

1. POLICY STATEMENT

In order to standardise the range of HNC/D courses the following policy will be implemented from October 2022. This is designed to ensure all learners and staff are fully aware of the expectations and obligations the HE courses demand and to regulate academic rigour for QAA and awarding body purposes, and have been revised to improve the quality and consistency of service to students.

STUDENT INDUCTION

- Induction checklists must be used to ensure a standardised induction is delivered, this will enable students to understand their programme specification.

INTERNAL VERIFICATION

- Internal verification of the assignments should be carried out by a staff member who is familiar with BTEC assessment at the appropriate level and has subject knowledge within the programme area.
- Internal verification should always be reported and recorded.
- If further actions are identified by the Internal Verifier, the Assessor is required to complete all actions and return it to the Internal Verifier for review and sign off. Once the assignment has been signed off as being fit for purpose by the Internal Verifier, it may be issued to the students.
- Internal Verifiers must sample assessed work for each assignment to check the accuracy of assessment decisions.
- More sampling should be undertaken with new or inexperienced assessors and/or with new BTEC qualifications.
- Feedback from the Internal Verifier to the Assessor should comment on the quality of their feedback to the student and the effective completion of documentation. The Internal Verifier should also give developmental feedback to the Assessor telling them what could be improved.
- It is important that internal verification is undertaken as soon as possible after assessment as this will improve the quality of assessment practice and not disadvantage students. Internal Verification must be undertaken before work is returned to the students.

ASSESSMENT

- Where a test is used to distinguish Merit and Distinction performance, then the different grading components of the questions should be identified so that it is clear which assessment criteria (RQF) are being targeted.
- Only evidence for assessment that is authentic should be accepted. Students must authenticate the evidence that they provide for assessment.
- It is important that all student work is checked for plagiarism by staff and by anti-plagiarism software.
- An observation record is used to provide a formal record of an Assessor's judgement of student performance.
- A witness statement can be used to provide a written record of student performance (process evidence) against grading criteria. Someone other than the Assessor of the qualification/unit may complete it.
- It is essential to track and record student achievement throughout a BTEC programme, Markbook is used for this purpose.
- Centres should plan a timetable of assessment activities with clearly identified evidence requirements and targeted completion dates, including internal verification.
- Formative assessment provides feedback to enable the student to make improvements to consolidate a Pass, or attain a higher grade. It must be constructive and provide clear guidance and actions for improvement.
- Summative assessment is the final consideration by an Assessor of a student's assignment. Students should be aware that summative assessment is subject to confirmation by the Assessment Board, and thus is provisional and can be overridden by the Assessment Board. Assessors should annotate on the student work where the evidence supports their grading decisions against the unit grading criteria. It is not expected that students are offered opportunities to revisit assignments at this stage of the assessment process unless approved by the Programme Leader.
- Assessment decisions for Pearson BTEC Higher Nationals are based on the specific criteria given in each unit and set at each level of attainment in that unit and at the qualification level.

SUBMISSIONS

- Students need to be aware of the importance of meeting assessment deadlines. Assessment plans and deadlines will be available to students in a 'HE Information folder' the course TEAMS area.
- Standardised submission time across all courses: 11.59pm on day of submission through teams/turnitin/learning box. (recommended the Monday/Sunday of each week).
- Work that does not meet the deadline is capped at a pass.
- It may be worth opening a late submission in order for students to submit once the original date/time has been missed.

LATE SUBMISSIONS

If the learner fails to meet the deadline with no 'good cause' reason:

- They have 5 days to submit from original date.
- CAPPED at a pass (good practice to indicate what it may have achieved if not capped and feedback on these skills).

RESUBMISSIONS

- ONLY One re-work opportunity is available for those who did NOT gain a pass on first submission. The reassessed opportunity will be CAPPED at a pass.
- Must submit within 15 days (preferably through turnitin).
- Assignments CANNOT be re-worked if pass is achieved, it should be 'right first time'.
- When splitting units across more than one assignment brief, it can be considered good practice to wait until all assignments have been assessed before offering the student a resubmission.
- The resubmission must be undertaken by the student with no further guidance.
- A list of all resubmissions authorised by the Programme Leader must be submitted to the Assessment Board and made available to the External Examiner (EE)

FAILED UNIT

If the learner does NOT complete the unit following a re-assessment opportunity:

- *The assessment board decides if the learner can repeat the unit, capped.*
- *Cost incurred by learner (unit cost)*

REPEAT UNITS

- A unit can be repeated if the centre and the Assessment Board decide it is an appropriate course of action.
- The unit must be studied again.
- The unit must be capped at a Pass grade.
- The unit can only be repeated once.
- The unit can only be repeated if a student has met all of the submission conditions, but still not achieved the targeted Pass criteria following resubmission, the Assessment Board may authorise a repeat unit opportunity to meet the required Pass criteria.

EXTENSIONS AND EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES

Extensions are where students have a temporary unexpected circumstance that means that they are unable to complete a particular assessment on time.

Students can apply for an extension of 5 working days and they can apply up to twice in an academic year.

Requests for extensions may be granted where circumstances or events are of a temporary nature and are sufficiently disruptive to prevent submission by the due date. Such circumstances should not be foreseeable or preventable.

These may include for example:

- Short-term illness
- Caring for a sick relative
- Unexpected personal difficulties.

The extension form must be filled in with clear reasons for their application, agreed by the programme lead then sent to helen.booth@tameside.ac.uk

The process is as follows:

- Learners cannot apply for extensions on or after the day of submission (see late submissions)
- All extension requests go to the HE Panel, decisions are made within 5 days of receiving, both teacher and student is informed of decision.
- If agreed, the work is NOT capped, and therefore normal submission rules apply.

Requests for extensions will NOT normally be granted for the following reasons:

- Planned events such as holidays, religious festivals or moving house
- Appointments arranged on the submission date
- Attending courses
- Paid employment
- IT issues (printer problems/ pc crashes/ USB issues), including denied access to the University systems due to debt
- Inadequate time planning

Once an application is made a student cannot retract the extension, even if the assignment is submitted by the original deadline.

If students experiencing longer term adverse circumstances, requiring more than a 5-day extension they can apply for Extenuating Circumstances.

These applications must be accompanied by corroborating evidence and if successful will result in an extension of a further agreed period of time.

The extenuating circumstances form must be filled in with clear reasons for their application and sent to helen.booth@tameside.ac.uk at the earliest opportunity. Submissions received later than 3 days will not usually be considered.

Full guidance and application forms for extensions and extenuating circumstances will be available to learners in the 'HE information folder on TEAMs.

CAUSE FOR CONCERN

Cause for concerns will be identified by the internal checks carried out bi-weekly by the HE Quality Officer and by the bi-annual attainment reviews in November and February.

If tutors have any concerns or 'students at risk' these need to be identified, initial tutorial to be carried out, record any actions set and time scales on pro-monitor.

If the student is not meeting the actions: Inform Curriculum leader/initial discussion to take place and record on pro-monitor. If noted behaviours still persist the HE Quality Officer must be informed.

MALPRACTICE

DEALING WITH SUSPECTED PLAGIARISM

1. If you suspect plagiarism has occurred within a student/candidates piece of work:
 - a. Check against a tool such as Turnitin or by typing some of the content into the google search engine and confirm.
2. If the student has signed the malpractice document to say it is their own work, then this is a serious concern and may need to be reported to the awarding body. (especially on Pearson Set work/exams). This must be reported to the HE Quality Officer in a timely fashion.
3. If the student has not signed to say it is their work, the following approaches can be taken
 - Ask the student to re-submit the assignment capped at a pass within a reasonable amount of time.
 - Set the student a new piece of work, capped at a pass to complete within a reasonable amount of time.

If the student/candidate continuous to submit work with poor academic practice it may be due to:

- Lack of study skills
- Poor time management

These need to be addressed with the student and advice and guidance given/referred to support the writing of suitably referenced work. Formative feedback on assessments usually supports this process and both verbal and written feedback can be used. It is suggested that internal procedures will manage the cases reported, however, continually submitting plagiarised work will need to be reported to Pearson and the consequence may be withdrawal from the study programme.

2. POLICY CONTEXT

This policy applies to Tameside College Higher Education staff and students.

3. LOCATION AND ACCESS TO THE POLICY

The Higher Nationals Academic Rigour Policy and supporting policies and other documents are available via SharePoint on the College network and through course handbooks and inductions for students.

4. POLICY STATUS

Responsibility: Assistant Principal – Academic/HE Quality Officer
 Approved by: Senior Leadership Team
 Issue Date: January 2021 version 1
 Review Date: Sept 2022 – updated to version 2
 Next Review Date: Sept 2024

Review/Change History:

Version	Description/Detail of Update & Name of Person who has carried out Update	Approval	Date of Issue
Version 1	Reviewed by Karin Sykes	SLT	Jan 2021
Version 2	New sections: Student Inductions Internal verification Assessments Resubmissions Repeat units Changes:	SLT	Oct 2022

HIGHER NATIONALS ACADEMIC RIGOUR POLICY



Tameside
College



Clarendon
Sixth Form College

	<p>Extension and extenuating circumstances process and application sections Inclusion of: HE information folder in TEAMS Attainment review in the cause for concern section. /Reviewed by Helen Booth</p>		
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