Assessment Policy

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Checked by	Tony Whitehouse & Raana Sarmad
Responsible person	Mohammed Touseef, Head of Higher Education
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Written by	Murray Cooper
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Related policies	− Internal Verification Policy − Complaints Policy − Academic Appeals Policy − Learning Teaching and Assessment Policy − Student Handbook − Data Privacy Notice and Consent Policy
External reference points	College partner Awarding Bodies and Organisations

Contents

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy and procedures is to ensure students and academic staff understand how assessments are conducted at the College. These are the rules and processes that students and academic staff need to follow to carry out assessments correctly and to the same standards across the College.

The policy includes information on setting activities or tasks, meeting deadlines, what happens when deadlines are not met, marking and verification (moderation) of assessments and giving feedback with grades to students. It also includes information on how overall grades are decided and what happens if a student does not pass.

The information below outlines the assessment guidelines, which are the procedures and criteria that students and faculty must adhere to conduct assessments accurately and consistently within the institution. It is important to also refer to the Pearson awarding organisation's assessment policy for BTEC HND in Business and ATHE's assessment policy

2. Scope

This policy covers all types of assessment for all courses delivered by Trent Education Centre. Programmes of study (courses) currently planned include the following courses:

TEC College courses
- Pearson BTEC Higher National Diploma (HND) in Business Level 4/5
- ATHE in Business Management Level 4

3. Aims and Objectives

The College aims to ensure that assessment procedures carried out at the College:

- are clear for all students and academic staff to understand and fare transparent and easily understood by both students and faculty members.
- meet the requirements and expectations of external bodies/organisations where relevant are in accordance with the standards and expectations set by external entities or organizations when applicable.
- meet the academic and employability needs of students doing the assessments
- are fair and consistent for all students, regardless of background or circumstances
- promote student learning and provide opportunities for feedback and improvement
- are regularly reviewed and evaluated to ensure effectiveness and quality
- are conducted in a timely manner to provide students with timely feedback on their progress.

The key objectives of this policy and procedures are in accordance with the core practices for Higher Education:

- Assessment criteria is established according to the level of achievement of learning outcomes
- Teaching activities are directly linked to learning outcomes and assessment methods
- Assessments are reliable, which means their accuracy can be trusted
- Assessments are consistent, meaning that the same benchmarks are used consistently in all situations.
- Assessments are fair and considerate of individual student situations, including making accommodations for disabled learners or those with learning challenges when compared to their peers.
- Assessments are considered valid when they effectively measure whether students have achieved the learning goals.
- Unless otherwise directed by an awarding body or organisation, a holistic approach to assessments is used so that the overall performance and understanding of students can be assessed
- Feedback is constructive and facilitates educational advancement.
- Feedback is timely, being provided within three weeks of submission.
- Students are given comprehensive information and assistance to prepare for assessments.

4. Definitions

An assessment is a student's completion of a specific task or activity outlined in an assignment or exam, which is then graded by an assessor to determine the student's proficiency in a particular subject or qualification. Assessments can include both formative and summative activities and tasks in a variety of formats, such as written or practical tasks, and cover coursework or exams.

4.1. Formative Assessment

Formative assessment is an evaluation method used by teachers to monitor and assess students' understanding and progress throughout a lesson or unit. It typically involves ongoing feedback and allows teachers to make necessary adjustments to their instruction to better support student learning. Formative assessment can take many forms, such as quizzes, exit tickets, discussions, observations, and written assignments. It is designed to help teachers identify areas where students may be struggling and provide targeted support to help them improve. The feedback provided to the student is only a guide for the students to see how well they are doing and will not count towards their final assessment. There should be no grade give for formative assessments.

4.2. Summative Assessment

A summative assessment is the concluding task that a student must complete, either in the form of coursework or an exam, for a specific unit or module they have been studying. Typically, students will complete these assessments at the end of a term or semester, after finishing their studies for that unit. This final assessment must be submitted by a deadline set at the beginning of the term or semester, outlined in the assignment brief that provides instructions on what needs to be done.

5. Assessment Regulations

5.1. Deadlines

Students are required to submit assignments and complete exams by specific deadlines, which are clearly outlined in the assignment briefs at the beginning of each task. These deadlines are also communicated during induction and available on the College's Virtual Learning Environment. In certain circumstances, deadlines may be extended by the Assessment Board, but they will never be moved up, reducing students' preparation time. If an assessment date is pushed back for any reason, students will receive advance notice.

5.2. Late Submission

The College will provide a deadline for submitting Assignments for each unit or module. If a learner fails to submit by this deadline, their submission will be considered late if received by the resubmission date (see Resubmissions below). Late submissions will result in a grade being capped at a Pass unless the student can show valid reasons for submitting late.

5.3. Mitigating Circumstances

If students are unable to meet a deadline, they should contact their Programme Leader before the deadline to request mitigating circumstances. This communication can be done either in writing or through email. They must provide a valid explanation for why they are unable to submit their work on time. Valid reasons may include:

1. If a student is experiencing a physical or mental health issue, the College may require them to provide documentation from a doctor. Additionally, they may be referred to a Counsellor for assistance.

2. If there has been a loss in the student's immediate family, the College will offer support during this difficult time.

3. For students with disabilities or learning difficulties, the College will provide special accommodations and adjustments as needed.

4. In the case of technical difficulties preventing a student from submitting work online, the College will work with them to find a solution.

5. If a student is a victim of a crime, the College will provide appropriate support and resources.

6. If a student unexpectedly becomes responsible for caring for a relative, the College will offer assistance and flexibility to help manage their responsibilities.

Examples of reasons that are typically not considered valid include:

- The student being overloaded with work commitments
- The student failing to understand the task and not attending support classes
- The student wanting to travel for personal or professional reasons
- The student seeking more time to enhance their work.

5.4. Feedback on Submissions

The College aims to offer students written feedback on all formative and summative assessments that are turned in on time within three weeks. Feedback may be provided within the same timeframe for late or extended deadline submissions, but there could be delays if Tutors/Assessors are unavailable. Group feedback will be given for formative assessments whenever possible to ensure fairness, while individual students will receive personalised and detailed feedback for summative assessments.

5.5. Internal Verification

Internal verification consists of providing assessors with feedback on the feedback they have given to students. Following the assessment of submissions, the College undertakes sampling of assessments for internal verification purposes. Each Assessor is assigned an Internal Verifier (IV) or Internal Moderator who reviews a portion of their assessment decisions to verify their accuracy. Internal verification should be conducted for every unit/module assessed, including every square root of them. In cases where there are multiple assessors for a unit/module, an equal number of submissions should be internally verified for each assessor.

If the Internal Verifier (IV) has a different opinion on an assessment decision that impacts the student's grade, the assessor can adjust the grade and feedback before sharing it with the student. In case of disagreement between the assessor and IV, the assessment will be escalated to the Lead Internal Verifier (Lead IV) for a final decision. If changes are made to the original assessment decision, the IV or Lead IV must review all assessments conducted by the same assessor for the same module to ensure consistency and accuracy in grading. Refer to the Internal Verification Policy for further information.

5.6. External Examination

In addition to Internal Verification, awarding organisations also conduct an external verification process in addition to internal verification. One example is on Pearson HND programs, where external verification is conducted annually by a Pearson External Examiner to ensure that assessment and internal verification decisions are accurate and meet the necessary standards.

5.7. The process of marking and giving feedback

1. **Submissions**
   The student submits their work by the deadline

   The Tutor/Assessor provides feedback and assigns a grade to the student within a two-week timeframe, following the assessment criteria outlined in the Assignment Brief and Programme Specification.

2. **By the end of the third week:**

   The College conducts sampling and internal verification/moderation of assessment work to ensure the reliability, fairness, consistency, and validity of all assessment decisions. Students receive their feedback and grade and can only appeal against them if they believe there was a procedural error, failure to make reasonable adjustments, or bias. Refer to the Appeals Policy and Procedures for further information.

5.8. Resubmissions

If a student does not pass their final assessment, they can resubmit it typically within two weeks of receiving feedback. This allows students to review the feedback and make necessary corrections to pass. Late submissions are also accepted up until the resubmission deadline, but students will only be able to achieve a Pass grade for resubmissions or late submissions without a valid reason.

5.9. Retakes

Students failing their resubmission will be required to retake the unit and complete a new assignment or exam at a different deadline. Retakes will be limited to a Pass grade. Additional class attendance and scheduling may be necessary for retaking the unit, potentially resulting in extra tuition costs and extended course completion timelines. It is advisable for students to pass on their initial attempts to avoid these additional steps.

5.10. Failure to Pass

Students who consistently do not meet deadlines or pass required units may not be able to advance to the next academic level. This means that an HND student, for instance, would not receive their interim HNC or complete HND qualification if they fail to submit work on time. Although these students can still submit assignments and receive unit certificates, they will not be able to obtain the full qualification. The final decision will be made by the appropriate board responsible for progression, assessment, or examinations.

5.11. Grades

For Pearson BTEC HND courses, all grades are based upon the following:

PASS
MERIT
DISTINCTION

Students who do not Pass are classified as REFERRED. If they resubmit or retake, they can only achieve PASS for the particular unit.

5.12. Compensatory Credit

Students may receive compensatory credit for certain programs. In the case of Pearson BTEC HNDs, students can receive compensatory credit for one 15-credit unit in their first year after completing the HNC Level 4, and another in their second year after completing the HND Level 5. This allows them to pass their HNC in the first year even if they fail one 15-credit unit and pass their HND in the second year even if they fail one 15-credit unit. However, students cannot pass their HNC or HND if they fail more than one 15-credit unit at each level. For information on how to achieve an overall Merit or Distinction, please refer to the Pearson BTEC Assessment Guidelines.

5.13. Calculating Final Grade for HND
The table below shows how final grades are calculated for HND qualifications.

	Points per Credit		Point Boundaries
Pass	4	Pass	420 - 599
Merit	6	Merit	600 - 839
Distinction	8	Distinction	840 +

In this system, the number of credits earned for each unit passed, Merit, or Distinction achieved is multiplied by a specific factor. For passing a unit, the credits are multiplied by 4; for achieving a Merit, they are multiplied by 6, and for achieving a Distinction, they are multiplied by 8. The first year of study involves completing 8 HNC L4 units, each valued at 15 credits, while the second year includes 7 HND L5 units, also valued at 15 credits each, except for the Research Project which is worth 30 credits.

For example, passing a 15-credit unit would result in earning 60 points (4 x 15), achieving a Merit would result in 90 points (6 x 15), and achieving a Distinction would result in 120 points (8 x 15). At the end of the first year, the total points earned from all HNC units are added together to determine a final grade based on the total points accumulated.

If students Pass HNC, they can progress to the HND in the second year and counting starts from zero. Students may progress to their second year if they only pass 6 HNC units. However, they will need to pass a 7th HNC unit before they can complete and pass their HND in the second year. They can fail the 8th unit and receive compensatory credit.

Students who successfully complete their Higher National Certificate (HNC) can advance to the Higher National Diploma (HND) programme in the following year, starting fresh in terms of counting their progress. If a student passes at least 6 out of the required 7 HNC units, they can move on to their second year of study, with the condition that they must pass the remaining unit by the end of the second year to obtain their HND.

Additionally, students have the option of failing the one out of eight units and still receiving compensatory credit. The final grade for the HND is determined by the total points accumulated at the end of the second year, excluding any points earned in the first year of study.

5.14. Publishing Grades

It is crucial for students to recognize that even though they receive feedback with grades that have been confirmed internally, those grades could still be changed by the Awarding Organisation based on decisions made by the External Examiner and Examination Boards. Therefore, the grades given by the College to students should be considered as preliminary until they have been approved by the appropriate Assessment Committee, External Examiner, or Examination Board. This final approval typically occurs at the end of the academic year, which could differ depending on when the student begins their programme of study.