

Title: Higher National Assessment Regulations

TYPE: Policy, Procedure

PURPOSE: To outline the assessment regulations applicable to all Higher National Certificate (HNC) and Higher National Diploma (HND) Regulated Qualification Framework awards Pearson Edexcel.

SCOPE: Students on above courses, staff

RESPONSIBILITY: Head of HE & Research

Legal Context: N/A

1. Introduction

The purpose of this policy statement is to outline the assessment regulations for Higher National Diplomas (HNDs) offered by Solihull College & University Centre (hereafter known as ‘the College’). These regulations are designed to ensure that all assessments are conducted fairly, consistently, and transparently, providing a reliable measure of student performance and achievement. Our commitment is to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity and to support students in their pursuit of excellence. This policy applies to all students, faculty, and administrative staff involved in the assessment process, and it aims to foster an environment of mutual respect, academic rigor, and continuous improvement.

2. Relationship to other policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- i. Mitigating Circumstances Policy
- ii. HE Internal Verification Policy
- iii. External Examiners Policy (Higher Education)
- iv. Recognition of Prior Learning Policy
- v. Academic Appeals Procedure
- vi. Academic Misconduct Procedure (Higher Education)

3. Responsibilities of the College

- 3.1 **Fair Assessment:** Ensure that all assessments are conducted fairly, consistently, and in accordance with established academic standards. This includes internal verification of marks as laid out in the HE Internal Verification Policy.
- 3.2 **Transparency:** Provide clear and accessible information regarding assessment criteria, procedures, and schedules to all students.
- 3.3 **Support:** Offer adequate support and resources to help students prepare for assessments, including access to study materials, tutoring, and academic advising.
- 3.4 **Feedback:** Provide timely and constructive feedback on assessments to help students understand their performance and areas for improvement.
- 3.5 **Confidentiality:** Maintain the confidentiality of student assessment results and personal information in compliance with data protection regulations.
- 3.6 **Appeals Process:** Establish and communicate a clear process for students to appeal assessment decisions if they believe there has been an error or unfair treatment.
- 3.7 **Assessment Boards:** it is the College's responsibility to hold annual assessment boards

4. Student Responsibilities:

- 4.1 **Preparation:** Take responsibility for preparing adequately for all assessments by attending classes, completing assignments, and utilizing available resources.
- 4.2 **Integrity:** Uphold academic integrity by avoiding plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of academic misconduct.
- 4.3 **Adherence:** Follow all assessment procedures and guidelines as outlined by the college, including submission deadlines and examination rules.
- 4.4 **Communication:** Communicate promptly with instructors or academic advisors if there are any issues or concerns that may affect assessment performance.
- 4.5 **Feedback Utilization:** Actively engage with and utilize feedback provided on assessments to improve future performance.
- 4.6 **Appeals:** Follow the established appeals process if there are grounds to believe that an assessment decision was incorrect or unfair.

5. Formative and Summative Assessment

- 5.1 Students working at higher levels of study are expected to be able to carry out independent research, work autonomously and identify strategies to improve their performance. Formative assessment therefore is an essential part of higher-level study. It is good practice for students to receive formative assessment feedback (whether written or verbal) at least once before submitting their final assignment for summative (graded) assessment, with sufficient time to act on the feedback before the deadline.
- 5.2 Students should be aware that formative feedback will be ungraded; and that grades from summative assessments are provisional until ratified at the Assessment Board.

6. Duration and Structure of Awards

- 6.1 The normal duration, and credits achieved, for HNC and HND for full and part time attendance is given below.

Study mode	Duration	Credits achieved per year	Total credits normally required for qualification
Part time HNC	2 years	60	120
Full time HNC	1 year	120	120
Part time HND	4 years	60	240
Full time HND	2 years	120	240

- 6.2 Credits may be made up of mandatory core units as required by the specific qualification, and optional units selected by the curriculum team.
- 6.3 The HNC (Higher National Certificate) is at Level 4 on the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ). The award is a total of 120 credits, usually comprising of eight units, each with a value of 15 credits. The minimum number of credits at pass or above required the award is 105 credits.
- 6.4 The HND (Higher National Diploma) is at Level 5 on the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ). The award is a total of 240 credits, usually comprising of sixteen units, each with a value of 15 credits. The minimum number of credits at pass or above required the award is 210 credits, 105 at level 4 and 105 at level 5.
- 6.5 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.

- 6.6 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.
- 6.7 The conditions of award and the compensation provisions will apply as outlined above and in section 7 (Compensation).
- 6.8 All 120 credits count in calculating the grade (at each level, as applicable).
- 6.9 The overall qualification grade for the HND will be calculated based on student performance in Level 5 units only.
- 6.10 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.
- 6.11 The table below outlines the points achieved per credit (e.g. a 15-credit unit at merit grade will amass 90 points); and the point boundaries for overall qualification grade.

Overall qualification grade	Points per credit	Point boundaries
Pass	4	420 – 599
Merit	6	600 - 839
Distinction	8	840 +

7. Compensation

- 7.1 Compensation can only be granted once the grade decisions have been processed and approved by the Assessment Board. The student must have been given the opportunity of resubmission in the first instance and processed accordingly at the next board. If the student has failed to pass the unit at that stage, they can either repeat the unit or take it as compensation. If a student accepts compensation this should be evidenced in writing and confirmation kept in student records and updated on the Assessment Board minutes and action log.

7.2 In order to gain compensation, the student must have completed the unit – this requires reasonable attendance and must have submitted the assessment work.

7.3 All units where compensation is applied for must be claimed with the grade of Unclassified (U). This will be shown on the student's transcript.

8. Awarding Credit

8.1 Pearson units are graded at Pass, Merit or Distinction. Learning outcomes within the unit are set at pass, merit or distinction levels. The principle of the criteria is that the higher levels build upon the lower. To achieve a Pass in a unit, students must achieve all Pass criteria. To achieve a Merit in a unit, students must achieve all Pass and all Merit. Distinction requires achievement of all Pass, Merit and Distinction criteria.

8.2 Students who do not meet all the pass criteria of a unit (after appropriate resubmission opportunities) should be graded as failing the unit (U) (see section 7 Compensation and section 9 Re-assessment).

8.3 Once the student achieves or exceeds the minimum pass criteria for the unit, credit for that unit will be awarded. The student will receive summative feedback and further opportunities to improve the grade are not permitted.

8.4 If a student wishes to appeal the decision of an assessment or of a unit grade, they should follow the HE Academic Appeals Procedure.

9. Assessment and re-assessment

9.1 Registration on a unit entitles the student to:

- Taught delivery of the unit
- Access to learning resources via the VLE
- Formative feedback on assessment
- One summative attempt at each assessment component
- One attempt at resubmission for each assessment component (if required) which will be capped at Pass grade
- One re-take opportunity if required – capped at Pass grade and eligible for further costs.

9.2 Eligibility for re-assessment: Students who have not achieved a passing grade in an assessment may be eligible for reassessment and can resubmit the relevance piece of coursework. Eligibility criteria include having attended the required classes and submitted all coursework on time.

- 9.3 Students who have achieved a pass or merit grade in an assessment cannot resubmit their work for a higher grade.
- 9.4 Students who have not achieved the minimum pass criteria to achieve the unit (and are not seeking compensation for that unit; see section 7) may be entitled to repeat/retake the unit.
- 9.5 Retaking the unit will have an additional cost associated with it.
- 9.6 The maximum grade awarded for a retake unit is Pass
- 9.7 Units may only be retaken once

10. Late Submissions & Mitigating Circumstances

- 10.1 Good time management is an essential quality for higher education students. Assignment deadlines for the academic year are published in advance to assist students in planning their workload.
- 10.2 Students requiring a short-term extension (up to 5 working days) should apply directly to their course leader, using the appropriate Mitigating Circumstances paperwork and process (see Mitigating Circumstances policy).
- 10.3 Students requiring extensions of longer than 5 working days should apply to the HE Mitigating Circumstances mailbox, following the guidance in the HE Mitigating Circumstances Policy.
- 10.4 For both short- and longer-term extension applications, if the application is accepted, the work can be marked without penalty.
- 10.5 If the application is not accepted, the work will be treated as late.
- 10.6 Students submitting late work, without an approved extension, but within 5 days of the original deadline will have their work marked and will be capped at a pass grade.
- 10.7 Work submitted (without approved extension) more than 5 days after the deadline, will be marked at the tutor's discretion, and will likely be marked at the end of the semester, after consideration by the Assessment/Exam board. This work will be capped at pass grade.

11. Progression

- 11.1 The minimum unit credits required for achievement of HNC/HND are laid out in section 6.
- 11.2 Once a student has completed the required credits at HNC, the student will usually be eligible to progress onto HND, and this will be confirmed at the Assessment/Exam board.
- 11.3 There may be rare occasions where progression is not allowed due to pre-requisite units not having been studied. This may apply to students who have taken a break in study between HNC and HND, during which time changes in regulations or units offered have occurred.
- 11.4 Students with a unit yet to be achieved, may, in exceptional circumstances, be allowed to retake that unit alongside the second year of their course. However, this is usually due to illness or other exceptional circumstance, and with the approval of the course leader and Assessment Board. Students should not rely on this course of action as decisions are made on a case-by-case basis.

12. Assessment Boards/Exam Boards

- 12.1 It is the responsibility of college to run Assessment/Exam Boards at appropriate intervals throughout the year.
- 12.2 It is good practice to run an interim board, an end of year board, and a re-assessment board.
- 12.3 Students must be advised that all grades are provisional until conferred at the Assessment Board.
- 12.4 The Assessment Board should take place after the visit from the Pearson External Examiner. Certification cannot take place until the External Examiner has 'visited' and their report submitted.
- 12.5 Assessment boards should usually be chaired by the Head of School or Assistant Principal for the Faculty.
- 12.6 A full listed of attendees should be taken and confirmed in the minutes of the Assessment Board.

12.7 Assessment Boards have a quorum requirement of 3 members of staff.

12.8 The Assessment Board functions to:

- Confirm unit grades and overall qualification classifications
- Determine the pass rate of modules
- Confirm progression onto the next stage of the programme for learners
- Identify any outstanding mitigating circumstances, or cases of academic misconduct.

13. Notification of Grades

Results are embargoed until released by the awarding body.

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