



South Eastern Regional College

Higher National Programme Regulations (RQF)

2024-25

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1 Introduction

These regulations apply to all Pearson HNC/HND RQF awards offered by the College. It should be read in conjunction with the Programme Regulations section in the HE Student Handbook. The College reserves the right to make reasonable changes to the regulations where it will assist in the proper delivery of education. These changes will normally come into effect at the beginning of an academic year. The College may introduce changes during the academic year when it reasonably considers these to be in the interests of students or where this is required by law.

2 Responsibilities

2.1 Responsibilities of the College

The College will ensure that students have access to the Pearson Higher National Regulations and supporting policies and procedures. All relevant processes required by Pearson to deliver a Higher National are detailed in the policies and procedures of the College. The main processes can be found in the HE Higher Education Programme Standard Operating Procedure (SOP). This along with any other relevant SOPs can be found in the key policies and procedures section of the SERC website and programme Virtual Learning Environments (VLE). These include:

- Academic Misconduct
- Mitigating circumstances and leave of absence
- Appeals and Complaints

The Programme Coordinator will ensure that the assessment requirements for the course are published. This will include:

- Student handbook including programme specification
- Assessment schedule (including reassessment dates)
- Learning outcomes, assessment criteria, weightings, and mode(s) of assessment for each unit
- Procedures for the submission of assignments, including the procedure for dealing with late submission of work, and indicative feedback dates
- Criteria relating to grading and marking schemes

2.2 Responsibilities of students

It is their responsibility to:

- Ensure that they read and comply with the assessment regulations for the Pearson Higher National course, supporting policies and procedures.

3 Duration and Structure of the RQF Award

Since September 2021, all HN awards delivered by SERC are from the Pearson RQF qualifications.

The table below summarises examples of the normal duration of a programme for students studying on full-time or part-time RQF HNC/HND awards.

Mode of attendance	Normal Duration of programme	Normal credits per year
Full-time HNC	1 years	120 credits
Part-time HNC	2 years	60 credits
Full-time HND	2 years	120 credits
Part-time HND	4 years	60 credits

Exceptionally, schools may offer a bespoke method of delivery for courses.

If the normal duration of a course is exceeded there may be funding implications for confirmed registrations.

BTEC Higher Nationals consist of core units, specialist units and optional units:

- Core and specialist units are mandatory.
- Specialist units are designed to provide a specific occupational focus to the qualification and are aligned to Professional Body standards.

The specific units offered are published on the Course Descriptors on the SERC website. Any changes to these will be communicated in-line with the Admissions SOP. Student choice in specialist units will be determined by level of demand and availability of resources including staffing.

3.1 Conditions and Compensations

Conditions for the award of the HNC

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

Compensation provisions for the HNC

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.

Students must have completed at least 90 credits at level 4 before progressing to level 5. The remaining 30 level 4 credits can be completed while undertaking level 5 study.

Conditions for the award of the HND

To achieve a Pearson BTEC Higher National Diploma qualification, a student must have:

- Completed units equivalent to 120 credits at Level 5
- Achieved at least a pass in 105 credits at Level 5
- Completed units equivalent to 120 credits at Level 4
- Achieved at least a pass in 105 credits at Level 4

Compensation provisions for HND

Students can still be awarded an HND if they have attempted but not achieved a Pass in one of the 15 credit units completed at Level 4 and similarly if they have attempted but not achieved one of the 15 credit units at Level 5. However, they must complete and pass the remaining units for an HNC or HND as per the unit rules of combination of the required qualification.

Units are usually 15 credits in value, or a multiple of this. Each 15-credit unit approximates to a Total Qualification Time (TQT) of 150 hours which includes 60 hours of Guided Learning (GL). TQT is the estimated total amount of time that a student could achieve a qualification in. GL is the time when a tutor is present to give specific guidance towards the learning aim being studied.

3.2 Calculation of the Overall Qualification

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. 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. The conditions of award and the compensation provisions will apply as outlined above. All 120 credits count in calculating the grade (at each level, as applicable).

The overall qualification grade for the HND will be calculated based on student performance in Level 5 units only.

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.

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

4 Admission Requirements

Admission requirements are publicised annually through Course Descriptors on the SERC website. The admission process may include vocational assessment as well as interview process and academic achievement. The admission process is detailed in the Higher Education Admissions SOP in the key policies and procedures section of the SERC website.

4.1 English Language Requirements

Pearson require that non-native English speakers show the following proficiency in English language to gain admission.

Language of delivery/ assessment	English language requirements
HN is taught and assessed in English	<p>Non-native English speakers and those students who have not had their final two years of schooling in English must have evidence of English Language Level B2 on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• IELTS 6.0 (Academic) minimum of 5.5 in all skill sets, or secure equivalent score from an approved UKVI Secure English Language Test (SELT) provider;• PTE Academic 51 (minimum of 46 in each part); or• Have GCSE in English, Essential Skills in Communication Level 2, ESOL Level 2 or another qualification gained at an Institution within the UK (this will be assessed by the College and the College will still request a SELT)

The International Office will provide guidance and Course Coordinators must involve them in the admission process of a non-native speaker.

4.2 Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) and Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL)

Applicants to Higher Nationals who hold relevant industrial experience may use the APL and APEL processes for admission.

Studies pursued and examinations passed in respect of other qualifications and/or evidence from the accreditation of prior experiential learning, may be accepted as exempting candidates from part of an approved programme.

This process is detailed in the Higher Education Accreditation of Prior Learning SOP.

5 HN Global

HN Global is an online resource that supports students and helps in planning delivering Pearson HNs. It is a **requirement** that HN RQF students are registered on HN Global. This should occur early in the first semester through tutorials. [HN Global | BTEC Higher Nationals](#)

6 Assessment

6.1 Assessment schedule

Students will be given an assessment schedule, detailing assessment submission dates, within the first two weeks of study of each unit.

6.2 Assessment submission

Assignments are to be submitted at the time, date, and method stated by the subject tutor. An electronic and a hard copy of an assignment must be submitted unless otherwise stated by the unit tutor. Electronic assignments should be submitted in a format agreed with your unit tutor, and the student should check their own work for plagiarism and unauthorised use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools prior to submission using Turnitin. Tutors will also check work for plagiarism. Assignments are on time only when they are submitted by the time stated.

All assignments, whether submitted electronically or as a hard copy, must be accompanied by the relevant front cover sheet (signed as a declaration of own work) and task sheet. Assignments will not be marked without them. Assignments should be submitted as identified by the unit tutor. It is the student's responsibility to ask for a receipt of submission if paper based.

6.3 Assessment grading – formative and summative

A key feature of RQF Higher Nationals is the use of holistic assessment. Holistic assessment is based on the principle that the student's work is evaluated as a whole, rather than as a set of individual tasks. Holistic assessment encourages the student to see how theories, concepts and skills work together.

For each unit in a HN qualification, we define learning outcomes which define the skills and knowledge that students should be able to evidence on completion of the programme. Because we are designing assessments against the learning outcome, students will see the potential to achieve at different levels. In holistic assessment, we are evaluating the work to see if students have achieved Pass, Merit or Distinction.

Formative Assessment: Formative assessment will be provided to the student if submissions are made in line with the agreed submission date. This takes place prior to summative feedback and does not confirm achievement of grades but focuses on helping the student to reflect on their learning and improve their performance.

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 prior to summative submission.

If a student feels that an unreasonable delay has occurred in returning work they should speak to their tutor in the first instance and the Course Coordinator if the issue is not resolved.

Following formative assessment and feedback, students can:

- Revisit work to add to the original evidence produced to consolidate a Pass grade or to enhance their work to achieve a higher grade.
- Submit evidence for summative assessment and final unit grade.

Summative Assessment: Using the formative feedback students should prepare for the summative submission. Summative assessments should be made in line with the agreed submission date. Summative assessment is the final consideration by an Assessor of a student's assignment, agreeing which assessment criteria the student has met in the assignment and recording those decisions.

Students should be aware that summative assessment is subject to confirmation by the Standards Verification Process and the Assessment Board which take place in January, June and August, and thus is provisional and can be overridden by the Assessment Board.

6.4 Resubmissions

A student who, for the first summative assessment opportunity, has failed to achieve a Pass for that unit specification shall be expected to undertake a reassessment. This request must be authorised by the Programme Lead IV, using Form 14- Programme Lead IV Resubmission Approval form, and outcome recorded formally at the next Assessment Board and meet the following requirements:

- Only one opportunity for reassessment of the unit will be permitted.
- Reassessment for course work, project or portfolio-based assessments shall normally involve the reworking of the original activity.
- For examinations, reassessment shall involve completion of a new activity.
- A student who undertakes a reassessment will have their grade capped at a Pass for that unit.
- A student will not be entitled to be reassessed in any component of assessment for which a Pass grade or higher has already been awarded.
- The resubmission must be recorded in the relevant assessment documentation.
- The student must have a clear and realistic deadline (usually 15 working days of the student being notified that a resubmission has been authorised).
- The resubmission must be undertaken with no further guidance.
- The original evidence submitted for the assessment can remain valid and be extended or may need to be replaced partially or in full.

The External Examiner (EE) is likely to want to include assessments that have been resubmitted as part of the sample they will review.

6.5 Repeat Units

The following applies to a student who, for the first assessment opportunity and resubmission opportunity, still failed to achieve a Pass for that unit specification:

- At the Centre's discretion and Assessment Board, decisions can be permitted to repeat a unit.
- The student must study the unit again with full attendance and (if required) payment of the unit fee.
- The overall unit grade for a successfully completed repeat unit is capped at a Pass for that unit.
- Units can only be repeated once

The External Examiner is likely to want to include assessments that have been re-submitted as part of the sample they will review.

6.6 Late Submission

If a student submits an assignment after the submission time and date and there are no extenuating circumstances, it will be treated as a 'late submission'. The work will be marked at the tutor's discretion. It is likely that the late work will not be marked until the end of the semester. The assignment will be assessed as normal with written feedback and assignment performance recorded by the unit tutor. This feedback will provide guidance for future development and recognise the learning that has been achieved. As the work is late a penalty will be applied at this stage and a Pass is the maximum grade that will be awarded.

As with all assessment results, both the uncapped and capped marks should be recorded and ratified by the Examination/Assessment Board; taking into account any mitigating circumstances that may have been submitted.

A late assignment may take advantage of the Resubmission opportunity (see 6.4).

6.7 Extenuating Circumstances

If you can satisfy the Programme Coordinator that you were unable to complete all or part of an assignment through illness or extenuating circumstances you may be permitted to submit coursework or complete a written examination at an agreed date.

An extenuating circumstance is defined as something over which the student has no control. This can include accidents, family bereavement and serious illness. It does not include IT problems or minor illnesses.

Applications for extenuating circumstances must be submitted as soon as is practicable, using the EC1 form located in the HE section of the SERC website. The EC1 form should be supported by supplementary evidence in the case of illness. Supplementary evidence including medical certificates must be presented within 10 days of the submission date. Illness will not be accepted as an extenuating circumstance unless accompanied by a medical certificate.

Any EC1 approvals must be made by the Programme Coordinator. An accepted EC1 form removes late submission restrictions. EC1 approvals and extensions should be minuted at course team meetings.

The student must agree a revised submission date with the subject tutor and Programme Coordinator. The revised submission date should be recorded in writing by both tutor and student on the reverse of the front cover sheet. Extensions **should not** be after summative feedback has been issued for other students on the programme.

All extensions granted by the Programme Coordinator must be recorded and made available at the Assessment Board and to the External Examiner (EE). Recording details of extensions enables the Examination Board and the EE to confirm that the programme is operating consistently in accordance with the College and Pearson's policies and guidance.

6.8 Leave of Absence

Students can apply for a Leave of Absence if they need to defer their studies, until the following semester or following academic year, due to exceptional circumstances. A Leave of Absence will normally be for the minimum period of at least one semester and the student will be guaranteed their place on the course if they return to their course on the agreed return date.

The Leave of Absence (LOA1) form, located in the HE section of the SERC website should be completed by the student and supporting evidence should be attached. Both the LOA1 and the evidence should be submitted to the Programme Coordinator. Once the Programme Team has reviewed the request a decision will be made and the Programme Coordinator will notify the student of the outcome within four weeks.

Ordinarily students who withdraw during the academic year will continue to be liable to pay the full fees for the academic year, despite their withdrawal. If receiving a tuition fee loan from Student Loans Company (SLC), through Student Finance NI (SFNI), this will cease when the student withdraws, and the student will have to pay any remaining outstanding tuition fees. The College will, however, consider a Fee Suspension for students who have been granted a Leave of Absence by the Programme Team. If approved, this means that the student will not be charged fees during their Leave of Absence.

In such instances the student should state on their LOA1 that they are requesting a Fees Suspension. The Programme Coordinator will then forward a copy of the completed LOA1 form and evidence to the Finance Unit. Once a decision has been

made on the Fees Suspension the decision will be communicated to the student by the Programme Coordinator. If receiving tuition fee support from SLC the Finance department will notify SLC of the fee suspension outcome and update the student's account on the College's Finance System.

7 Progression

To progress to the next stage of the course (usually from Year 1 to Year 2) you must normally pass all modules at the level studied. You may, however, carry one module as long as you have made genuine attempts to complete the module by the August Examination Board or have extenuating circumstances. A student should not rely on the right to carry a module as this will depend on individual circumstances.

Re-sit fees will apply only if you have failed by the August examination board. A fee of £45.00 to cover administration and marking will be applied for each element of coursework to be submitted following the August examination board. These fees will apply where there is resubmission without attendance.

7.1 *Final/Overall Grading of Award*

7.1.1 Note on awards of Pass, Merit or Distinction criteria

- To achieve a Pass, a student must have satisfied all the Pass criteria for the learning outcomes, showing coverage of the unit content and therefore attainment at Level 4 or 5 of the national framework.
- To achieve a Merit, a student must have satisfied all the Merit criteria (and therefore the Pass criteria) through high performance in each learning outcome.
- To achieve a Distinction, a student must have satisfied all the Distinction criteria (and therefore the Pass and Merit criteria), and these define outstanding performance across the unit as a whole.

The award of a Pass is a defined level of performance and cannot be given solely on the basis of a student completing assignments. Students who do not satisfy the Pass criteria should be reported as Unclassified.

7.1.2 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 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 achieved