DOCUMENT DETAILS

Document Name:	**HE Assessment Policy**			
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Document author	Claire Barton			
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Applicability	Students	X	Staff	X
	Governors		Other	
Summary	This document explains the ways in which assessment is conducted at HE levels and how classification grades are derived.			

DOCUMENT CONSULTATION & APPROVAL

Consultation person / body	**Date passed**
NA	

Approval body	**Date approved**
HEAB	Nov 25

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

A significant negative impact has been identified in the following area and a full impact assessment / risk assessment is available.

Equality & diversity	No
GDPR	No
Health & safety	No
Safeguarding	No

Friendly version of policy available	No

POLICY CHANGES

Key updates	**Impact**	**Section reference**
Job title update.		
Appendix 2 removed from 3.1	There is no appendix 2 so nothing to link to	3.1
Clarity on using Module specifications added to 3.2	To ensure staff are aware of the process to change the agreed	3.2

	assessments from the module specifications	
Link to BTEC quality assurance guides	To ensure staff are clear on where to access quality assurance guides for BTEC	3.3
Clarity on programme handbooks for HN's added and minor grammatical adjustments	To ensure all staff are clear on what they need to provide to staff	4.0
Reference to BTEC formative assessment removed	To ensure formative assessment is promoted for all HE courses	5.1
Removed: and thus is provisional and can be overridden by the Assessment Board.	This could appear confusing to staff.	5.2
Removed 'It is not expected that students are offered opportunities to revisit assignments at this stage of the assessment process unless approved by the Programme/ Course Leader. ' As this is not in line with OU and NTU guidance	This could appear to staff that they can offer a resubmission for a degree or FdA student when they cannot	5.2
Removed 'If student work has *consistently* poor spelling, grammar or language it should not ordinarily be accepted for marking but should be returned to the student to be corrected. The student must be given a deadline by which to correct the work.	Not in adherence with university partners guidance.	5.3
Added section	To ensure clarity with university submission procedures	5.5
• Removed: For NTU and Open University programmes, anonymous marking of first submissions is recommended to negate any sense of subjectivity or bias, or unintentional or inadvertent influence that confounds overall judgements about quality of work alone. This can be affected by identifying students' work by college ID numbers until the point at which work is returned to them in person. There may be circumstances where this is not possible such as where the student is assessed in the personal presence of their marker.	This is not possible with the small and personalised projects we offer	6
Appendix	Be clear on assessment limits for University and differences for H.N's word count allowances	Appendix

1. CONTEXT AND PURPOSE

Assessment of student produced work is the necessary process by which this College can ascribe and measure outcomes for students. These present summative grades to determine an overall or final classification of ability for everyone, across all HE level programmes.[1] The process also gives an opportunity for staff to consider the effectiveness of their teaching.

Overall aims and principles of assessment

- Nottingham College's Quality Team will strategically review and support processes in HE assessment to co-ordinate and shape more uniform practices across provision.
- Course teams will review their own assessments at course committees twice yearly to demonstrate that reviewed data and other feedback has been considered and acted upon.
- Assessments should support the wider development of all students, beyond their course curriculum such as critical and creative thinking, reflection, and social skills as well as employability.
- Feedback from assessments will offer direct developmental advice on how students can improve. It will also be given in a timely manner to be built upon in future work in the most appropriate format for both formative and summative assessments.

2. ASSESSMENT IN TEACHING AND LEARNING PRACTICE

A variety of methods, approaches, and tasks will ensure that students are able to achieve. They also present familiarity with those expected at higher levels and offer intrigue to stimulate as well as replicating real world skills important beyond academic study. These may include:

Examinations	Coursework	Practical assessments	Presentations
Written Open exams	Written assignment/ Essays	Oral assessment	Internal
Written Closed exams	Reports	Skills assessment	Externally presented
Written Timeconstrained papers/ case study questions	Projects	Performance	Videos of workplacement
On-line exams	Portfolios of evidence	Production of artefact	Posters of research
	Dissertations		Formal debates

All will be sufficiently challenging in accordance with external validation and agreed levels of study to align student achievement with a desire for all to progress to the next level. They will also adhere to all relevant GDPR and data protection requirements.

3. PLANNING

This Policy recognises that any assessment or assessments needs careful, considered and deliberate planning by academic staff and teachers to ensure efficacy and substantiated

[1] For further advice, guidance and support on concepts and notions of assessment see QAA 2018: https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/advice-and-guidance/assessment

outcomes for students. As such, planning should reflect concepts of spacing, balancing and diversity of assessment:

3.1 For NTU programmes

- All assessments should be strategically planned at course level to enable students to demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes. This is evidenced on the Course Assessment and Feedback plan in the Assessment Booklet.
- A range of formative and summative assessments should be created to generate the furthest opportunity for students to develop prior to final award or classification; the number of formative and summative assessments is recommended to be the same.
- The recommended number of assignments per module is a maximum of one, or fewer, in order to prevent over-assessment and unnecessary replication of evidence when evaluating ability against learning outcomes. Respective weightings are the prerogative of Course Leaders.
- Course teams should produce an assessment plan for students to detail: handout and handing in dates for all assignments; the expected date when feedback is available; and the precise weighting of assessment grades towards overall classification.

3.2 For Open University programmes • Diagnostic assessment is recommended to provide indication of learner's readiness for study and to identify learning barriers and needs before commencement.

- Course Programme handbooks should contain evidence of an assessment scheme as approved by validation agreements.
- A variety of assessments should be used, and the method should be consistent with agreed subject benchmarks where available.
- Scheduling, volume of assessments, and their weighting must be appropriate and reviewed by course teams to monitor effectiveness; these are set out in programme specifications and detail added in module specifications both cannot be changed without application to the OU for a major, minor or moderate change.
- Regulations for Validated Awards of the Open University contains specific matters; this is available on the HE area of Studentnet, the College's VLE.

3.3 BTEC Assessment and grading Assessment tracking and recording

It is essential to track and record student achievement throughout BTEC programmes. All assessment must be recorded in such a way that:

- assessment evidence is clearly measured against national standards;
- student progress can be accurately tracked;
- the assessment process can be reliably verified;
- there is clear evidence of the safety of certification.

This enables a holistic approach to assessment of the programme and organises the sequence of delivery and assessment of units.

Staff should prepare assessment tracking to record all assessment activities for the qualification on a unit by-unit basis, at criterion level and incorporate time for regular formative feedback. This helps to motivate students and provide learning targets and goals.

Tracking of student progress, recording what each student has achieved and what still must be done is vital. This helps to ensure full coverage of the units and provide opportunities for grading. It also helps enable internal verification and provide samples for External Examiners

(EEs) and other external audits as required. BTEC guidance documents on quality assurance practices can be found https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/btec-higher-nationals/about/quality-assurance-process.html as well as individual subject specific guidance for assessment and planning here https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/btec-higher-nationals.html .

4. ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Assessment criteria form the very basis for judgments upon which assessment outcomes rest. Therefore:

- All assessment criteria are provided to students at the earliest possible opportunity following induction so they are clear as to the precise measures their work will be evaluated against and the specific context that their work applies to.
- The means as to how students are assessed will be clearly and accurately provided at the commencement of the course of study and include: the learning outcome to be assessed; whether the assessment is formative or summative; word count; submission deadlines and penalties for lateness; how and where to submit; and information on how feedback is to be communicated when work is returned.
- The production of an Assessment Booklet for NTU asserts adherence to the above.
- The inclusion of an assessment schedule in Programme Handbooks for Open University programmes confirms adherence to the above.
- The production of an assessment plan shared in Programme Handbooks is required for BTEC HN programmes and adheres to the above assessment guidance.
- Assessments are ordinarily submitted to Turnitin via the College's VLE except where assessment artefacts or assessment instruments prevent this.

5. FEEDBACK TO STUDENTS

5.1 Formative Assessment

It is the responsibility of course teams to ensure that feedback on all assessments is made in a timely, developmental, and constructive manner. This ensures that students can develop and aspire to elevate their future assessment outcomes through independence with aspirations to progress or transfer to the next level. Requirements to uphold this are therefore:

- Students will receive individual feedback and an individual grade within 15 working days of the stipulated submission date. Where formative assessments are concerned it is recommended that students receive feedback in shorter time of exchange to allow them to incorporate and embrace developmental pointers more quickly, enhancing their potential to utilise advice in future work.
- As above, the *latest* date that feedback should be provided to students should be clearly stated in the assessment and feedback schedule. It is considered that any deviation from the date set be considered unusual and where mitigating circumstances are profound since timeliness of feedback is essential to student support and development.
- Implicitly, therefore, course teams should review and monitor the exact timeliness of feedback at every opportunity to or at key junctures in the academic year.

5.2 Summative assessment

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. However, students should be aware that summative assessment is subject to confirmation by the Assessment Board.

Assessors should annotate on the learner work where the evidence supports their grading decisions against the unit grading criteria.

Students will need to be familiar with the assessment criteria so that they can understand the quality of what is required. They should be informed of the differences between grading criteria so that higher skills can be achieved.

All summative assessments, where possible, are to be made via the College VLE and Turnitin.

5.3 Marking spelling, punctuation, and grammar
It is good practice for Assessors to "mark" spelling and grammar, i.e., correct mistakes on student work and expect the student to either correct them (at the formative feedback stage) or note them (at the summative feedback stage).

5.4 Resubmissions for BTEC programmes
Regarding BTEC resubmissions please see the latest BTEC Centre Guide to Quality Assurance and Assessment Levels 4 to 7 as there are differences between QCF and RQF qualifications.

5.5 Resubmissions/late submissions for OU/NTU Programmes
Course teachers are not permitted to allow any resubmissions or late submission after the designated submission deadlines of students work prior to the stipulated examination board. At the examination board they may present students who may require a resubmission in line with agreed procedures a capped or uncapped submission this will be agreed with a specific deadline sent to learners from the HE office. Course teachers may be able to offer some support and guidance but if teaching is required students may need to repeat the module/year depending on the amount of work needing to be submitted. For detail on the allowance timelines for late submissions see HE Assessment Guidance for Students, NTU Quality Handbook https://www.ntu.ac.uk/about-us/teaching/academic-development-and-quality/quality-management/quality-handbook or Open University's latest Handbook for Validated Awards https://university.open.ac.uk/validation-partnerships/about-ou-validation/ou-handbook-validated-awards

6. FAIRNESS AND TRANSPARENCY IN ASSESSMENT
The absolute objectivity and equity in assessment is desired in all student marking:

- Exceptions to designed and planned assessments may occur where one or more students are disabled, and the college has a duty under the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments should a disadvantage with non-disabled peers be substantiated.

7. MARKING AND MODERATION

- Marking and subsequent moderation of marking is to be routinely achieved in a uniform way across the College. As such, overall and collective standards are upheld and quality assurance can be performed most effectively to ensure consistency and prevent importune need to reconsider outcomes by individual students or at collective, module level.
- For validated programmes documentary evidence of moderation is imperative and should be retained by the Course Leader. This includes a moderation plan to present overall moderation moments such as days and meetings. Moderation of assessments is recorded on appropriate Moderation forms A and B, accordingly, with: A to moderate all assessments for suitability before handout and delivery; and form B in

conjunction with second or ‘double’ marking to detail the overall sample moderation and comments concerning the whole sample.

- For validated programmes, the sample size to be moderated on all programmes is 25% or a minimum of five pieces, including all referred or failed work and a broad range of grades (or as stated on form B). This size may be discretionally increased should the marker be in their first year of teaching and marking or new to the actual level of delivery.
- The process of moderating the sample of students’ work offers the opportunity for advised and developmental feedback for the marker with associated actions to be completed before the work is returned to students. Moderation is co-ordinated by the Course Leader who will moderate others’ marked work as part of duties; his or her marking shall be moderated by a colleague with appropriate and sufficient disciplinary expertise to perform this role.
- In exceptional circumstances, where the moderator’s own evaluative judgements diverge strongly from the original marker’s, the Course Leader should reconcile through review and a deliberate, documented course of action. This would usually be resolved by a third ‘blind’ marker, Exam Board decision and in consultation with External Examiners.
- Accordingly, grades cannot be challenged by students who are referred to guidance in the Academic Appeals Procedure.
- Where formative assessments are used, and in the desire to return work more quickly, moderation is not normally required unless the teacher is in their first year of teaching, or new to the actual level of delivery, or where supportive development is required.

7.1 For BTEC HN programmes’ internal verification sample

During the programme, sampling from Assessors must cover the following as a minimum:

- Every assessor
- Every unit
- Work from every assignment
- Every assessment site (for multi-site and consortia centres).

There is not a requirement that all learners must have been internally verified during the lifetime of a programme and there is no prescribed sample size, but a well-constructed sample should consider:

- the full range of assessment decisions: pass, merit, distinction criteria, and not yet achieved, should all be included in the sample if possible
- the experience of the Assessor: new or inexperienced Assessors should have more work internally verified than an experienced Assessor
- new BTEC programmes: when a unit or programme is first introduced, the sample should be increased
- the size of the group of learners
- known issues with internal verification: these may have been identified previously

8. SUPPORT FOR ASSESSMENT

It is the advice of this Policy that all staff involved in assessment processes are suitably qualified, experienced, and supported to uphold highest principles. Assessment and feedback practices are informed by reflection on professional practice, vocational awareness, and employer input. Training and development in assessment design, implementation and evaluating is provided through internal and external opportunities to create an ethos of continual improvement.

Please see Appendix for guidance on assessment tariffs and standardised College wide tariffs for programme design and planning.

9. STRATEGIC REVIEW

The review and monitoring of collective provision and approaches to assessment is necessary to achieve the following broader objectives to enhance quality across provision. The College will aim:

- To proffer standardised and consensual implementation of assessment principles regardless of discipline, notwithstanding autonomy afforded to ensure the context of learning is steadfastly related to vocational and technical areas.
- To implement most rigorous assessment policies and practices on all programmes.
- To support the design, approval, monitoring and review of all forms of assessment.
- To evaluate how assessments uphold higher educational standards and promote developmental learning in all areas.

As such, it is the responsibility of the Academic Board and relevant committees in the Academic Governance Framework for HE to assure the necessary implementation of the above objectives by:

- Considered and planned ratification and approval of assessment decisions.
- Open dialogue and feedback to regarding assessment design and decisions.
- Analysis and monitoring of all data sources to evaluate the impact of assessment decisions.
- Suggestions for continuing staff development and training and support to improve assessment design, implementation, and decisions.

Links to other policies:

HE Teaching and Learning Strategy
HE Assessment Guidance for Students

APPENDIX – ADVICE AND GUIDANCE ON DESIGNING ASSESSMENT TARIFFS

Assessment tariffs are the subject of continuing review in the sector, with this College wishing to promote similar or College wide tariffs across all HE for summative assessments. The choice of assessment remains at the discretion of the module and subject team; a diverse menu of assessment approaches should be offered, as an integral aspect of good assessment practice. The word count or equivalent ought to reflect the length, or time, that students need to achieve the learning outcomes, acknowledging that sometimes the skill is in the ability to be concise.

In the main, standard modules of 20 credits are proposed to be delivered over one term or semester. If appropriate, multiples can be exercised of 40 or 60 credits such as final major project or dissertation usually comprising 60 credits.

Assessment instrument and equivalent at level	Essay (20 credits)	Oral Presentation (20 credits)	Written Examination (20 credits)	Reflective journal (20 credits)	FMP/ Dissertation (60 credits)
Level 4 (stage 1)	2,500 words	10 minutes	2 hours	2,500 words	N/A
Level 5 (stage 2)	3,000 words	15 minutes	2.5 hours	3,000 words	6,000 words
Level 6 (stage 3)	4,000 words	20 minutes	3 hours	4,000 words	6,000 to 8,000 words

Where more than one assessment is used per module, then the notional volume is determined by halving the volume of each assessment ie an essay of 1,250 words and a presentation of 5 minutes would be equivalent to a single assessment for level 4.

Although this list is not exhaustive, and recognising that during course design and approval stages, different cases will be made, the notions above can help understand how more equitable HE wide approaches can be arrived at.

For Open University programmes documentation to support design from proposal stage to module writing is found in their templates section for validation at: https://www.open.ac.uk/about/validation-partnerships/supportinginformation/partners/programme-validation-and-revalidation

The QAA's advice and guidance on Assessment should also be consulted at: https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/advice-and-guidanceassessment.pdf?sfvrsn=ca29c181_4

Assessment limits for University Courses

All assessments should adopt the following approach to limits and penalties, to ensure consistency of experience across the HE provision

- Use of a word count or timing limit with +10% margin for tolerance. Beyond this margin, no further content will be marked. Students may therefore be disadvantaged for failing to be concise and for failing to conclude their work within the limit specified.
- Students must state their word count for all written work. Incorrectly stating the word count may result in an accusation of academic misconduct but no additional penalties are applied just that content that exceeds the word or timing limit will not be marked.

- There is no additional penalty for work submitted below the word count, but students are advised that submitting work significantly below the word count risks failing to meet the assessment criteria. (The word count refers to everything in the main body of the text, including headings, tables, figures, in-text citations, quotes, lists etc. Items not included in the word count are titles, contents pages, executive summaries or abstracts, appendices, bibliographies, or reference lists.)

Assessment Guidance for Higher National Courses

- It is good practise to provide a desired word count for HN courses in line with our above assessment procedure but students must not be penalised for exceeding a word count and this must be made clear to students. Consideration must be given to the time and context of the task as well as the student and teacher work load in completing lengthy pieces of work. This said a firm word count MUST NOT be given for HN courses in line with the Quality guide https://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/BTEC-Higher-Nationals/btec-higher-nationals-centre-guide-to-quality-assurance-and-assessment.pdf