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**ASSESSMENT POLICY HE**

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| Author/Reviewer: | Academic Registrar |
| Date Approved: | September 2006 |
| Where Approved: | CMG |
| Date of Issue: | May 2010 |
| Impact Assessment: | 24.3.2010 |
| Reviewed | May 2011 |
| Reviewed | May 2012 |
| Reviewed | October 2015 |
| Reviewed | January 2017 |

**ASSESSMENT POLICY - HE**

**Purpose of the Policy**

The main purpose of the policy is to ensure that all students are provided with fit for purpose assessment opportunities during their programme. This policy is also to provide clear guidance to all programme teams about assessment practice.

The assessment policy seeks to ensure that assessment practices and procedures;

* meet awarding body requirements
* are subject to appropriate internal moderation/verification
* can be evidenced
* are applied consistently across all programme/subject teams
* take account of the diversity of learners

Assessment methods for all qualifications will be in accordance with the requirements of the awarding/validating body.

**Scope**

This policy and process apply to all Higher Education programmes delivered at or on behalf of Nescot. Assessment procedures for all qualifications will be in accordance with the requirements of the awarding/validating body.

Exceptions to this policy will be applied where the assessment policy of the awarding/validating body differs, in such cases the procedures of the awarding/validating body will take priority.

**Methods of Assessment**

Assessment methods for all qualifications will be in accordance with the requirements of the awarding / validating organisation. The assessment methods will be determined by the learning outcomes within each qualification and will include an appropriate range of assessment criteria.

**Assessment Procedure**

1. Programme co-ordinators are responsible for planning programme assessment requirements well in advance. This includes responsibility for designing an assessment plan which minimises bunching of assessments and reflects due consideration of assessment structure, timing and methodology across the programme.
2. Programme coordinators and module/unit coordinators are responsible for formally providing students with information about examinations (date, time, and examination duration) through their assessment plan.
3. Programme coordinators are responsible for ensuring the assessment plan is provided in programme handbooks at the start of the course. Assessments will be explained to students prior to commencement to ensure they fully understand any requirements and rules, but without compromising the integrity of that assessment.
4. Programme coordinators are responsible for providing clear information about all programme assessment requirements and making these available to all students formally, in programme handbooks and/or module/unit guides. Information will include;
   1. how and when assessment takes place
   2. any associated additional costs
   3. any special arrangements for assessed coursework, examinations or tests
   4. any specialist or alternative ways of assessing/examining learners with learning difficulties/and/or disabilities
   5. whether or not previous achievement or experience can count towards the proposed qualification. Where appropriate, copies of learner qualifications will be collected by tutors
   6. how to present evidence for holistic assessment
   7. rules regarding timescales, examination conditions, methods of communicating the outcomes of assessment etc
5. Programme coordinators are responsible for coordinating programme handbooks and distributing these to students.
6. Programme coordinators and module/unit coordinators are responsible for preparing schemes of work/module guides and making these available to students at the start of their programme.
7. Programme coordinators and module/unit coordinators will hold assessment meetings to agree types of evidence being used to support assessment decisions. The rules of assessment must be applied when making judgements about the evidence or work presented. To be reliable, evidence must be valid (relating to the targeted outcome), authentic (must be the student’s own work), current (reflecting current practice) and sufficient (enough to demonstrate competence in the planned outcomes).
8. Heads of Department will be responsible for appointing internal verifiers/moderators and ensuring implementation of internal verification activity across their Department.
9. Internal verifiers/moderators, in liaison with programme coordinators and module/unit coordinators, will be responsible for ensuring all assignment briefs or assessments have been subject to a rigorous internal moderation/verification process using the agreed College system prior to distribution to students.
10. Heads of Department, in liaison with programme coordinators and module/unit coordinators, will ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to retain coursework submissions securely and will ensure that the return of coursework to learners is timely and secure.
11. Programme coordinators, module/unit coordinators and assessors must not give informal extensions to individual students. Any student requiring further consideration due to learning difficulty, learning disability, or circumstances beyond their control, must apply to the programme coordinator formally for an extension in advance of the submission date using the College Authorised Extensions Policy. Where appropriate any learner unable to meet a submission date must use the Extenuating Circumstances procedures.
12. Where possible anonymous marking should take place
13. Internal verifiers/moderators, in liaison with programme coordinators, module/unit coordinators and assessors, will be responsible for ensuring assessment decisions have been subject to a rigorous internal moderation/verification process in accordance with IV policy, IV handbook and agreed sampling levels, prior to assessment decisions/marks being issued to students.
14. Internal verifiers/moderators will hold regular standardisation meetings to agree assessment decisions/mark, or types pf evidence being used to support the assessment decision.
15. Programme coordinators, module/unit coordinators and assessors will be responsible for ensuring assessment feedback is provided to students in sufficient time to enable them to improve their subsequent performance. In all cases this will be within the College agreed timescale and as detailed on the assignment brief.
16. Programme coordinators, module/unit coordinators and assessors will be responsible for ensuring students receive regular updates on their progress through formative and summative assessment feedback.
17. Heads of Department are responsible for monitoring the provision of feedback for programmes in their Department. Unless prohibited by the awarding body the minimum requirements for feedback are:
    1. A provisional mark or grade
    2. Feedback identifying the major shortcomings and recommendations to enable the work to be improved
    3. Areas of strength
    4. Feedback will be explicitly linked to the grading criteria

**Unit/Module Failures**

The regulations of the awarding/validating body will be adhered to where a learner fails to satisfactorily complete assessments. The arrangements for BTEC programmes are appended to this document.

**Referrals**

The regulations of the awarding/validating body will be adhered to where a learner is referred in assessments. The arrangements for BTEC programmes are appended to this document.

**Procedure in the event of illness**

If a student fails to sit or submit all or part of an assessment due to medically certified illness or other valid cause, s/he may be permitted to sit/resubmit the failed assessment(s) as if for the first time by a date to be determined in accordance with the Extenuating Circumstances policy. This is only permitted if application has been made in accordance with the Extenuating Circumstances policy.

**Late submission of work**

The College believes that handing work in on time is a valuable discipline which helps students to develop the ability to plan and organise their time effectively and prepares them for jobs which include a need for time management. In this context the late submission of work is not condoned, unless extenuating circumstances have been agreed.

Programme coordinators, module/unit coordinators and assessors will be responsible for making students aware, in the programme documentation, of any penalties that they will incur as a result of the late submission of coursework. In all cases of late submission the regulations of the awarding/validating body will be followed. The arrangements for BTEC programmes are appended to this document.

Disciplinary action may be taken against students on HE courses who persistently hand work in late.

**Access arrangements for learners with learning difficulties or disabilities**

Students are entitled to special access arrangements in all examinations, internal and external, so that they are not at a disadvantage due to a learning difficulty or disability. Examples of access arrangements include extra time, use of a reader, scribe or laptop.

Students are encouraged to inform the college at an early stage if they believe they need access arrangements.

Programme coordinators also have a role in identifying students on their programme who require access arrangements. These students are referred to Learning Support in the early stage of the programme so that they can benefit from learning support and so that applications for access arrangements can be made at the appropriate time to the relevant examination board.

Learning Support staff will assess students' access arrangement needs, if this assessment has not been carried out previously, and will inform the programme leader of the arrangements the learner is entitled to.

**Extenuating circumstances**

Extenuating circumstances for HE students will be considered by the Extenuating Circumstances Board. Consideration of late submission of work, or examination performance affected, will take place in advance of Assessment Boards. Students must complete the appropriate form and supply supporting evidence in line with the policy. Extenuating Circumstances Boards will normally be held in February and May prior to Unit Assessment Boards – one Extenuating Circumstances Board will consider the application from a range of programmes.

**Assessment Boards, Examination Boards and Resit Boards**

Assessment Boards

The purpose of an Assessment Board is to consider and agree students’ achievement at the end of each semester. Assessors will meet formally in Assessment Boards as follows;

* Semester 1 Assessment Board to be held between the end of semester 1 and Easter.
* Semester 2 Assessment Board to be held at the end of S2 a minimum of 1 week before the planned Award Board.

For those programmes which do not have units/modules completed at the end of semester 1 the Assessment Board will be a formal review of assessment progress.

Assessment Boards will include the programme coordinator and all those assessing on the units/modules under consideration. The following have rights of membership of the Assessment Board;

* Chair (Senior Manager who is independent of the programme)
* Programme coordinator
* Unit/Module coordinator
* Members of staff responsible for teaching and assessment of the unit
* Head of Department
* Quality Office representative
* Subject External Examiners/Moderator.

Examination Boards

The purpose of an Examination Boards is to oversee the assessment of awards, formally agree the progression status of learners and confirm final award classification or grades. Assessors will meet formally once each year in Examination Boards as follows;

* Examination Board - to be held as soon as possible after the Semester 2 Assessment Board

Composition of Examination Boards for University partner validated programmes must include at least one external examiner, the programme coordinator and all those assessing on the programme. The following have rights of membership of the Award Board;

* Chair (Senior Manager who is independent of the programme)
* Programme Co-ordinator
* Unit/Module co-ordinator
* Members of staff responsible for teaching and assessment of the unit
* Head of Department
* Quality Office representative
* Subject External Examiners/Moderator.

Resit Boards

The purpose of a Resit Board is to consider and agree learner’s achievement in the exceptional cases where the Examination Board has recommended that learners are given a resit opportunity. Where necessary Assessors will meet to consider and agree learner’s achievement in Resit Boards as follows;

* Resit Boards - to be held no later than half way through the semester following that in which the Examination Board was held.

Composition of Resit Boards will be the programme coordinator and all those assessing on the programme. The following have rights of membership of the Award Board;

* Chair (Senior Manager who is independent of the programme)
* Programme Co-ordinator
* Unit/Module co-ordinator
* Members of staff responsible for teaching and assessment of the unit
* Head of Department
* Quality Office representative
* Subject External Examiners/Moderator.

All Assessment, Examination and Resit Board meetings will be formally minuted and a record provided to the Quality Office. Immediately after the meeting the programme coordinator will complete and return to the Examinations Office and Quality Office any documentation required by the Examinations Office or Quality Office.

**Quorum**

The quorum for the above meetings is normally one half of the members, the Chair and in the case of an Award Board for University partner validated programmes an external examiner must be present. Members of Assessment Boards should only absent themselves in exceptional circumstances and should seek the approval of the chair who must be briefed about any matters which may affect any decision of the Board.

**Progression**

Criteria for progression into the subsequent year are clearly set out in awarding body regulations which will be communicated to learners at the beginning of the academic year by the programme coordinator.

**Special assessment needs**

Students with a disability or requiring special arrangements will be given appropriate and sufficient consideration of their individual needs.

**Academic appeals process**

If a learner is dissatisfied with an assessment decision, s/he should discuss this with the relevant member of staff concerned in the first instance. If this does not lead to a satisfactory resolution then the learner can appeal formally. The Nescot Academic Appeals Policy is available on Weblearn or from the Quality Office. The Academic Appeals Policy of the awarding body will take precedence over the Nescot Policy for learners registered on programmes other than those of Pearson.

**Malpractice by Centre Staff**

Any member of staff who is considered to have breached any of the following will be subject to the college’s Staff Disciplinary Process.

This list is not exhaustive and other instances of malpractice may be considered:

* improper assistance to candidates
* inventing or changing marks for internally assessed work (coursework or portfolio evidence) where there is insufficient evidence of the candidates’ achievement to justify the marks given or assessment decisions made
* failure to keep candidate coursework/portfolios of evidence secure
* fraudulent claims for certificates
* inappropriate retention of certificates
* assisting students in the production of work for assessment, where the support has the potential to influence the outcomes of assessment, for example where the assistance involves centre staff producing work for the student
* producing falsified witness statements, for example for evidence the student has not generated
* allowing evidence, which is known by the staff member not to be the student’s own, to be included in a student’s assignment/task/portfolio/coursework
* facilitating and allowing impersonation
* misusing the conditions for special student requirements, for example where students are permitted support, such as an amanuensis, this is permissible up to the point where the support has the potential to influence the outcome of the assessment
* falsifying records/certificates, for example by alteration, substitution, or by fraud
* fraudulent certificate claims, that is claiming for a certificate prior to the student completing all the requirements of assessment.

**Retaining Records**

Current students:

All student work and associated records are retained until after SV or External Verification/Moderation and certification. Work is stored securely and in college.

Stored records include all IV of assignments and unit criteria, tracking of progress etc. E-tracker records are archived for two years, although not available to staff after the year end. The e-tracker administrator has access to previous year screens.

Once certificated, work is returned to students. Arrangements for the collection of work are given to students at the end of the course, this includes the timescales for destroying uncollected work.

Certificated students:

Records relating to summative decisions (to criterion or learning aim level i.e. tracking sheets, assignment briefs, IV records etc) and of course the Certification claims, are kept for THREE years. This is either electronically or paper, but always secure.

Associated documents

* Academic misconduct policy
* Academic appeals policy
* Extenuating circumstances policy
* Authorised extensions to assessment deadline policy
* Assessment schedules and the return of assessed work Policy HE
* Internal verification policy and handbook
* Learning support policy
* Application Form for RCPL/RPEL
* QAA Quality Codes

**Appendix A**

**HE BTEC programmes; Assessment arrangements**

**Deadlines for the Submission of Assessed Work**

Programme coordinators should inform students of the deadlines for the submission of formally assessed work.

**Extensions to the deadline for formal submissions**

Where acceptable reasons (with appropriate evidence provided) are agreed with the Programme coordinator, the deadline for the submission of a formally assessed piece of work may be extended by either ten college working days without penalty (see Authorised Extension to Assessment Deadline Policy).

**Late submission of assessment within five college working days of the deadline**

The college operates a period of five college working days from the point of the initial submission deadline within which a student may submit work late without an agreed extension or agreed extenuating circumstances and continue to be awarded a mark.

Normally, work submitted within five college days of the deadline will be penalised. Work that is judged to be of the required pass standard will be capped at the minimum pass grade. Work that fails to make the minimum standard initially will be recorded as a fail. If it is passed on resubmission, it will be capped at the pass grade.

**Late submission of work beyond the five college working day deadline**

Work submitted after the five college working day period will not be considered. A mark of fail will be agreed.

A student seeking permission to submit work beyond the five college working day period due to documented extenuating circumstances should follow the College’s regulations on extenuating circumstances (see Extenuating Circumstances Policy).

A student given permission to submit work within the five college working day period permitted by the College’s Authorised Extension to Assessment Deadline Policy who does not then submit the work, and who does not follow the College’s regulations on extenuating circumstances, will be deemed not to have submitted the work. The work will be treated as a non-submission.

**Penalty for non-submission**

When an element of assessment is not submitted, it will be counted as an attempt and marked as a fail.

Persistent late submission or non-submission of coursework may result in a student's suspension or exclusion and the possible termination of registration.

**Reassessment – General Principles**

A student who has passed a module at the first attempt will not be offered the opportunity to be re-assessed to improve the grade.

A student who passes a module on reassessment will be awarded the minimum pass grade for the module.

**Forms of Reassessment**

The College operates the following forms of reassessment:

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| **Retake** | Where a student is permitted or required to retake a failed examination at the next sitting or re-submit a failed coursework for a module within the same course year |
| **Repeat** | Where a student is permitted or required to repeat all elements of assessment for that module in the following course year |
| **Replace** | Where a student is permitted or required to replace a failed module with an alternative and complete all elements of assessment for a module in the following course year |

Where on practical grounds it is not feasible to offer the original form of assessment by retake an alternative form of reassessment by re-take may be agreed. This will be designed to ensure that students can demonstrate the learning outcomes broadly associated with the elements of assessment failed at the first attempt.

Where it is not possible to design a reassessment by retake which will allow students to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes associated with particular failed elements, a repeat/replace will be agreed.

The Assessment Board will recommend reassessment by retake for only those elements of the module that have been failed.

Where students are required to undertake reassessment by repeat or replace, it will be a requirement to undertake all elements of assessment for the module, regardless of whether or not specific elements of assessment were passed at an earlier attempt. The overall module result will be capped at the minimum pass grade.

**Maximum credit load for reassessment by retake following failure at the first attempt**

Following failure at the first attempt, a student is permitted reassessment by retake in a maximum of 60 failed credits.

Where a student fails more than 60 credits, an Examination Board may require a student to:

* be reassessed by 'repeat' or 'replace' in any additional failed credit
* change their mode of study from full-time to part-time

Alternatively, an Examination Board may judge that no further reassessment can be permitted and terminate a student's registration. The College has an agreed set of principles for the amount of failure that a student may be permitted at each level of study before an Examination Board will normally agree that a student’s registration will be terminated. These are summarised in the table below.

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| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **First assessment point** | **Second assessment point** |
| **Level 4 progression and award** | Students will normally be permitted 60 credits of retakes and 60 credits repeats/replaces in all scenarios unless all credit is failed non submission, at which point a student will normally have their registration terminated | Students will normally be permitted repeats/replaces in up to 120 credits in all scenarios unless all credit is failed non submission, at which point a student will normally have their registration terminated |
| **Level 5 progression and award** | Students will normally be permitted 60 credits of retakes and 60 credits of repeats/replaces in all scenarios unless all credit is failed non submission, at which point a student will normally have their registration terminated | Students will normally be permitted repeats/replaces in up to 120 credits in all scenarios unless all credit is failed non submission, at which point a student will normally have their registration terminated |

A student will be considered for an intermediate award provided they have fulfilled the learning outcomes for the award.

**Appendix B**

**HE BTEC- Admission with Credit from Prior Learning (which includes RPEL and RPCL)**

We welcome applications from prospective students who wish to enter at a later stage of a course or gain exemption from specific modules, subject to any specific requirements of an accrediting/regulatory body.

Such entry can be assessed on the basis of existing qualifications (RPCL) and/or experience (RPEL), but the upper limit for this is 50% of the credit required for the award (e.g. typically for a two year HND course, entry to start in the final year) while the minimum exemption considered is 15 credits (i.e. typically one module).

Application is via the normal route and the usual processes for assessing the application apply. In addition, where applicants wish to enter directly to the start of the final year, they should make this clear on the application, citing whether this will be on the basis of existing qualifications and/or experience. All such applications are referred to the Programme Coordinator, who maps general and specific credit from any appropriate existing qualifications against the curriculum from which exemption is sought. In the case of exemption based on experiential learning, the applicant is interviewed by the Programme Coordinator; where an applicant for entry with advance standing is then accepted on the basis of RPEL, our offer is conditional on them preparing a satisfactory portfolio of evidence. We normally charge a fee to assess the portfolio.

Where a prospective student wishes to seek exemption from specific module(s) rather than or in addition to direct entry into a later year, this should be sought, once an offer of a place has been made, via the Admissions team who refer the matter to the above procedure.

It is the student’s responsibility to present their evidence in a way that leads an assessor to make a judgement about the validity, authenticity, currency and sufficiency of the evidence.