



Blackpool and The Fylde College

Regulations: BTEC Higher National Programmes

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REVISION HISTORY

Ver	Date	Author	Description
1.0		Scott Smith	Initial Approval
1.1	14/03/2017	Scott Smith	Amended to meet the requirements of RQF
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APPROVAL

Ver	Committee	Date Approved	Comments
1.0	HEAB		
1.1	ASDC		
1.2	ASDC		

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1. SCOPE AND PURPOSE

1.1 OVERARCHING PROCEDURES

These regulations can be seen as a subset of the Blackpool and The Fylde College's HE Taught Award Regulations and as such the following sections of the regulations also apply to the delivery of BTEC Higher National programmes at the College.

- Academic Appeals
- Academic Malpractice & Misconduct
- Recognition of Prior Learning
- Assessment & Feedback (IV, moderation & standardisation)
- Boards of Examiners

Anyone accessing this document should always do so in conjunction with BTEC's assessment guidance documents (QCF & RQF). ¹

1.2 BTEC DELIVERY

The regulations in this document govern Higher National programmes and are intended for Blackpool and The Fylde College staff and students.

Every BTEC Higher National programme delivered at Blackpool and The Fylde College, is governed by the set of standard assessment regulations set out in this document.

The standard regulations are applicable, without modification, unless:

Exceptions have been approved by the College for whole programmes, e.g. to accommodate the requirements of Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs). Where this is the case, the exceptions are recorded in the Programme Specification and the Programme Handbook.

An individual student's entry profile and/or study choices necessitate changes, e.g. where units undertaken as part of a student prior study at a different institution replace credit-bearing Blackpool and The Fylde College units. Further details relating to this can be found in B8 – Recognition of Prior Learning Procedure of the HE Taught Award Regulations.

All students sign at enrolment to accept the assessment regulations prevailing at the time and any subsequent approved modifications during their registration period. The assessment regulations are made available to students through the College website. All

students are notified of any changes made to the assessment regulations during their studies.

1.3 KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

HE Academic Board (HEAB): to approve the Blackpool and The Fylde College Regulations: BTEC Higher National Programmes.

Academic Standards & Development Committee (ASDC): to review the BTEC Regulations periodically and approve amendments.

Programme Board of Examiners: to implement the assessment regulations.

2. REGULATIONS

2.1 PERIOD OF REGISTRATION

The maximum period of study a full-time student would normally take to complete a stage of a programme (120 credits at a particular level) is one academic year; pro rata for part-time students.

The period taken to complete the programme may only be changed when an application is approved through B1 Personal Mitigating Circumstances & Interruption of Study Procedure of the College's Academic Regulations.

Any period of College registration will always be limited to the BTEC's five year registration.

2.2 ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

2.2.1 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 involves both the tutor and the student in a two-way conversation about their progress and takes place prior to summative assessment. It does not confirm achievement of grades, but focuses on helping the student to reflect on their learning and improve their performance. The main function of formative assessment is to provide feedback to enable the student to make improvements. This feedback should be prompt so it has meaning and context for the student and time must be given following the feedback for actions to be complete. Students are provided with formative feedback during the process of assessment and are empowered to act to improve their performance. Feedback on formative assessment must be constructive and provide clear guidance and actions for improvement. It is good practice to plan for at least one formal opportunity to provide written

formative assessment feedback on each assessment, at a point when students will have had the opportunity to provide evidence towards all the assessment criteria targeted.

2.2.2 SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT AND DEADLINES

Summative assessment is a final assessment decision on an assignment task in relation to the assessment criteria of each unit. It is the definitive assessment and recording of the student's achievement. Tutors should provide a clear indication of where the evidence supports their grading decisions against the unit grading criteria.

The academic team will not amend published summative assessment deadlines for an individual student unless an approved application through B1 Personal Mitigating Circumstances & Interruption of Study Procedure of the College's Academic Regulations is in place.

Under certain extraordinary circumstances, for example illness to tutor(s) or availability of particular resources, the relevant Head of Curriculum may amend assessment deadlines for a cohort of students in order to support the assessment of a unit.²

2.2.3 SPELLING, PUNCTUATION AND GRAMMAR

It is good practice for tutors to "mark" spelling and grammar, i.e. correct mistakes on student work and expect the student to either correct them (at the formative feedback stage) or note them (at the summative feedback stage).

Mistakes in spelling and grammar should not influence assessment decisions unless:

- the mistakes are so problematic that they undermine the evidence of student understanding, or
- specific assessment criteria require good communication, spelling and grammar and/or correct use of technical language.

2.2.4 GRADING CLASSIFICATION

Each successfully completed unit will be graded as a pass, merit or distinction.

A pass is awarded for the achievement of all outcomes against the specified assessment criteria Merit and Distinction grades are awarded for higher-level achievement.

The generic merit and distinction grade descriptor, listed below are for grading the total evidence produced for each unit and describe the student's performance over and above

² HE Taught Award Regulations: Part A - A4.3.3 Amendments to Deadlines

that for a pass grade. They can be achieved in a flexible way, for example in a sequential or holistic mode, to reflect the nature of the sector concerned.

2.2.5 SUMMARY OF GRADES

In order to achieve a pass in a unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> all learning outcomes and associated assessment criteria have been met
In order to achieve a merit in a unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> all learning outcomes and associated assessment criteria have been met all merit grade descriptors are achieved
In order to achieve a distinction in a unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> all learning outcomes and associated assessment criteria have been met all merit and all distinction grade descriptors are achieved

2.2.6 GENERIC GRADE DESCRIPTORS AND INDICATIVE CHARACTERISTICS

For QCF qualifications only: The differences between assessment criteria, grade descriptors and indicative characteristics are outlined in the following table:

Assessment Criteria	Statements that identify the important features to be present in the assessment evidence and are indicative of a satisfactory (i.e. Pass) level of achievement.
Grade Descriptors	Statements that identify the features within the assessment evidence which enable an Assessor to measure achievement above the satisfactory level (i.e. Merit and Distinction).
Indicative Characteristics	Guides to the expected student performance within a particular assignment , supporting the generic grade descriptors. The indicative characteristics should reflect the nature of a unit and the context of the sector programme.

Contextualised indicative characteristics are specified in the programme specification for each particular programme.

Please note: For RQF qualifications only: Merit and Distinction are now stipulated in individual unit descriptors and therefore the indicative descriptor that support high achievement are no longer required.

Merit Descriptors

Merit descriptors	Exemplar indicative characteristics
In order to achieve a merit the student must:	(Centres can identify and use other relevant characteristics. This is NOT a tick list). The student's evidence shows, for example:
Identify and apply strategies to find appropriate solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective judgements have been made • Complex problems with more than one variable have been explored • An effective approach to study and research has been applied.
Select / design and apply appropriate methods and techniques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant theories and techniques have been applied • A range of methods and techniques have been applied • A range of source information has been used • The selection of methods and techniques/sources has been justified • The design of methods/techniques has been justified • Complex information/data has been synthesised and processed • Appropriate learning methods/techniques have been applied.
Present and communicate appropriate findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The appropriate structure and approach has been used • Coherent, logical development of principles/concepts for the intended audience • A range of methods of presentation have been used and technical language has been accurately used • Communication has taken place in familiar and unfamiliar contexts • The communication is appropriate for familiar and unfamiliar audiences and appropriate media have been used.

Distinction Descriptors

Distinction descriptors	Exemplar indicative characteristics
In order to achieve a distinction the student must:	(Centres can identify and use other relevant characteristics. This is NOT a tick list). The student's evidence shows, for example:
Use critical reflection to evaluate own work and justify valid conclusions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conclusions have been arrived at through synthesis of ideas and have been justified • The validity of results has been evaluated using defined criteria • Self-criticism of approach has taken place • Realistic improvements have been proposed against defined characteristics for success.
Take responsibility for managing and organising activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autonomy/independence has been demonstrated • Substantial activities, projects or investigations have been planned, managed and organised • Activities have been managed • The unforeseen has been accommodated • The importance of interdependence has been recognised and achieved.
Demonstrate convergent / lateral / creative thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideas have been generated and decisions taken • Self-evaluation has taken place • Convergent and lateral thinking has been applied • Problems have been solved • Innovation and creative through throughout • Receptiveness to new ideas is evident • Effective thinking has taken place in unfamiliar contexts.

Each of the generic merit and distinction grade descriptors can be amplified by use of indicative characteristics. These give a guide to the expected student performance, and support the generic grade descriptors. The indicative characteristics should reflect the nature of a unit and the context of the sector programme.

The indicative characteristics shown in the table for each of the generic grade descriptors are not exhaustive. Consequently, tutors should select appropriate characteristics from the list, or construct others that are appropriate for their sector programme and level.

It is important to note that each assessment activity does not need to incorporate all the merit and/or distinction grade descriptors.

The merit and distinction grade descriptors and indicative characteristics identified in the tables below are published in Annexe C of the Higher National specifications for each unit. They:

- need to be viewed as a qualitative extension of the assessment criteria for pass within each individual unit
- must be identified and specified within an assignment and the relevant indicative characteristics should be used to place the required evidence in context.

2.2.7 CONTEXTUALISING THE GENERIC GRADE DESCRIPTORS (QCF)

The generic merit and distinction grade descriptors need to be viewed as a qualitative extension of the assessment criteria for pass within each individual unit. The relevant generic grade descriptors must be identified and specified within an assignment and the relevant indicative characteristics should be used to place the required evidence in context.

Each assessment activity does not need to incorporate all of the Merit and/or Distinction grade descriptors. The tutor should include Merit and/or Distinction grade descriptors and an associated indicative characteristic that are relevant for the activity or task in hand.

Students must always be provided with an opportunity to achieve

For example, when the student has to select and apply appropriate methods and techniques in order to carry out the assessment activity or task then M2 would apply. Please note that if the tutor has included more than one indicative characteristic against an individual grade descriptor such as M2 in an assignment, e.g.:

- I. a range of methods and techniques have been applied and
- II. the selection of methods and techniques has been justified

Note: Only one indicative characteristic i) or ii) needs to be achieved by the student for the grade descriptor, M2 to be achieved.

2.3 NON AND LATE SUBMISSION

Failure to submit or late submission of an assessment by the published summative deadline will result in a grade of 'None Submission' (N/S) being recorded.

Where a student has submitted work after the summative deadline, the tutor will decline to grade the work in question.

2.4 REASSESSMENT

Where a student has been successful in a unit no further opportunity to improve a grade, after the published summative submission date, is permitted.

Where a student had failed a unit, a grade of 'Refer' will be applied.

Failing students will be provided, by the relevant programme board of examiners, with one reassessment attempt for each failed assessment of a unit.

- 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.

Reassessment briefs will not incorporate 'Merit' or 'Distinction' criteria; students will therefore be reassessed in the relevant Pass criteria only.

2.4.1 REPEAT UNITS

The following applies to any student who has failed a reassessment opportunity, they:

- are permitted to repeat a unit once and once only
- must study the unit again with full attendance and payment of the unit fee
- will have the overall unit grade for the successfully completed repeat unit capped at a Pass grade

2.5 PROGRESSION

Requirements for progression are set out in individual programmes programme specifications.

2.6 AWARDS (QCF)

All named awards are based on credit. The credits required for each named award are defined in the Programme Specification for the programme concerned.

A **Higher National Certificate** will normally be awarded to a student who has achieved:

- 120 credits at or above the level of the qualification from a valid combination of completed units
- a minimum of 65 credits at Level 4

A **Higher National Diploma** will normally be awarded to a student who has achieved:

- 240 credits from a valid combination of completed units
- a minimum of 125 credits at Level 5

2.7 CLASSIFICATION (QCF)

The calculation of the qualification grade is based on a student's best performance in units at or above the level of the qualification to the value of 75 credits:

- For HNC - The best 75 credits must come from a maximum of 120 credits as a valid rule of combination.
- For HND - 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 core/mandatory credit.

The programme specification will identify and ensure that the correct unit combination is adhered to.

Unit points available per credit for specified unit grades, for either Level 4 or level 5 units.

Unit Point 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

2.7.1 QUALIFICATION GRADES (QCF)

The following table identifies the point ranges relating to each classification.

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

Examples of qualification calculations can be found in Appendix A.

2.8 AWARD (RQF)

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.

2.9 COMPENSATION (RQF)

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.

3.0 CALCULATION OF THE OVERALL QUALIFICATION GRADE (RQF)

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 based on unit achievement.

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.

Points per credit

- Pass: 4
- Merit: 6
- Distinction: 8

Point Boundaries

Grade	Point boundaries
Pass	420–599
Merit	600–839
Distinction	840 +

3.1 PROGRAMME SPECIFICATIONS

A programme specification for each BTEC Higher National Programme delivered at Blackpool and The Fylde College is published on the College's website. Each document relates to the aims and outcomes of the programme, how it is taught, its structure and how students are assessed (e.g. exams, dissertations, portfolios or projects). Programme specifications are reviewed and where appropriate amended every five years to ensure that the structure of the programme is up to date, meeting the needs of students, employers and the College's HE strategy.