



Blackpool and The Fylde College

Regulations: SQA Higher National Programmes

Version: 1.0

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Introduction: September 2016

Review: September 2022

REVISION HISTORY

Ver	Date	Author	Description

APPROVAL

Ver	Committee	Date Approved	Comments
1.0	HEAB	06/07/2016	

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1. SCOPE AND PURPOSE

1.1 OVERARCHING PROCEDURES

These regulations can be seen as a subset of the Blackpool and The Fylde College's HE Taught Award Regulations and as such the following sections also apply to the delivery of SQA Higher National programmes at the College.

- Academic Appeals
- Admissions
- Academic Malpractice
- Accreditation of Prior Learning
- Assessment and Feedback (IV, moderation and standardisation)
- Boards of Examiners
- Personal Mitigating Circumstances & Interruption of Study Procedure.

Anyone accessing this document should always do so in conjunction with SQA's assessment guidance document¹ and with the SQA Arrangements for HNC and HND document.²

1.2 SQA DELIVERY

The regulations in this document govern Higher National programmes and are intended for Blackpool and The Fylde College staff and students.

Every SQA Higher National programme delivered at Blackpool and The Fylde College, is governed by the set of standard assessment regulations set out in this document.

The standard regulations are applicable, without modification, unless:

Exceptions have been approved by the College for whole programmes, e.g. to accommodate the requirements of Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs). Where this is the case, the exceptions are recorded in the Programme Specification and Handbook.

An individual student's entry profile and/or study choices necessitate changes, e.g. where units undertaken as part of a student prior study at a different institution replace credit-bearing Blackpool and The Fylde College units. Further details relating

¹ SQA Guide to Assessment: July 2015

² Arrangements for: HNC & HND Nautical Science Validation date: June 2006 Version: 01

to this can be found in B8 – Accreditation of Prior Learning Procedure of the HE Taught Award Regulations.

All students sign at enrolment to accept the assessment regulations prevailing at the time and any subsequent approved modifications during their registration period. The assessment regulations are made available to students through the VLE. All students are notified of any changes made to the assessment regulations during their studies.

1.3 KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

HE Academic Board (HEAB): to approve the Blackpool and The Fylde College Regulations: SQA Higher National Programmes.

Academic Standards and Development Committee (ASDC): to review the SQA Regulations periodically and approve amendments.

Programme Board of Examiners: to implement the assessment regulations.

2. REGULATIONS

2.1 PERIOD OF REGISTRATION

The maximum period which a student may normally take to complete the programme, is set out in the individual programme specification.

The period taken to complete the programme may only be changed when an application is approved through B1 Personal Mitigating Circumstances and Interruption of Study Procedure of the College's Academic Regulations.

2.2 ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

2.2.1 FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

Students working at higher levels should be capable of undertaking independent study and research, developing strategies to improve their own performance, supported by teaching staff.

Formative assessment involves both the tutor and the student in a two-way conversation about their progress and takes place prior to summative assessment. It does not confirm achievement of grades, but focuses on helping the student to reflect on their learning and improve their performance. The main function of formative assessment is to provide feedback to enable the student to make improvements to consolidate a 'Pass', or attain a higher grade. 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. Students are provided with

formative feedback during the process of assessment and are empowered to act to improve their performance. Feedback on formative assessment must be constructive and provide clear guidance and actions for improvement. It is good practice to plan for at least one formal opportunity to provide written formative assessment feedback on each assessment, at a point when students will have had the opportunity to provide evidence towards all the assessment criteria targeted.

2.2.2 SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT AND DEADLINES

Summative assessment is a final assessment decision on an assignment task in relation to the assessment criteria of each unit. It is the definitive assessment and recording of the student's achievement. Tutors should annotate the student's work where the evidence supports their grading decisions against the unit grading criteria.

Subsequent to the original publication the academic team will not amend published summative assessment deadlines for an individual student unless an approved application through B1 Personal Mitigating Circumstances and Interruption of Study Procedure of the College's Academic Regulations is in place.

Under certain extraordinary circumstances, for example illness to tutor(s) or availability of particular resources, the relevant Head of School may amend assessment deadlines for a cohort of students in order to support the assessment of a unit.³

Students who have been unsuccessful in a unit but are within 5% of achieving a pass will be provided with an oral examination by the first and second marker. The markers will determine whether a student can provide additional evidence in order to obtain the minimum pass grade. This discussion and evidence must be documented and retained by way of digital audio file and clearly described on the College Stage 2 moderation form.

2.3 NON AND LATE SUBMISSION

Failure to attend an examination, to submit or a late submission of an assessment by the published summative deadline will result in a grade of 'None Submission' (N/S) being recorded. This will be treated as the first attempt at the assessment, any further attempt will be classed as a reassessment attempt.

2.4 REASSESSMENT

³ HE Taught Award Regulations: Part A - A4.3.3 Amendments to Deadlines

Where a student has been successful in an assessment no further opportunity to improve a grade, after the published summative submission date, is permitted.

Where a student had failed a unit, a grade of 'Refer' will be applied.

Students should be provided with a minimum of four weeks between an original failed assessment attempt and their reassessment attempt. It is the programme leader's responsibility to ensure appropriate support for students, including opportunities for appropriate consolidation and remediation of learning after the summative assessment.

Students who have failed a unit will be provided with a maximum of one reassessment opportunity for each failed unit or part thereof. Where the unit contains more than one assessment, only the failed assessment can be reassessed i.e. passed assessments cannot be improved upon. The SQA Guide to Assessment Document ⁴ states that a further reassessment opportunity may be provided to students in 'exceptional circumstances'. The College does not permit further reassessment however where an application under the College's Part B1 - Personal Mitigating Circumstances and Interruption of Study Procedure is approved by the College's PMC Panel an opportunity to change a deadline or examination date may be permitted.

All reassessments must be reported to the relevant programme board of examiners.

The unit tutor and programme leader will at the start of each stage of study provide all students with an assessment schedule for that stage, the schedule will also include the points at which reassessments will take place.

Reassessment briefs will always differ from the original brief, this includes the reassessment of Graded Units.

2.5 AWARDS

All named awards are based on credit. The credits required for each named award are defined in the Programme Specification for the programme concerned.

⁴ http://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/25GuideToAssessment.pdf

2.6 PERIODIC REVIEW

2.6.1 ANNUAL PROGRAMME REVIEW PROCESS

The Annual Programme Review (APR) is a cornerstone of quality assurance and enhancement in the College and is central to ensuring that the learning opportunities made available to students enable the intended learning outcomes of the programme to be achieved. The APR also evaluates student attainment of academic standards and allows programme teams and academic schools to confirm that their portfolio aligns with the College mission and strategic priorities, and that the programme remains current and relevant. The APR is at its heart a means of continuously enhancing the student experience.

Self-evaluation requires the programme team to reflect collectively, honestly and to stand back and consider objectively both strengths and weaknesses. For the process to have any real worth, it has to be owned by all involved and should not simply be issues-driven nor an attempt to paper over any cracks.

The APR process is cyclical, in that it looks back specifically at the previous year of delivery, and looks ahead to the next year through a Quality Improvement Plan which identifies strategic areas for enhancement. This is continuously reviewed through the Programme Quality Meeting process.

2.6.2 PROGRAMME SPECIFICATIONS

A programme specification for each SQA Higher National Programme delivered at Blackpool and The Fylde College is published on the College's website. Each document relates to the aims and outcomes of the programme, how it is taught, its structure and how students are assessed (e.g. exams, dissertations, portfolios or projects). Programme specifications are reviewed and where appropriate amended every five years to ensure that the structure of the programme is up to date, meeting the needs of students, employers and the College's HE Strategy.