



South Eastern Regional College

Higher National Programme Regulations (QCF)

2017-18

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1 Introduction

These regulations apply to all Pearson QCF HNC/HND awards offered by the College. It should be read in conjunction with the General Programme Regulations in the HE 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 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 Moodle sites. 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

3 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.

4 Duration of the QCF Award

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

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

The total number of credits normally required for a Pearson HNC Diploma is 120 credits. The credits are made up of mandatory core units and units selected by the programme team. The Pearson HNC programme must contain a minimum of 65 credits at level 4.

The total number of credits normally required for a Pearson HND Diploma is 240 credits. The credits are made up of mandatory core units and units selected by the programme team. The Pearson HND programme must contain a minimum of 65 credits at level 4 and 125 credits at level 5 or above.

Students undertaking an HND who fail to successfully complete the full qualification may be awarded an HNC, if their credit achievement permits.

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 information about Higher Education SOP. Student choice in specialist units will be determined by level of demand and availability of resources including staffing.

5 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 SERC Admission SOP in the key policies and procedures section of the SERC website.

5.1 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 will need to demonstrate one of the following on entry:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) B2 or;• IELTS 6.0: minimum of 5.5 in all skills, or;• PTE 51 or;• Or equivalent (Examples of equivalent qualifications would be a GCSE in English, Level 3 Programmes, Essential Skills in Literacy Level 2, ESOL Level 2 or another qualifications gained at an Institution within the UK).

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

5.2 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 Accreditation of Prior Learning SOP within the HE Programme SOP.

6 Submission of Coursework, Examination and Assessment – QCF Programmes

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 on Moodle and this will allow the student to check their own work for plagiarism prior to submission. 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 at the locations stated in the HE Handbook. It is the student's responsibility to ask for a receipt. The receipt sheet is found in the Appendices in the HE Handbook.

6.3 Assessment grading – formative and summative

Once an assignment has been submitted as required, it will be marked, the achieved criterion (ia) will be identified on the front cover sheet and there will be written feedback for improvement from the subject tutor. This formative assessment will enable students to make improvements to consolidate a Pass or attain a higher grade. The work will be returned to the student within three weeks. 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 there will be one opportunity to achieve or improve the criteria awarded. This is the summative assessment. The work should be resubmitted one week following the original return by the tutor. The original assignment plus the updates should be resubmitted. This opportunity is only available if the assignment has been submitted within the deadlines set. It is not expected that students are offered opportunities to revisit assignments at this stage of the assessment process unless approved by the Programme Coordinator.

6.4 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 graded as normal with the criterion (ia) met identified on the front cover sheet and written feedback from the subject 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 Board; taking into account any mitigating circumstances that may have been submitted.

6.5 Resubmissions

Every assignment contributes to the final qualification grade, therefore, the Programme Coordinator can authorise an opportunity for a student to resubmit evidence to meet the assessment criteria targeted by an assignment.

A student may be offered a resubmission if they have not met all of the criteria (Pass, Merit or Distinction) available in an assignment. Resubmissions can only be offered if:

- The student has met the initial deadlines set in the assignment or has met an agreed deadline extension
- The assessor judges that the student has fully attempted to achieve all targeted learning outcomes in their original submission
- The assessor judges the student will be able to provide improved evidence without further guidance
- The assessor has authenticated the evidence submitted for assessment.

If the student summative submission was 'late' and a resubmission is **offered this will be capped at a Pass and is offered only to achieve the Pass criteria.**

The Programme Coordinator must make available for the External Examiner a list of all resubmissions and submit for review and discussion at the Examination Board.

A new assignment brief must be issued to students for whom a resubmission has been authorised. Any evidence produced by the student in their original submission that did meet the criteria remains valid and may be used for the resubmission assignment brief. Any assignment briefs used for resubmissions must be internally verified before being issued.

Procedure for resubmission

The Programme Coordinator must:

- Record the resubmission using relevant assessment documentation
- Students will have 15 working days to submit the resubmission assessment
- The student must undertake the resubmission with no further guidance
- Only one opportunity for re-assessment of each assessment criterion and Merit and Distinction descriptor will be permitted
- The original evidence submitted for the assessment can remain valid and be extended, or may need to be replaced partially or in full
- Every effort will be made to schedule resubmissions so that they do not affect other assessments.

On some occasions the resubmission of the assignment may be under supervised conditions, even if this was not necessary for the original assessment. For example, this may be necessary to ensure that plagiarism cannot take place.

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

Assessment grids presented at Examination and Progress Boards must show the history of the assessment i.e. summative grades, late submission, resubmission and repeat units.

6.6 Repeat Units

Where a student has met all of the resubmission condition, but has still not achieved the targeted Pass criteria following resubmission, the Examination Board may authorise a repeat unit opportunity to meet the required Pass criteria or offer one **final** resubmission of Pass criteria if it is agreed that it is necessary, appropriate and fair to do so.

The Examination Board must **only** authorise a repeat unit in circumstances where they believe it is necessary, appropriate and fair to do so. When repeating a unit:

- The student must study the unit again normally with attendance
- The overall grade for a successfully completed repeat unit is capped at a Pass for that unit
- The student will have one opportunity to repeat a unit and can repeat up to two units in a programme
- The standard rules regarding assessment will apply to students who are repeating units, although the assessments that they submit will be treated as first submissions
- The EE is likely to want to include repeat unit assessments in the review sample.

Any evidence previously produced by the student for the unit being repeated that did meet the Pass criteria remains valid and may be used for assignments within the repeat unit. Students who are repeating a unit only need to generate evidence for any Pass criteria that they did not receive in their previous submissions.

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 circumstances 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 course work to be submitted following the August examination board. These fees will apply where there is resubmission without attendance.

7.1 Note on awards of Pass, Merit or Distinction criteria

The grading of Pearson BTEC Higher National qualifications is at the unit and qualification level. Each successfully completed unit will be graded as a pass, merit or distinction. All pass criteria must be achieved in each unit to obtain a pass in the unit. All merit and distinction grades must be achieved at least once in the unit to obtain that grade. While each assessment opportunity does not need to incorporate all the merit or distinction descriptors there will be more than one occasion in each unit to attempt these grades.

7.2 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">• pass requirements achieved• all merit grade descriptors achieved
In order to achieve a distinction in a unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• pass and merit requirements achieved• all distinction grade descriptors achieved