an exceptional circumstance, no grade will be awarded and examiners will only comment on the work for learning purposes and return it with a zero or nul grade. Then a **Cause for Concern** should be issued in line with the College Disciplinary process.*

- c. A student who has substantiated exceptional circumstances may be granted a 'time extension' (see note above) to submit work either five or ten days after the 'official deadline'. Where a student is authorised to submit work after the 'official deadline', they will not be penalised provided it was submitted within the authorised 'time extension deadline'.

15. Minimum pass marks

15.1 The minimum pass mark for a unit is 'Pass'.

16. Compensation

16.1 A board may not compensate a failed unit.

17. Unit failure

17.1 A student who has not achieved the minimum unit mark of 'Pass' has failed the unit.

18. Maximum unit attempts

18.1 The maximum permitted number of attempts normally allowed for a student to pass a unit will be two – first attempt and referral or retake. At level 1 (FHEQ level 4), a board has discretion to authorise a third attempt in appropriate circumstances.

18.2 A student may not demand reassessment in a unit that is no longer offered in the course. A board may, at its discretion, make special arrangements where it is not practicable for students to be reassessed in the same units and by the same methods as at the first attempt.

19. Referral and retake

19.1 For reassessment in a unit, a student will either:

- a. undertake a referral in that academic year in the failed Pass criteria of the unit as determined by the Course Manager;
- b. retake an individual assignment as agreed by the examination board
- c. retake the whole unit in the following academic year, including the new unit assessments, with or without further attendance.

Guidance note 19.1

Referral is the normal form of reassessment since it is linked to the student's original unit studies and normally will not involve further attendance. As it is linked to the student's original unit studies it should take place in the same academic calendar unless there are sound academic reasons for not doing so. If a student fails the referred work, they may be offered the opportunity to retake the unit.

In the case of referral, a student should not normally have to repeat an element they have passed.

In the case of some failures, it may be appropriate for a board to forego the initial referral opportunity and require a student to retake the unit with or without attendance. Without attendance means that the student is not required to attend classes except those, if any, during which assessment is conducted. If a student fails the retake, they may be offered a referral opportunity.

20. Zero mark as an academic irregularities penalty

21.1 A student who has committed an academic irregularity may be referred in a unit or element in order to provide the student with the opportunity to meet the learning outcomes. If a student subsequently demonstrates those outcomes, a pass should be recorded.

21. Maximum mark for retake

21.1 The maximum mark that is recorded for a retake unit is Pass.

22. Maximum mark for referral

22.1 The maximum mark that is recorded for a referred assessment element is Pass.

23. Referral submission dates

23.1 Normally, all students who are required to undertake retake work by an exam board will be required to submit their work within six weeks of the date of the exam board.

Guidance note 23.1

The course leader or agreed tutor should advise all students to return work to a nominated individual in person or by recorded delivery. All work must either be given in person to students or sent (preferably recorded delivery) within two weeks of the board meeting. The availability of staff during the vacation should be made known to students.

24. Progression and trailing units

The examination board approves a student's progression onto the next year of a course and a board may use its discretion to allow a student to progress carrying a deficiency, normally of up to 15 credits.

Guidance note 24.1

A board may exercise discretion and allow a student to progress carrying more than 15 credits provided it is reasonable to allow a student to do so given their overall academic record and the extent of the deficiencies to be retrieved.

25. Termination of studies

25.1 A board is authorised to terminate a student's studies for the following reasons:

- d. the student has exhausted the total number of attempts as set out under reg. 18;
- e. the student has an overall poor record of performance, attendance, participation or commitment on the course and the board judges that there are no grounds to permit the undertaking of further remedial or retake units;
- f. major academic irregularities.

Guidance note 25.1

The course leader or year tutor should formally counsel a student who has failed units at the end of the half-year or where progress is giving cause for concern.

26. Improvement of marks

26.1 No reassessment is permitted for a student to improve upon a mark above the pass level required for the award.

Determining awards

27. Classification

27.1 The following classification bands are adopted for Higher National Diplomas and Higher National Certificates:

- Distinction
- Merit
- Pass