

## **P960 - Higher Education HNC/D Academic and Assessment Regulation Policy**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The need to ensure that learners have access to appropriate guidance on academic and assessment expectations and regulations is a requirement of higher education provision. It is linked to the assessment requirements of awarding/ validating bodies, QAA guidance and relates to existing policies as identified. The procedure outlined both complements the guidance issued by stakeholders such as Edexcel and embraces the ethos of Universities due to progression routes taken by students.

### **2. PURPOSE**

The purpose of the policy is to ensure that University Centre Peterborough (UCP) adheres to the requirements and expectations outlined by QAA, validating bodies and the SFE. It also recognises the demands of higher education and the importance of student experience and enhancement. The approach of UCP is to ensure that Higher Education delivery is a learning partnership between staff and students. This policy will also ensure effective management of academic standards in line with awarding body requirements.

### **3. SCOPE**

All Higher Education provision offered by UCP under direct and franchise arrangements as defined by QAA (Quality Assurance Agency). This applies to both UK/EU and International students studying the QCF framework. This Policy will be reviewed in August 2018 when the new RQF framework will be introduced.

### **4. RELATED DOCUMENTS**

- **P900** HE Competition Markets Authority and Student Protection Policy
- **P981** HE Complaints Process
- **P809** Student Disciplinary Procedure
- **P982** HE Student Academic Appeals Policy
- **P921** HE Recruitment and Admissions Policy
- Awarding / Accrediting body guidance
- **P922** HE HNC HND Fee and Refund Policy

### **5. RESPONSIBILITIES**

**UCP Director of Quality and UCP Academic Director**- overview of academic regulation and relevance to QAA codes and agreeing intermission beyond the 12 month period.

**UCP Academic Directors**- will aim to ensure the resources allocated and provided achieve a consistency of provision across their faculty.

**Faculty Managers** - are responsible for the allocation of tutors and the day-to-day responsibility to ensure that all learners in their teams can access the support/ guidance detailed below. To also ensure that regular training and updates are provided to staff.

**HE Curriculum Leader's** - co-ordination and monitoring of short –term extensions and formative feedback and assessment. Curriculum planning and monitoring adherence to quality and moderation procedures. Liaise with external stakeholders.

**Student Advisor** – responsible for issuing long-term extensions and intermissions.

**HE Manager** – oversight of curriculum operations and maintenance of academic standards and regulation.

## **6. RISK ANALYSIS**

**This policy is required to** ensure that correct procedures are in place and followed by all involved in the assessment and guidance offered to higher education students.

### **Analyse risks of non-adherence to this policy**

Poor student satisfaction and impact on the NSS (National Student Survey). Poor external stakeholder perception and loss of rights for certification. Failure to demonstrate effective enhancement and an impact on funding available to learners. Failure to achieve a positive outcome from a Higher Education Review.

### **Staff training needed**

Induction and refresher training to be made available to staff.

**Compliance** reduces the risks described above.

## **7. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

7.1 This policy has had a stage 1 impact Assessment.

## **8. DATA PROTECTION**

8.1 As outlined in Policy P215 – Assessment Policy.

## **9. PROCEDURE AND EXPECTATION**

### **9.1 Good Academic Practice**

Good Academic Practice is a requirement of all higher education study and identifies the required skills and approach of higher education students. It is a requirement that students demonstrate this so as to prevent instances of plagiarism or collusion. Turnitin will be used to ensure originality of submissions and assessments to be submitted via this software will be identified in the course handbook and on assessments. It should be noted that Turnitin is not a punitive tool but should be used as part of the formative assessment process to develop academic writing and referencing.

To demonstrate good academic practice students must:

- Develop their independent evaluation of academic issues
- Draw upon research from academics in their field of study
- Discuss and evaluate existing concepts and theories
- Demonstrate their understanding of the key literature
- Develop their arguments

To support their own good academic practice they will need to develop:

- Study and information skills (e.g. reading, note taking, research etc.)
- Skills of critical enquiry and evaluation (e.g. taking a balanced opinion, using reasoning and argument)
- Appropriate academic writing skills (e.g. for essays, reports, dissertations etc.)
- Accurate referencing skills to prevent allegations of poor academic practice, dishonesty, plagiarism, cheating or fraud. Individual work needs to be clearly identified to prevent collusion. If students in a class are instructed or encouraged to work together in the pursuit of an assignment, such group activity is regarded as approved collaboration.
- Examination techniques (e.g. preparation, revision)

## **9.2 Assessment and grades**

The validating / accreditation body requirements for grade / unit / credit achievement will be adhered to. This detail will be available to students in Course Handbooks and updated on an annual basis. HNC / D students will have their work submitted to an Intermediate Awards Board and Final Awards Board. This Board will agree final grades and advise on progression where appropriate this will be informed by the EE process. External Examination (EE) performs the same quality checks as other forms of standards verification but also ensures that the processes and procedures are consistent and appropriate for qualifications at higher and professional levels.

## **9.3 Ethics and Risk Assessment for Research and Design projects**

Prior to the development of any project / dissertation, the student is required to undertake an ethics audit and complete a risk assessment. This is to ensure the safe undertaking of work, both to protect the student and organisations (UCP and the employer) from any repercussions, reputational damage and liability. This will also enhance the students learning and career progression within industry and the academic community. The ethics and risk assessment will be agreed with the course leaders and relevant supervisor.

## **9.4 Intellectual Property**

Under English Law, which covers England and Wales, intellectual property if related to an individual's employment is owned by their employer. Otherwise the originator or inventor of the Intellectual Property in question is the rightful owner.

## **10. Assessment Regulations**

**10.1** Formative submission and assessment is positively encouraged. The process for this is outlined in individual course handbooks. The Academic Assessment Calendar will be available within each Course Handbook

### **10.2 Submission of Work-Summative/Final Submission**

Unless otherwise stated all coursework assignment reports etc. must be submitted via the UCP Student Support Desk at no later than 4pm on the submission date. Students will be required to complete a submission sheet where they will be issued a receipt from the UCP staff showing their name, course and most importantly the date submitted. Students are strongly advised to retain all of their receipts and work. Work must not be handed directly to a tutor. Once submitted the assessment cannot be retrieved.

### **10.3 Late Submissions**

Students must be made aware of the consequences of failing to meet deadlines. Deadlines for assessment are an important part of Higher Nationals. Students are encouraged to develop good time management that will stand them in good stead in the workplace. It is important that students are assessed fairly and consistently and that some students are not advantaged by having additional time to complete assignments.

Where an authorised extension (see regulation 10.3 below) has not been agreed in advanced, work submitted late by up to 7 calendar days after the published deadline may be marked. Punitive capping and downgrading grades to a "Pass" for late work is not acceptable unless the assessment criteria in the Merit/Distinction grade descriptors require evidence of:

- Meeting agreed timelines
- The ability to plan/organise time effectively

- The ability to work to industrial/commercial practices that include implicit timelines

Work submitted after the 7 days of the published deadline and without an authorised extension will not be marked and the unit will be recorded as failed. No opportunity to resubmit work will be granted. Conditions for retaking a unit will apply.

#### 10.4 Short term extension

All requests for extensions require evidence to be submitted. A student may request a maximum of one short term extension to a submission deadline when circumstances outside the student's control have arisen which prevents submission or are likely to result in significant underperformance if the original deadline is enforced. Students submit their request to a **Student Adviser before** the submission deadline.

The purpose of a short term extension is to allow a student, for acceptable reasons, to defer the submission of work to a later date but to ensure that the work is submitted in time to be processed and assessed by the appropriate Awards Board in the originally identified assessment period (e.g. Semester 1)

All short term extensions are for a default period of 5 working days. A student is permitted to submit the work earlier than the expiry date of the extension period if he/she wishes.

The following are examples of **acceptable** reasons for such a request:

- Short-term illness
- A short term illness of any person for whom the student has a responsibility for care;
- Authorised absence from UCP during teaching weeks;
- An enforced change in employment circumstances for which only short term notice was given;
- Other reasons considered acceptable by the Faculty Student Adviser (or the designated staff member)

The following examples of **unacceptable** reasons for such a request;

- Academic workload;
- Misreading the instructions on submission deadlines in the course handbook;
- Computer, disc, printer or any other technical failure for which the student is responsible (students should ensure they keep a back-up copy of their work);
- Unauthorised absence from UCP (e.g. holiday taken during teaching weeks).

If a student's circumstances require additional time beyond the expiry date of the original short term extension, the student can seek a long term extension as no further short-term extensions can be granted. Consequently, the piece of work is processed and assessed by the appropriate Awards Board at a future assessment period (as determined in line with the academic calendar).

An accepted Short Term extension **will not** impact on grade awarded.

#### 10.5 Long term extension

A student may request a long term extension to a submission deadline. Long term extensions of up to 15 weeks are considered and approved if, the student is experiencing personal or professional difficulties and use of other measures would:

- Result in significant disadvantage to the student's academic performance and/or ability to complete his/her studies;
- Exacerbate an existing health problem or result in additional stress related problems;
- Fail to address the underlying problem or issue which is unpredictable in nature.

Students submit their request at least 5 working days **before** the submission deadline to the **Student Advisor**. All long term extensions are considered on a confidential basis. The appropriate documentation must be completed and confirmation received in writing.

A long term extension may also be considered and approved\* where there are practice-related issues which can be resolved only through additional time for completion. Long term extensions are viewed as exceptional solutions and are used only in circumstances where officers are confident that the individual case merits such action. Evidence will be required.

An accepted Long Term extension **will not** impact on grade awarded.

*\*Does not result in additional taught sessions as input will have taken place.*

## **10.6 Intermission**

Registered students may apply for a period of intermission of up to 12 calendar months during which they may suspend their studies for personal reasons (e.g. health, financial). This period may be extended in exceptional cases (e.g. to cover maternity leave) but only with the prior approval of the Academic Director.

Any period of intermission must have an approved start and an approved return date which, in the latter case, must take full account of the academic coherence and requirements of the pathway for which the student is registered. The approved start and return dates may not necessarily coincide with the published start date and end date of a semester or trimester.

Any period of intermission must be authorised in writing and in advance by the appropriate **Student Advisor**. UCP is unable to guarantee to students that the pathway for which they originally registered will still be available when they resume their studies.

During an approved period of intermission students remain registered students for their pathway at UCP and are entitled to have access to certain UCP facilities and systems. However, since intermitting students are no longer active, they are **not** entitled to certain other benefits or services related to their studies e.g. exemption from council tax. It is expected that students will liaise with SFE and / or employer to resolve any financial / funding issues.

Intermitting students who do **not** return to re-register for their pathway within 20 working days after the approved date of return from their period of intermission are discontinued from UCP. Discontinuation under these circumstances does not prevent a student from subsequently seeking re-admission to the pathway at UCP from which they have been discontinued, provided they have not previously been withdrawn or discontinued.

Students who experience difficulties with their studies due to personal reasons and/or who are considering withdrawing from UCP should seek advice about the most appropriate course of action before formally completing UCP's withdrawal form.

## **11. Academic Regulations**

### **11.1 Progression**

The Awards Board makes a formal annual progression decision for all students. A student progresses from one level or year of study to the next of the course for which they are registered, provided they continue to enrol for the units selected from within the prescribed set of compulsory and optional units for their course, satisfy any prerequisites or other academic requirements for unit enrolment and meet the requirements for progression set out in this section.

## 11.2 Failure of a unit

If a student has failed to satisfy the minimum pass criteria for each learning outcome of the assignment, he/she will be awarded a fail overall for the unit. There are two possible outcomes of this;

1. If a student made a first submission attempt and met the first assignment deadline as outlined on the assignment brief (or met an approved extension deadline), but failed the assessment criteria, the student is allowed one further resubmission attempt. The resubmission must meet the resubmission deadline outlined on the assignment brief. See Academic Regulation 11.4 below.
2. If the student failed to submit any assessment for the unit by the first submission deadline, or within 7 days of the published deadline, and without an authorised extension, the student will be given NS (Fail due to non-submission) for the element(s) of that unit. A second resubmission attempt will not be permitted. At the discretion of the Awards Board, the student may be allowed one further retake of a unit. This means that the student will have to enrol, pay and attend lessons for the unit. See Academic Regulation 11.5 below.

## 11.3 Procedure for resubmission

A student may be offered a resubmission if they have achieved a Pass or Merit, or not met the Pass criteria in their first submission. They will only be authorised one resubmission and only if all of the following conditions are met:

- The student has met initial deadlines set in the assignment, or has met an agreed deadline extension (a student submitting late will not be allowed a resubmission attempt)
- The assessor judges that the student will be able to provide improved evidence without further guidance
- The assessor has authenticated the evidence submitted for assessment

If a student has not met the conditions listed above, the assessment board must not authorise a resubmission.

If a student has met the conditions listed above, a resubmission may be granted and the following conditions apply:

- the resubmission must be recorded on the Higher Nationals Assessment Form
- The student must be given a deadline for resubmission within 15 working days\* of the student receiving the results of the assessment
- the resubmission must be undertaken by the student with no further guidance
- only one opportunity for reassessment of the unit will be permitted
- the original evidence submitted for the assessment can remain valid and be extended, or may be need to be replaced partially or in full
- If the student only failed one learning outcome in his/her original submission the resubmission result will be uncapped
- If the student failed two or more learning outcome in his/her original submission the resubmission result will be capped at a pass

*\* 15 days (excluding weekends) must be within term time, in the same academic year as the original submission.*

#### 11.4 Conditions for retaking a unit

If a student has met all of the submission conditions, but still not achieved the targeted pass criteria following resubmission of an assignment, the Awards Board may authorise for the students to retake the failed unit to meet the required pass criteria.

The following conditions must be met:

- the Awards Board must only authorise a repeat in circumstances where they believe it is necessary, appropriate and fair to do so
- the student must study the unit again with full attendance and pay the unit fee
- the overall grade for a successfully completed repeat unit is capped at a Pass for that unit
- the student must have the same reassessment opportunities as at the first registration (see resubmission procedure above)
- students have only one retake opportunity. Units can only be repeated once.

A retake assignment is a new assignment targeted only to the pass criteria which were not achieved in the original assignment. There's only one submission opportunity for a retake, and tutors are not allowed any further guidance while students are retaking the assignment.

No retake of a unit is permitted for a student to improve a mark above the pass level required for the award.

#### 11.5 Conditions for progression:

If a student has passed all units at any given stage or level of the programme they can progress to the next stage or level. Exceptionally, at the discretion of the Awards Board a student may be allowed to progress with some failed unit(s). Students will be charged an additional fee for retaking or replacing any failed unit(s).

In order to progress from one level or year of study to the next, a student who has failed unit(s) must;

- be in a position to recover any failure
- not have failed a unit more than once (and after resubmission attempts are exhausted)
- satisfy the criteria below:

Duration of Course	Not failed more than:
(Full time) 1 Year study	30 credits
(Part Time) 2 Years of study	15 credits
(Part Time) 3 Years of study	15 credits

If the unit is no longer available, a replacement unit may be studied as directed by UCP. This will be treated as a retake and will be subject to all regulations relating to retake units. If a replacement unit cannot be studied, the student will need to renegotiate their programme of study. Decisions about taking a replacement unit or renegotiating a programme require discussion and agreement at the Awards Board.

If a student fails a core or elective unit after retake this would normally mean that they will have to withdraw from the programme.

#### 11.6 Discontinuation of studies

An Awards Board is authorised to terminate a student's studies for the following reasons;

- the student has exhausted the total number of attempts as set out in 5.3b and 5.3c
- major academic irregularities see section 4.10

A student is discontinued when it is no longer possible to continue to study towards the intended award (e.g. the student has failed re-take units or does not meet the progression criteria above).

Students concerned about their progress should discuss this with their personal tutor and also use the extension process outlined above.

It should be noted that in order to pass the qualification, students are required to achieve ALL units.

### 11.7 Calculation of the final HNC grade

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.

Calculation of the BTEC HNC qualification grade is based on the learner's best performance in units at or above the level of the qualification to the value of 75 credits:

- The best 75 credits must come from a maximum of 120 credits as a valid rule of combination
- The units from which the best 75 credits are selected come from the whole qualification including the mandatory core credit.

This means that credit from some mandatory core units is likely to form part of the best 75 credits in most programmes (the mandatory core credit units will automatically be included in the calculation once the maximum amount of credit for optional specialist units for the rule of combination is used up.)

### 11.8 Calculation of the final HND grade

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.

The grade achieved in units from an appropriate HNC may contribute to an HND grade. If a learner moves from HNC to HND, credits at Level 5 or above from both the HNC and HND can contribute to the best 75 credits of the overall HND grade. Note that for HND learners, level 4 units do not count towards the qualification grade.

Calculation of the BTEC HND qualification grade is based on the learner's best performance in units at or above the level of the qualification – i.e. **only units at level 5** can be counted towards the value of 75 credits:

- The best 75 credits must come from a maximum of 240 credits as a valid rule of combination
- The units from which the 75 best credits are selected come from the whole qualification including the mandatory core credit, but must be level 5 units or above.

This means that credit from some mandatory core units is likely to form part of the best 75 credits in most programmes (the mandatory core credit units will automatically be included in the calculation once the maximum amount of credit for optional specialist units for the rule of combination is used up.)

### 11.9 Qualification grades above pass grade

Learners will be awarded a pass, merit or distinction qualification grade using the points gained through the 75 best credits based on unit achievement.

Unit credit points available for specified unit grades, for either Level 4 or Level 5 units;

Points per credit

Pass	Merit	Distinction
0	1	2

Example for level 4 or level 5 unit of 15 credits

Pass	Merit	Distinction
0	15	30

Qualification grade:

Points Range	Grade
0-74	Pass
75-149	Merit
150	Distinction

Example 1: Achievement of a BTEC HNC Diploma with Pass grade

		Level	Credit	Grade	Grade points	Points per unit (weighting × credit points)
Unit 1	Mandatory core unit	4	15	P	0	
Unit 2	Mandatory core unit	4	15	P	0	
Unit 3	Mandatory core unit	4	15	M	1	15
Unit 4	Mandatory core unit	4	15	M	1	15
Unit 15	Specialist unit	5	15	P	0	
Unit 17	Specialist unit	5	15	P	0	
Unit 18	Specialist unit	4	15	M	1	15
Unit 12	Specialist unit	4	15	M	1	15
Unit 14	Specialist unit	4	10	D	2	20
	<b>Qualification total requirement 120</b>		<b>130</b>			<b>60</b>

Unit 14 is not included as it is an additional unit on top of the 120 credit qualification

The learner can only include the points from the best 75 out of 120 credits in a valid combination.

Example 2

Achievement of an HND Diploma with a Merit grade

		Level	Credit	Grade	Grade points	Points per unit (weighting × credit points)
Unit 1	Mandatory core unit	4	15	P	X	
Unit 2	Mandatory core unit	4	15	M	X	
Unit 3	Mandatory core unit	4	15	M	X	
Unit 4	Mandatory core unit	4	15	M	X	
Unit 5	Mandatory core unit	4	15	M	X	
Unit 6	Mandatory core unit	5	15	M	1	15
Unit 7	Mandatory core unit	5	15	D	2	30
Unit 8	Mandatory core unit	5	20	D	2	40
Unit 20	Specialist unit	5	15	M	1	15
Unit 21	Specialist unit	5	15	M	1	(15)
Unit 23	Specialist unit	5	15	P	0	
Unit 25	Specialist unit	4	15	P	X	
Unit 26	Specialist unit	5	15	M	1	(15)
Unit 29	Specialist unit	4	15	M	X	
Unit 33	Specialist unit	4	15	M	X	
Unit 35	Specialist unit	5	15	M	1	(15)
Unit 36	Specialist unit	5	10	D	2	20
	<b>Qualification grade totals</b>	<b>Min 125 at level 5</b>	<b>260</b>			<b>105</b>

The learner can be considered for a merit: only count the points from the best 75 credits from a valid combination of 240 credits X these units are below the level of the qualification so cannot be counted for grading The best 75 credits include both mandatory core and optional units ( ) these units are not counted in the overall score

The learner has sufficient points for a merit grade.

## 11.10 Student Appeals

A student appeal is a request to review decisions made by a centre on their progression, assessment and awards. The appeal process cannot be used to challenge academic judgement or appeal if a student disagrees with the mark they have been given.

Circumstances to submit an appeal may include the following:

- an appeal against a mark awarded for a unit assessment
- overall outcome of a programme of study
- Failure at any stage of a programme of study
- Withdrawal from study due to unsatisfactory progress or failure to meet academic or professional requirements i.e. unsatisfactory work and attendance.

The student has a right to appeal if he or she can provide new evidence which the Awards Board was not aware of, or believes that the procedures have not been followed properly.

To lodge an academic appeal, a student must do so within 7 days of receiving assessment results. Details about the Appeals Process can be found in P982 Higher Education Student Academic Appeals Policy available on the UCP website [www.ucp.ac.uk/policies/](http://www.ucp.ac.uk/policies/).

Students have a final right of appeal to Pearson, but only if the procedures in place at UCP have been fully utilised or if the student is dissatisfied with the outcome. Further details are given in the Enquiries and appeals about Pearson vocational qualifications policy.

[https://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/Support/policies-for-centres-learners-and-employees/Enquiries\\_and\\_Appeals\\_on\\_Pearson\\_Vocational\\_Qualifications.pdf](https://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/Support/policies-for-centres-learners-and-employees/Enquiries_and_Appeals_on_Pearson_Vocational_Qualifications.pdf)

If students are not satisfied with the result of their appeal after following their centre's processes, they can request the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) review their complaint. The OIA will not deal with complaints about academic judgment but will look at academic appeals.