



HE Taught Award Regulations: Part A

Version: 1.8.2

Academic Year: 2019-2020

Revision History

Ver	Date	Author	Description
1.0	October 2013	Peter Greenall	Introduction Of Sections A1, A2 and A4.11
1.1	January 2013	Peter Greenall	Introduction Of Sections A7 and A8
1.2	March 2014	Scott Smith	Introduction Of Section A5
1.3	July 2014	Scott Smith	Introduction Of Section A4.10
1.4	December 2014	Scott Smith	Introduction Of Sections A3 and A4.8
1.5	May 2015	Scott Smith	Introduction Of Section A6
1.6	June 2015	Scott Smith	Introduction Of Section A4
1.7	February 2016	Scott Smith	Introduction of Section A9
1.7.1	July 2016	Scott Smith	<p>Amendments to titles and a change to viva voce (A4.1.14) that encompass the new SQA Higher National regulations</p> <p>Changes to section A1.3 to amend the awarding power status of the College.</p> <p>In section A3.4.1 the addition of a statement setting out responsibility for the approval of College Awards</p>
1.7.2	December 2016	Scott Smith	Small iterative changes. Alignment sector and partner changes
1.8	October 2017	Scott Smith	<p>Updates relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of assessment required to award a degree posthumously • The introduction of the College's HEAR • Clarification of when condonation can be awarded • In line with sector and QAA practice, the renaming of Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) to Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) • The removal of a right of academic appeal against admission • Some small typographical updates

1.8.1	March 2019	Scott Smith	Amendments of all references to HFCE, KIS, OFFA and Quality Code to the appropriate body or section. Addition of a section relating to updating.
1.8.2	March 2020	Johnny Davison	Addition of a sub section relating to force majeure

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A1 INTRODUCTION

A1.1 MISSION AND VALUES

College mission: *“Inspirational learning creating outstanding futures”*

Blackpool and the Fylde College serves individuals, communities and employers by providing excellent learning opportunities that enhance social development and contribute to economic success. Our College transforms lives by inspiring students to achieve their potential in a supportive learning environment.

College values:

1. Placing the learner at the heart of all we do
2. Showing fairness, courtesy and mutual respect
3. Learning, teaching and assessment as the key to our success
4. Empowering others to achieve their full potential
5. Working collaboratively to achieve excellence and growth

A1.2 AWARDING POWERS

Blackpool and The Fylde College currently holds Foundation Degree Awarding Powers these regulations apply in their entirety to awards made by the College. Where awards are made in partnership with a Higher Education Institution or through a national awarding body, sections of these regulations apply as stipulated through an agreed delegation of responsibility.

A1.3 SCOPE AND APPLICATION

These regulations outline the structures, policies and procedures that contribute to academic quality assurance and enhancement at the Blackpool and The Fylde College.

Unless explicitly stated otherwise, these regulations apply to all taught higher education programmes at Blackpool and The Fylde College. Where Blackpool and The Fylde College programmes lead to awards of other institutions, these regulations shall apply to the maximum extent possible within the requirements of the relevant awarding body, but in the case of significant conflict of regulations those of the awarding body shall take precedence. Where practicable, Blackpool and The Fylde College will seek formal recognition of these regulations by its partner institutions.

These regulations form part of the contractual agreement made between Blackpool and The Fylde College and students undertaking a Higher Education programme of study at the College. The Higher Education Taught Award Regulations are updated annually; students therefore are subject to the academic regulations applicable at the start of their programme and for its duration. Students who either interrupt their studies or progress from a foundation degree to a top-up programme will be considered as a new enrolment and, wherever possible, will be subject to the annually updated regulations.

A1.4 COMPETENT AUTHORITY

The final authority regarding interpretation and implementation of Blackpool and The Fylde College policies and regulations shall be with the HE Academic Board.

The HE Academic Board may, by minuted resolution, constitute sub-committees to administer the operation of the whole of these regulations, or any part thereof. Unless the resolution creating such a sub-committee explicitly limits its powers, each/any sub-committee shall have the authority to decide matters on behalf of the HE Academic Board and shall report its decisions in writing to be included in the minutes of the next scheduled HE Academic Board meeting.

Where the HE Academic Board is satisfied that these regulations result in a significant disadvantage to any student who was already enrolled on his/her programme prior to the date of implementation or change, it shall have discretion to authorise variations from these regulations to ensure that the student is treated fairly. All such variations must be explicitly authorised in writing by the HE Academic Board or sub-committee. The Blackpool and The Fylde Committees Handbook defines the membership and terms of reference for the HE Academic Board.

A1.4.1 FORCE MAJEURE

Blackpool and The Fylde College will do all that it reasonably can to provide educational services as described on its website or in the prospectus or other documents issued by it to appropriately enrolled students. Sometimes circumstances beyond our control mean that we cannot provide such educational services. This might be because of, for example:

- industrial action by staff or third parties
- acts of god
- acts of terrorism
- epidemics, pandemics or any other like events

In these circumstances, Blackpool and The Fylde College will take all reasonable steps to minimise the resultant disruption to those services and to affected students by, for example, offering affected students the chance to undertake learning remotely or at a different campus, or by delivering a modified version of the same course, but to the full extent that is possible under the general law Blackpool and The Fylde College excludes liability for any loss and/or damage suffered by any applicant or student.

A2 STRUCTURE

A2.1 OVERVIEW

These academic regulations are arranged in two sections:

Section A Blackpool and The Fylde College Taught Award Regulations: this section contains the core precepts and regulations of the College's higher education provision.

Section B Operational Policies and Procedures: detailed implementation protocols, flowcharts, etc. Relating to the implementation of policies and regulations.

A2.2 REVISING AUTHORITY

Section A of this document (Blackpool and The Fylde College Taught Award Regulations) may only be changed by minuted resolution of the full HE Academic Board or constituted sub-committees as outlined in A1.4 Competent Authority.

Authority to amend and update Section B is delegated to the Academic Standards and Development Committee (HE Academic Standards and Development Committee). This delegation may be revoked or amended by minuted resolution of the HE Academic Board. Minutes of the meetings of any Academic Standards and Development Committee meeting that amends or updates these sections must be copied to the next scheduled HE Academic Board for information.

The Academic Standards and Development Committee may, by minuted resolution, delegate its power to amend and/or update Section B of these regulations, or any part thereof, to sub-committee(s) or other bodies as it sees fit. Unless the resolution effecting such a delegation explicitly limits its powers, each/any bodies to which powers are delegated shall have the authority to decide matters on behalf of the Academic Standards and Development Committee and shall report its decisions in writing to be included in the minutes of the next scheduled Academic Standards and Development Committee meeting.

A definitive version of this document, including all revisions approved by the HE Academic Board, will be maintained by the HE Academic Registrar.

A2.3 ADMINISTRATION

These regulations are updated annually in-line with the revising authority requirements set out in A2.2. There are however instances that may require administrative amendments to be made both in year and in preparation for the

following academic year; these amendments are restricted to the updating of the academic year to which the section pertains and changes to named roles within the College. These changes may be undertaken with immediate effect, with the approval of the Director of Higher Education. A record of any administrative changes will be presented to the Academic Standards and Development Committee annually.

A3 AWARD DESIGN, VALIDATION AND REVIEW

A3.1 APPROPRIATE CONTENT

Blackpool and The Fylde College awards and constituent modules may focus on any area of academic discourse or of vocational and / or social interest, including areas that may involve controversial views or beliefs, subject to the following constraints:

- Study of the area of discourse selected must reasonably be considered to contribute to the programme learning outcomes.
- Study must not expose students or staff to significant risks of physical, mental, moral or spiritual harm.
- Curriculum design must allow for the testing, discussion and evaluation of any assertions made and of any implicit underlying assumptions, beliefs and values in the light of all available evidence.
- The right of staff and students to hold, express and promote personal views and/or beliefs must be protected, provided that any such expression is lawful and does not intrude unreasonably on others' rights to hold different views and/or beliefs.

A3.2 AWARD DESIGN

A3.2.1 PRINCIPLES

- All Blackpool and The Fylde College awards are consistent with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education which incorporates the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) 2008 and the Higher Education Credit Framework for England (2008).
- Awards are defined by a series of benchmarks relating to the general level of knowledge and skills required to register for the award, and the qualification, credit volume and study levels required to achieve the awards.
- To the greatest extent possible within the requirements of the Quality Code, the requirements of any relevant professional and/or statutory body, Blackpool and The Fylde College programmes are designed to have non-discriminatory programme outcomes and core competences.
- Blackpool and The Fylde College awards may be structured so that programmes incorporate intermediate awards with appropriate learning outcomes.
- Qualifications can only be conferred or recommended where a student has registered for and successfully completed a programme of study leading to an approved award.

- English is the primary language of learning and assessment for all awards except where the study area involves foreign languages.
- Where an award is recognised by and subject to the regulations of a professional regulatory or statutory body (PRSB) and there is a conflict between these regulations and those of the PRSB, then the regulations of the PRSB shall normally have precedence.

A3.2.2 MODULES, CREDITS AND LEVELS

The College defines its taught provision in terms of programmes, modules, credits and levels.

MODULES

Each module is self-contained with defined learning outcomes and a specified volume of credit at one level/intellectual standard only.

Modules can also stand alone as coherent credit bearing learning experiences in their own right.

Modules may have specified pre-requisites/precursors. Where these are stated, they may determine the order in which particular modules or combinations of modules are undertaken.

Essential elements of learning within a named programme award may be indicated through the specification of core/mandatory modules at validation. Such modules must be passed for the named award to be conferred.

Modules contributing to programmes leading to a professional qualification may integrate academic and professional components.

Blackpool and The Fylde College may, where academically sound, change the modules offered and/or the content of individual modules but in doing so will ensure that students who have legitimately registered for a named award will be able to follow an appropriate series of modules to qualify for the named award within the normal registration period.

Where appropriate and where specified in the relevant programme validation document students may be offered the opportunity to select from optional modules.

The total credits of all modules studied at any level of a programme must always equate to the requirements of the programme.

CREDITS

In determining the number of credits required to achieve an award, Blackpool and The Fylde College recognises one credit as equivalent to ten hours of notional academic learning time. A standard academic year of full-time study equates to 120 credits (1200 notional hours).

QUALIFICATION LEVELS

Each module is placed at one of four academic levels. These are:

LEVELS 3 – FURTHER EDUCATION

Certain programmes may contain modules at level 3. These modules contribute to HE awards only by providing underpinning knowledge and/or preparatory skills. They do not form part of the summative classification structure of any HE award.

These modules are allocated a level by reference to the challenge and content of comparable FE awards and have assessment strategies based on those of FE awards.

The following levels are defined by the framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ).

LEVEL 4

Level 4 modules provide the opportunity to demonstrate:

- Knowledge of the underlying concepts and principles associated with the area of study, and an ability to evaluate and interpret these within the context of that area of study
- An ability to present, evaluate and interpret qualitative and quantitative data, in order to develop lines of argument and make sound judgements in accordance with basic theories and concepts of their subject(s) of study.
- A Level 4 module should contribute substantially to the students' capacity to:
 - Evaluate the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems related to their area(s) of study and/or work
 - Communicate the results of their study/work accurately and reliably, and with structured and coherent arguments
 - Undertake further training and develop new skills within a structured and managed environment.
 - Demonstrate the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of some personal responsibility.

LEVEL 5

Level 5 modules provide the opportunity to demonstrate:

- Knowledge and critical understanding of the well-established principles of the area of study, and of the way in which those principles have developed
- Ability to apply underlying concepts and principles outside the context in which they were first studied, including, where appropriate, the application of those principles in an employment context
- Knowledge of the main methods of enquiry in the subject(s) relevant to the named award, and ability to evaluate critically the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems in the field of study
- An understanding of the limits of their knowledge, and how this influences analyses and interpretations based on that knowledge.

A Level 5 module should contribute substantially to the students' capacity to:

- Use a range of established techniques to initiate and undertake critical analysis of information, and to propose solutions to problems arising from that analysis
- Effectively communicate information, arguments and analysis in a variety of forms to specialist and non-specialist audiences, and deploy key techniques of the discipline effectively
- Undertake further training, develop existing skills and acquire new competences that will enable them to assume significant responsibility within organisations.
- Demonstrate the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and decision making.

LEVEL 6

Level 6 modules provide the opportunity to demonstrate:

- A systematic understanding of key aspects of their field of study, including acquisition of coherent and detailed knowledge, at least some of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of defined aspects of a discipline
- An ability to deploy accurately established techniques of analysis and enquiry within a discipline
- Conceptual understanding that enables the student:
 - to devise and sustain arguments, and/or to solve problems, using ideas and techniques, some of which are at the forefront of a discipline
 - to describe and comment upon particular aspects of current research, or equivalent advanced scholarship, in the discipline

- An appreciation of the uncertainty, ambiguity and limits of knowledge
- The ability to manage their own learning, and to make use of scholarly reviews and primary sources (for example, refereed research articles and/or original materials appropriate to the discipline).

A Level 6 module should contribute substantially to the students' ability to:

- Apply the methods and techniques that they have learned to review, consolidate, extend and apply their knowledge and understanding, and to initiate and carry out projects
- Critically evaluate arguments, assumptions, abstract concepts and data (that may be incomplete), to make judgements, and to frame appropriate questions to achieve a solution – or identify a range of solutions – to a problem
- Communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences.
- Demonstrate the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring:
 - The exercise of initiative and personal responsibility
 - Decision-making in complex and unpredictable contexts
 - The learning ability needed to undertake appropriate further training of a professional or equivalent nature.

A3.2.3 QUALIFICATION STRUCTURES

The range of qualifications offered by Blackpool and The Fylde College, and their structures in terms of their minimum content at various academic levels (based on a typical full-time academic year of 120 credits) are as listed in the following table:

Credits			
Award	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6
Blackpool and The Fylde College Certificate of Achievement (exit award)	120	-	-
Foundation Degree	120	120	-

The levels shown in the table above are minima and individual programme specifications may exceed the rigour indicated either by increasing the required number of credits at any level or by substituting credits at a higher level for credits at lower levels.

A3.2.4 CURRICULUM DESIGN

- Each qualification is designed to be a valid, coherent whole and to produce a distinctive, relevant outcome for the student whether or not it also provides a stepping-stone to another award.
- Each programme is intended to address the QAA Benchmark Statements in the relevant subject area at a level consistent with the award. Honours degrees are designed to comply fully with the Benchmarks unless a reasoned case can be made for departing from the standard. Lower awards are constructed so that they contribute in an appropriate manner to the academic progression towards an Honours degree.
- Foundation Degrees are designed to meet in full the expectations of the QAA Foundation Degree Characteristics Statement.
- All programme designs provide the opportunity to develop transferable skills. In some cases these are embedded within academic modules, in others they are taught separately.

A3.2.5 NAMING OF AWARDS

SUBJECT TITLE

Each award should bear a subject title reflecting its principal subject area, subject to the following criteria.

- Subject titles should reflect the subject area(s) of the majority of the material studied. The inclusion of material from another subject area, or from a narrower specialism within the principal subject area, amounting to 25% or less of the credits of an award should not be reflected in the subject title of the award.
- Blackpool and The Fylde College Certificate of Achievement awarded as contained awards of programmes leading to higher awards should normally be given a subject title appropriate to the study that an individual student has completed successfully. Where there is insufficient coherence to a student's successful study for a named award to be made, these awards may be made without a subject title.

AWARD TITLE - FOUNDATION DEGREE

Foundation degree programmes will lead to the award of either FdA, FdSc or FdEng.

- The award of FdA is generally used in art and design, the arts and humanities and areas of social science and business studies.

- The award of FdSc is generally used in areas of science, mathematics, their applications and in certain other disciplines of an analytical nature.
- The award of FdEng is reserved for programmes which provide a technologically broad based education with an emphasis on engineering applications.

A3.2.6 DESIGN GUIDELINES

Normally, the size of modules at all academic levels will be 20 credits. The use of double modules for substantial pieces of project work, dissertations, etc. is permitted. Level 4 and level 5 modules should not normally exceed 40 credits. Care should be taken not to invite difficulties in meetings of the programme board of examiners by setting module sizes in such a way that minor failure in a single module would have an unduly profound impact on the student's final award.

Normally, each award should have at least one module, typically a project in the final year/stage that allows the student to apply learning gained across the programme to an assessed synoptic task.

Variations from this general guidance is permitted but should be clearly justified in validation documents.

A3.2.7 AEGROTAT AWARDS

Every Blackpool and The Fylde College award shall be available as an aegrotat award to be made at the discretion of Programme Board of Examiners in cases where serious physical or mental illness or other compassionate circumstances have affected a student's attendance and/or attainment. Aegrotat awards are ungraded / unclassified.

A3.2.8 POSTHUMOUS AWARDS

Blackpool and The Fylde College may grant awards to deceased students, who had before they died, completed all the required modules and assessment (examinations and/or coursework) and had fully met the approved criteria for the award. Blackpool and The Fylde College shall also have discretion, on the recommendation of the relevant board of examiners, to grant the award to deceased students who had not completed all the required modules and assessment nor fully met the approved criteria for the award; in such cases, to be awarded a foundation degree, the student must have achieved 75% or more of the total work required to achieve the programme. The certificate in respect of the qualification awarded shall bear a date earlier than that of the candidate's death and shall be sent to the next of kin as soon as possible after the grant of the award.

A3.3.1 PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Curriculum planning and development is reviewed annually within each curriculum area. Each curriculum area produces a Self-Evaluation Document that provides the College with a comprehensive and focused analysis that identifies areas of potential growth and reduction and also facilitates curriculum development and enhancement. It provides valid and reliable evidence to inform the College validation cycle and business planning schedule which in turn supports the strategic management of Higher Education.

The Business Planning Schedule represents the preparatory stage of the programme approval process, and is the definitive list of programmes being revalidated or validated in the year specified it also includes any programmes the College wishes to close down. The Schedule is considered and approved by the HE Academic Standards and Development Committee.

- The HE Academic Standards and Development Committee will receive an update on the progress made in curriculum development at each meeting.
- It is not expected that programmes will be added to the Business Planning Schedule prior to the grant of outline planning permission.
- In considering listings for new programme proposals, the HE Academic Standards and Development Committee will ensure that proposals align with the College's HE strategic aims and ambitions.

A3.4 PROGRAMME APPROVAL AND VALIDATION

A3.4.1

Stage 3 validation panels are by delegated authority of HE Academic Board responsible for the approval of Blackpool and The Fylde College awards. A summary report of programme (re)validations, including approvals, will be provided regularly to HE Academic Board by the Head of Higher Education.

A3.4.2 DOCUMENTATION DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this subsection, the principal documents are defined as follows:

Concept Document

A Concept Document includes a simple outline of the nature of the proposed award, its rationale, intended market, and resourcing.

Outline Planning Permission

An Outline Planning Permission Document contains a rationale for the development/renewal of curriculum and information such as the proposed aims and objectives, outcomes, structure, admission requirements, staffing, resourcing, and an indication of the content of each proposed module.

Programme Specification

A Programme Specification is a concise description of the intended learning outcomes of a programme and how these outcomes can be achieved and demonstrated. It should clearly articulate what the programme is seeking to achieve and how that achievement is supported and assessed.

The Programme Specification is intended for publication and should give students and potential students a sufficiently detailed overview of the programme structure, content, assessment, etc. to enable them to make an informed decision about whether the programme meets their needs and to provide a clear basis for expectations while studying. It also provides an authoritative reference for the quality assurance of the programme. It is not intended to be a fully detailed academic document. Programme specifications are also available to external audiences and will be published on the Blackpool and The Fylde College web-site.

Validation Document

A Validation Document contains the additional information needed, in addition to the programme specification, to inform the decisions of the validation process (such as the full rationale for the validation of the programme, evidence of demand, etc.) needed at the first validation of a programme.

Business Case

A business case document will contain a proposal for the planned programme with regard to resources, a rationale for its development, the cost involved in the development and delivery and a risk assessment.

The HE Academic Standards and Development Committee will specify indicative content for all the above and will approve templates and guidance for completing the documentation. The guidelines will be reviewed regularly to ensure their currency and that they meet the expectations of all relevant external partners including the QAA Quality Code, the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF), the Foundation Degree Characteristics Statement, the Subject benchmark statements for subjects studied at honours degree level and the Framework for HE Qualifications (FHEQ).

A3.5 DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The development of HE Programmes and awards at Blackpool and The Fylde College requires progression through three stages of development and approval. All definitions and operational matters are contained in section B4 – Curriculum Development and Approval Procedure of Blackpool and The Fylde College's Academic Regulations.

A3.5.3 AMENDMENTS

Major and minor amendments are carried out as defined in B4 – Curriculum Development and Approval Procedure of Blackpool and The Fylde College's Academic Regulations.

A3.6 WITHDRAWAL OF VALIDATION / PROGRAMME CLOSURE

The HE Academic Standards and Development Committee may recommend the withdrawal of programme approval if it has evidence that the programme is no longer meeting minimum acceptable academic standards or where recruitment levels are no longer viable.

Where a programme is closed to further recruitment for any reason, Blackpool and The Fylde College will ensure that adequate standards and the learning experience are maintained for any students remaining on the programme or that students are enabled to transfer to a suitable alternative programme at Blackpool and The Fylde College or elsewhere.

All programme closures must be proposed to the Academic Standards and Development Committee on the requisite College template.

A3.7 REVALIDATIONS

A3.7.1 QUINQENNIAL PROGRAMME RE-VALIDATIONS

Quinquennial Programme re-validations are carried out:

- To consider the validity, currency and effectiveness of the programme
- To ascertain whether any action identified from external examiners' reports has been considered fully and appropriately implemented.
- To consider proposals for changes in the validated programme.
- To identify any areas of good practice for wider dissemination within Blackpool and The Fylde College
- To identify any issues requiring wider consideration.

All validated programmes will be subject to revalidation during the academic year prior to the expiry of their validation. Revalidation may be required at other times if the content of a programme is to undergo such fundamental change that a Major Amendment process would be inappropriate.

A4 ACADEMIC ASSESSMENTS AND AWARDS

A4.1 ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

A4.1.1 OVERVIEW

Blackpool and The Fylde College ensures that all its assessment processes are robust and reliable. Great importance is placed on ensuring that assessment practices are appropriate and meet each of the programmes aims and learning outcomes.

Assessment processes aim to facilitate the making of judgements about a student's achievement of academic standards set in terms of knowledge, skills and understanding. All higher education programmes within Blackpool and The Fylde College incorporate specific assessment strategies which include a variety of tasks and projects. The underpinning themes that inform the assessment processes reflect the need to educate within an inclusive, equitable, ethical and objective framework.

These principles require assessment processes to be embedded within the learning and teaching strategies, and include diagnostic, formative, summative and synoptic assessment and feedback. These ensure there is equivalence in terms of the assessment demands on students from programmes of a similar level and ensures that there is on-going review to avoid over assessment. Assessment tasks ensure that students have opportunities to demonstrate knowledge and skills in different ways. The process requires the creation of assessment schedules which are staged to ensure that the assessment facilitates deep learning and targeted development of employability skills. Appropriate feedback on assessment is seen as the cornerstone of any effective assessment process and is prioritised through the practice of providing timely, formative, constructive comments with recommendations for further improvement.

Equitable and ethical principles are applied to ensure that assessment tasks, schedules and grade descriptors relate to, and conform to, programme and module learning outcomes. Student support systems ensure that students are informed of and understand the assessments tasks, criteria and procedures at appropriate times. The process ensures that it avoids bias in terms of gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion or belief, age, class or disability. Where assessment takes place online the systems will ensure that effective protocols are adhered to. The process will also explicitly incorporate requirements for effective evaluation by students, staff and quality committees.

Objectivity and regulatory requirements are reflected in the systems in place to facilitate robust impartial decisions on progression and achievement in line with levels of the programme, award and the QAA Quality Code.

A4.1.2 AIMS OF ASSESSMENT

All programmes of study will provide various assessment methods to facilitate effective learning and will include a range of approaches to learning. Assessments must ensure that standards are maintained in reference to external reference points that include the QAA Quality Code and professional, statutory and/or regulatory bodies

The main aims of assessment are:

- To assist in measuring, rewarding and celebrating student learning.
- To measure objectively, record, and report on student progress and achievement of programme and module learning outcomes.
- To address gaps in learning and understanding through effective feedback.
- To facilitate the application of learning in diverse contexts.
- To offer opportunities for credit accumulation and progression.
- To make use of a variety of methods and tasks to provide the optimum opportunities to demonstrate learning.

The aims of the associated processes are:

- Explicitly to ensure equal opportunities for students.
- To allow for adapted and/or alternative assessments for students with particular needs.
- To ensure that information on timing, nature, procedures and criteria for assessment are published accurately to students.
- To provide a consistent process incorporating appropriate internal and external scrutiny of assessment tasks, criteria and judgements to confirm validity, reliability and integrity.
- To ensure that regulations are applied consistently in the measurement and interpretation of student achievement in line with the academic infrastructure and programme outcomes.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of learning, teaching and assessment strategies.
- To ensure compliance with precepts within the code of practice on assessment, work based and placement learning.

A4.1.3 RESPONSIBILITY FOR ASSESSMENT

The relevant head of curriculum area is ultimately responsible for effective assessment ensuring that individual programme teams are aware of their responsibilities with regard to:

- the creation of assessment instruments,
- for ensuring that, before distribution to students, assessment instruments meet the requirements set out in B6 - Assessment and Feedback Procedure of the HE Taught Award Regulations,
- that robust moderation of assessment instruments is undertaken in line with the requirements set out in B6 - Assessment and Feedback Procedure of the HE Taught Award Regulations.

Compliance with assessment requirements is monitored via the Annual Programme Review (APR) process, the Quality and Standards Directorate and the HE Academic Board.

In addition, the role of external examining provides additional assurance to both Blackpool and The Fylde College and its partners with regard to verification and moderation.

A4.1.4 PASS / FAIL ASSESSMENTS

The content and/or method(s) of an assessment may demonstrate achievement of specified learning outcomes but not lend itself to the grading of levels of achievement. Where this is the case the assessment should be graded on a pass / fail basis and be excluded from the calculation of the overall grade for the module to which it contributes.

The validation document for an award may designate either a component or the whole module as falling into this category.

During the validation of a programme the decision to use pass / fail assessments is the academic judgement of the teaching staff and must always consider that:

- the use of pass / fail assessments does not significantly distort or dilute the assessment burden of the module;
- the volume and nature of graded assessment within any individual module is sufficient to justify the award of an overall mark;
- the graded assessments within a module must give the student an opportunity to demonstrate levels of achievement across the subject material and learning outcomes of the module

Where a programme of study contains a pass/fail assessment, whether a whole module or component of a module, the pass/fail assessment must be completed successfully to secure the credit attributed to the specific module.

A4.1.5 COMMUNICATION

Students must be informed of the number, timing and types of assessments they will be required to undertake. This information must be accessible to students be in line with CMA guidance¹ and should include an approved disclaimer where necessary.

Changes in assessment deadlines should not be made without good reason. It is the responsibility of the programme leader to ensure that that changes do not materially disadvantage the students affected and that they receive information in a timely manner.

A4.1.6 PROFESSIONAL, STATUTORY AND REGULATORY BODIES

Accreditation, approval, endorsement or other recognition of awards and/or programmes by professional, statutory and regulatory bodies may impose additional requirements and/or restrictions on assessment.

These requirements may become part of the requirements for an award either at validation or by later amendment, or may not affect the award itself but regulate the recognition that students can expect after graduation.

Programme teams must ensure that all students affected are fully informed of the implications of any such requirements.

A4.1.7 DISABILITY AND EQUALITY REQUIREMENTS

The validation process ensures that the assessment structure of each programme meets the requirements of the award and of any relevant professional or statutory body, and that the range of assessment types employed across each programme is appropriate to its intended students.

INCLUSIVE ASSESSMENT

As far as it is both practicable and permitted by a programmes' validation document and by the requirements of any relevant professional/statutory body; the methods used for all assessment should be selected to make the process equitable for all.

¹ Competition and Markets Authority, UK higher education providers – advise on consumer protection law: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/415740/HE_providers_-_advice_on_consumer_protection_law.pdf

Staff should always seek to design assessments so that the whole group, including students with protected characteristics, can undertake the same assessments in the same manner.

A4.1.8 ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS

Access arrangements and/or adapted and/or alternative assessment arrangements will be provided, where required, for students with physical and sensory disabilities, with specific learning difficulties (including dyslexia), with psychological problems or with chronic medical conditions.

Access arrangements are changes that enable a student to undertake a standard assessment in substantially the original manner. They should reflect the least possible change to normal practice necessary to ensure that individual students' needs are accommodated. Such arrangements may involve extra time, rest breaks, alternative times / dates for assessment, deferral of assessment to an appropriate later date, special room arrangements, the use of an amanuensis or word processor, question papers in alternative format, or other appropriate support.

A4.1.9 AUTHORISATION OF ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS

Decisions to provide access arrangements are agreed through coordination between the Student Support and Wellbeing Team and programme teams. A number of factors must be taken into account so as to not disadvantage any student. These include, but are not restricted to, existing College practice and experience as well as an individual's requirements.

A4.1.10 ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENTS

Alternative assessments involve changes to assessment practice that, where possible, preserve the original assessment method but make a substantial change to the manner of assessment. Alternative assessments should be permitted only when the student's needs cannot be accommodated by access arrangements and should reflect the least possible change to normal practice necessary to ensure that individual students' needs are accommodated.

If the nature of a student's needs cannot be accommodated by the provision of access arrangements an alternative assessment that does meet the student's needs may be substituted. The alternative assessment will involve a change of assessment method and should be designed to have, as nearly as possible, the same scope, depth, difficulty, rigour, learning outcomes and grade descriptors as the assessment for which it has been substituted.

Access arrangements, and alternative assessments may be used even when not explicitly provided for in the validation documentation for the relevant programme. They may also be approved where students suffer acute short term issues. The guidelines for approval of Personal Mitigating Circumstances should be used when determining whether a short term issue warrants consideration.

EXCEPTIONS

The use of access arrangements and alternative assessments should not be considered when:

- A change in assessment practice would undermine the core competences of a student's award;
- A change in assessment practice is contrary to the reasonable 'fitness to practice' expectations of any profession, professional and/or statutory body associated with a student's award;
- The mix of assessments in the student's award is such that any disadvantage a student may encounter in one assessment is fully compensated for in other assessments and to change the assessment requirements for the student would amount to a granting that student undue advantage over their peers.

A4.1.11 AUTHORISATION OF ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENTS

Decisions to provide alternative assessments are agreed by the relevant head of curriculum area and HE Academic Registrar in consultation with the Student Support and Wellbeing Team and programme teams. A number of factors must be taken into account so as to not disadvantage any student. These include, but are not restricted to, existing College practice and experience as well as an individual's requirements.

The nature of the alternative assessment(s) to be used should be proposed by the relevant programme team. In such cases the external examiner should be provided with the proposed alternative assessment to ensure its suitability. Arrangements should be documented.

A4.1.12 NOTIFICATION AND EVIDENCE

Students are required to make requests for access arrangements and/or alternative assessments as early as possible. Blackpool and The Fylde College cannot guarantee to process requests at short notice. Where requests are made at short notice, assessment may exceptionally be deferred to allow for due consideration of a case without prejudice to the final decision.

The authorisation of access arrangements and/or alternative assessment arrangements is an evidence based process and students must provide appropriate

and independent evidence (e.g. assessments of need, doctor's letters, psychologists' reports) to support their applications.

A4.1.13 ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMPETENCE

Satisfactory competence in the English Language is a condition of entry to Blackpool and The Fylde College programmes and difficulties that arise for students whose first language is not English do not amount to a disability. As a result, access arrangements and/or alternative assessments will not be approved solely on the grounds of students' competence in English.

A4.1.14 VIVA VOCE EXAMINATION

The use of viva voce examination is not permitted as a method of assessment under these regulations except where operated as part of an assessment under the College's SQA Higher National Assessment Regulations.

A4.2 GRADE DESCRIPTOR GUIDELINES

A4.2.1 FEEDBACK GRADES

Any assessment leading to the award of a Blackpool and The Fylde College degree will be assessed by assigning one of the grades, A+ to F4, identified in the table below.

Where pedagogically sound and recognised in the programme validation document individual assessments may, by exception, be assessed by assigning percentile marks.

The available feedback grades and their relationship to classifications are illustrated in the table below.

Broad Descriptor	Grade	Aggregation Score	%	Honours Class	Foundation Class
Excellent	A+	24	70-100	First	Distinction
	A	21			
	A-	18			
Good	B+	17	60-69	Upper Second	Commendation
	B	16			
	B-	15			
Satisfactory	C+	14	50-59	Lower Second	Merit
	C	13			
	C-	12			
Acceptable	D+	11	40-49	Third	Pass

	D	10			
	D ⁻	9			
Marginal fail	F1	7	30-39	Fail	Fail
Fail	F2	4	20-29		
Poor fail	F3	2	10-19		
Very poor fail	F4	0	0-9		

Where work is qualitatively assessed it will first be tested against the grade descriptors appropriate to the level of the module and will be allocated to a category A-F. Once this has been done the quality of the work will be assessed to determine its relative quality within the band and it will be awarded a final grade on the scale A+ to F4 accordingly.

Where feedback is provided to a student as a numeric mark, for the purposes of input into the record system, it will be converted to an aggregation score using the table below. This will ensure that whether feedback is provided as a mark, grade or as a mixture of both a student's overall achievement for a stage is recorded and classified in the same format.

Percentile to aggregation score conversion table									
100	99	98	97	96	95	94	93	92	91
24	23.85	23.7	23.55	23.4	23.25	23.1	22.95	22.8	22.65
90	89	88	87	86	85	84	83	82	81
22.5	22.35	22.2	22.05	21.9	21.75	21.6	21.45	21.3	21.15
80	79	78	77	76	75	74	73	72	71
21	20.7	20.4	20.1	19.8	19.5	19.2	18.9	18.6	18.3
70	69	68	67	66	65	64	63	62	61
18	17.7	17.4	17.1	16.8	16.5	16.2	15.9	15.6	15.3
60	59	58	57	56	55	54	53	52	51
15	14.7	14.4	14.1	13.8	13.5	13.2	12.9	12.6	12.3
50	49	48	47	46	45	44	43	42	41
12	11.7	11.4	11.1	10.8	10.5	10.2	9.9	9.6	9.3
40	39	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31
9	8.775	8.55	8.325	8.1	7.875	7.65	7.425	7.2	6.975
30	29	28	27	26	25	24	23	22	21
6.75	6.525	6.3	6.075	5.85	5.625	5.4	5.175	4.95	4.725
20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11
4.5	4.275	4.05	3.825	3.6	3.375	3.15	2.925	2.7	2.475
10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
2.25	2.025	1.8	1.575	1.35	1.125	0.9	0.675	0.45	0.225

A4.3 PRIMARY AND SECONDARY GRADE DESCRIPTORS

Blackpool and The Fylde College has developed tables of primary grade descriptors to assist in standardising the nature of achievement expected at each academic level and the grading of student performance.

These primary grade descriptors are designed to assist lecturing staff in the design of assessments and would not normally directly form an assessment grade descriptor. Lecturing staff should make use of these guidelines to inform their assessment design and should produce appropriately contextualised grade descriptors (secondary grade descriptors).

Level 3 Primary Grade Descriptors

Excellent

<p>A+, A , A- 70%-100%</p>	<p>Student has met the learning outcomes of the assessment with secure knowledge and understanding demonstrating study beyond the central requirements of the subject.</p> <p>The work shows clearly an appreciation of the importance of theoretical underpinning and provides evidence of simple analysis</p> <p>Work shows confidence in using given tools/methods in defined practical contexts and/or problems and an ability to reach reasoned conclusions.</p> <p>For a grade of A+ student's work should meet all the requirements above and demonstrate exceptional appreciation of the breadth of the field of study and sophisticated ability to express the complexity of issues. Work should transcend expectations for the level of student and the nature of the task(s) set.</p>
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Good

<p>B+, B , B- 60% - 69%</p>	<p>Student has met the learning outcomes of the assessment with evidence of relevant acquisition of knowledge and understanding.</p> <p>The work shows the ability to express defined ideas clearly and with evidence of understanding and simple judgement.</p> <p>Work shows evidence that the student has applied given tools/methods with broad accuracy to well defined practical contexts and/or problems though conclusions drawn are limited.</p>
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Satisfactory	
C+, C, C-	Student has met the learning outcomes of the assessment with evidence of acquisition of the main aspects of the knowledge of the subject. The work describes given knowledge clearly and displays limited evidence of an ability to use judgement.
50% - 59%	Work shows that the student has applied given tools/methods to well defined practical contexts and/or problems
Acceptable	
D+, D, D	Student has met each of the learning outcomes with evidence of simple acquisition of knowledge of the subject. The work describes given knowledge with few errors.
-40% - 49%	Work shows that the student has applied given tools/methods with minor errors to well defined practical contexts and/or problems.
Marginal Fail	
F1	Student has not met all the learning outcomes but may show some incomplete knowledge of the topic.
30% - 39%	The work displays inaccuracy and uncertainty in handling given knowledge. The work may lack coherence and demonstrate an inability to describe given knowledge. Unable to always apply given tools/methods to well defined practical contexts and/ or problems

Fail	
F2 20% - 29%	Attainment of learning outcomes appreciably deficient in critical respects, lacking a secure basis in relevant factual and analytical dimensions
Poor Fail	
F3 10% - 19%	Attainment of learning outcomes appreciably deficient in respect of nearly all learning outcomes, with irrelevant use of materials and incomplete and flawed explanation.
Very Poor Fail	
F4 0% - 9%	No convincing evidence of attainment of any learning outcomes. Work that completely misrepresents or misunderstands thinking in the discipline through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absence or misuse of sources; • Work that is confused and incoherent

Level 4 Primary Grade Descriptors

Excellent

A+, A , A-

70%-100%

Student has met the learning outcomes of the assessment with thorough knowledge and understanding demonstrating study beyond the core requirements of the subject.

The work shows a resourceful and imaginative ability to analyse based on defined classifications, principles, theories or models.

Work shows clear evidence that the student has applied given tools/methods accurately to well defined practical contexts and/or problems.

For a grade of A+ student's work should meet all the requirements above and demonstrate exceptional comprehension of knowledge and understanding. Sophisticated ability to analyse beyond defined classifications/principles. Work transcends expectations for the level of student and the nature of the task(s) set

Good

B+, B , B-

60% - 69%

Student has met the learning outcomes of the assessment with evidence of relevant and sound acquisition of knowledge and understanding.

The work shows evidence of ability to analyse based on defined classifications, principles, theories or models.

Work shows evidence that the student has applied given tools/methods accurately to well defined practical contexts and/or problems. Although the work recognises inherent complexities in the area of study, some conclusions are reached on the basis of insufficient evidence.

Satisfactory	
	Student has met the learning outcomes of the assessment with evidence of acquisition of knowledge of the subject.
C+, C, C- 50% - 59%	<p>The work is largely descriptive in nature with evidence of limited reasoning based on defined classifications, principles, theories or models.</p> <p>Work shows some evidence that the student has applied given tools/methods accurately to well defined practical contexts and/or problems, including limited recognition of the inherent complexities in the area of study.</p>
Acceptable	
	Student has met each of the learning outcomes with evidence of basic acquisition of knowledge of the subject.
D+, D, D -40% - 49%	<p>The work is limited to description and prone to unsubstantiated assertion, opinion or logic.</p> <p>Work shows evidence that the student has applied given tools/methods to well defined practical contexts and/or problems.</p>
Marginal Fail	
	Student has not met all the learning outcomes but may show an emerging knowledge of the topic.
F1 30% - 39%	<p>The work is descriptive and uncritical with some inaccuracy and lack of coherence. Work may include discussion which is irrelevant or lack internal consistency. Unable always to apply given tools/methods to well defined practical contexts and/ or problems</p>

Fail	
F2 20% - 29%	Attainment of learning outcomes appreciably deficient in critical respects, lacking a secure basis in relevant factual and analytical dimensions
Poor Fail	
F3 10% - 19%	Attainment of learning outcomes appreciably deficient in respect of nearly all learning outcomes, with irrelevant use of materials and incomplete and flawed explanation.
Very Poor Fail	
F4 0% - 9%	No convincing evidence of attainment of any learning outcomes. Work that completely misrepresents or misunderstands thinking in the discipline through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absence or misuse of sources; • Work that is confused and incoherent

Level 5 Primary Grade Descriptors

Excellent

A+, A , A-

70%-100%

Student has met the learning outcomes of the assessment with evidence of detailed knowledge and understanding of key concepts and theories, demonstrating a creative approach to a variety of ideas, contexts and frameworks. The work adopts a critical approach, using evidence, reasoning and reflection based on given classifications, principles, theories or models.

Work shows sustained evidence that the student can identify and define straightforward problems and/or practical contexts and can successfully apply knowledge and skills aimed at their resolution.

For a grade of A+ student's work should meet all the requirements above with impressive knowledge and understanding applying a well sustained critical approach drawing on a comprehensive breadth of evidence, reasoning and reflection. Work transcends expectations for the level of student and the nature of the task(s) set.

Good

B+, B , B-

60% - 69%

Student has met the learning outcomes of the assessment with evidence of detailed knowledge and understanding of key concepts and theories, demonstrating a variety of ideas, contexts and frameworks. The work adopts a critical approach using given classifications/principles.

Work shows evidence that the student can identify straightforward and successfully solve problems and/or practical contexts and choose appropriate methods for their resolution in a considered manner.

Satisfactory	
<p>C+, C, C-</p> <p>50% - 59%</p>	<p>Student has met the learning outcomes of the assessment with evidence of knowledge and understanding of key concepts and theories which is generally sound. The work shows evidence of a general critical approach using given classifications/principles, although there may be some lack of focus on key points.</p> <p>Work shows evidence that the student can apply accurately learning in a considered manner to straightforward problems and/or practical contexts.</p>
Acceptable	
<p>D+, D, D</p> <p>-40% - 49%</p>	<p>Student has met each of the learning outcomes of the assessment with evidence of basic knowledge and understanding of key concepts and theories. The work is heavily limited to description; analysis may be unsophisticated.</p> <p>Work shows evidence that the student can apply essential learning to straightforward problems and/or practical contexts.</p>

Marginal Fail	
F1 30% - 39%	<p>Student has not met all the learning outcomes of the assessment with basic knowledge of some relevant topic issues and evidence of partial understanding.</p> <p>Work is largely descriptive and uncritical with some unsubstantiated assertion. Analysis is minimal or contradictory. Unable to always apply essential learning to straightforward problems and/or practical contexts. For professional programmes any work which contains evidence of, or reference to, unsafe or dangerous practice should be deemed a fail. Insufficient understanding of given tools/methods to apply them to straightforward practical contexts and/or problems.</p>
Fail	
F2 20% - 29%	<p>Attainment of learning outcomes appreciably deficient in critical respects, lacking a secure basis in relevant factual and analytical dimensions</p>
Poor Fail	
F3 10% - 19%	<p>Attainment of learning outcomes appreciably deficient in respect of nearly all learning outcomes, with irrelevant use of materials and incomplete and flawed explanation.</p>
Very Poor Fail	
F4 0% - 9%	<p>No convincing evidence of attainment of any learning outcomes. Work that completely misrepresents or misunderstands thinking in the discipline through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absence or misuse of sources; • Work that is confused and incoherent

A4.3 ASSESSMENT SUBMISSION AND REASSESSMENT

A4.3.1 ASSESSMENT SUBMISSION

Written submissions will normally be through electronic means and use the turnitin interface for the MOODLE VLE. Where it is not possible to submit written work electronically the submission will be by delivery to a predetermined central point/person. All non-electronic submissions will be recorded and receipted.

As part of their submissions, candidates are required to make a declaration that the submitted work is their own and has not been submitted for any other award in substantially the same form by the candidate or any other person, and affirming that acknowledgement has been made to assistance given and that all major sources have been appropriately referenced. No coursework, dissertation or project submission will be accepted without the inclusion of such a statement (included on the standard assessment front sheet).

In the case of group work where a submission in common is made by its members, all the students within the group must sign the same statement.

Where work is submitted by secure electronic means, this/these declaration(s) will be deemed to have been made whether or not the work contains a student signature.

A4.3.2 DUE DATES

Formal examinations will be held on a specified date and at a specified time determined by the relevant programme team and confirmed by the Achievements team. This date and time must be communicated in writing to all affected students at least one month in advance of the assessment date.

Other assessments will have a due date for completion. This date will be:

- clearly stated on all assessment instruments
- be determined by the module tutor in consultation with the programme team
- take account of the College's guidance on assessment feedback timeframes

All programme handbooks will contain the relevant assessment schedule providing students with an overview of the assessment requirements relating to each distribution

date, deadline and examination date. This information must be accessible to students be in line with CMA guidance² and should include an approved disclaimer where necessary.

A4.3.3 AMENDMENTS TO DEADLINES

Amendments to deadlines are not permitted except in extraordinary circumstances e.g. where illness of a module tutor has adversely affected a cohort's ability to achieve the learning outcomes. Amendments may only be granted by the relevant head of curriculum who when considering amendment requests should take into account:

- Any potential negative impacts on other assessments.
- That the student experience is not compromised.
- That students' results will be available to the earliest board of examiners that is consistent with fair consideration of the students' circumstances.

Due care must be taken in setting a new due date for an assessment to ensure that the cohort in question can reasonably be expected to be prepared for the assessment by the revised due date and have had adequate opportunity to complete the necessary preparatory work and/or study. Amendments will be confirmed to the students in writing specifying a new deadline in the form of a revised assessment front sheet.

AMENDMENTS FOR STUDENTS WITH MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES

Amendments to assessment deadlines may only be established by the programme leader/module tutor in liaison with the particular student when an approved Personal Mitigating Circumstances application that encompasses the particular assessment component(s) is in place.

A4.3.4 LATE WORK

Where coursework is more than three days late a mark of zero or F4 will be awarded.

Deadlines should normally be set on Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays to avoid the third day occurring at a weekend. Where the third day does fall on a weekend, students will have until 10 am on the next working day to hand in without receiving further penalty. For this purpose, it should be noted that a 'working day' is not related to the student's personal timetable. A working day is therefore typically considered as being any day Monday – Friday, excluding bank holidays or college closure.

² Competition and Markets Authority, UK higher education providers – advise on consumer protection law: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/415740/HE_providers_-_advice_on_consumer_protection_law.pdf

For undergraduate work assessed using percentages, marks between 50% and 69% will be reduced by ten percentage points. Other marks will be reduced according to the following table.

Late Work Penalties			
Grade marking		Numeric marking	
Quality of work	Grade Awarded	Quality of work	Percentage Awarded
A+	B+	87-100	68
A	B	74-86	65
A-	B-	70-73	62
B+	C+	60-69	50-59
B	C		
B-	C-		
C+	D+	50-59	40-49
C	D		
C-	D-		
D+	F1	40-49	31
D			
D-			
F1	F2	31-39	18
F2	F3	18-30	9
F3	F4	0-17	0
F4			

A4.3.5 REASSESSMENT

Where a student has not met the lowest passing mark for a module they will have the right to one reassessment of any failed assessment(s) in that module. Reassessment tasks and dates are non-negotiable and will be communicated to the student in writing by the programme team following the programme board of examiners.

Reassessment of failed work should normally take the form of a new assessment and should not be the resubmission of an improved version of the original assessment. Students should be provided with an alternative assessment covering the outcomes of the original assessment. The reassessment should normally be of the same type as the original i.e. if the original assessment was an examination the reassessment should also be an examination. Where it is not possible to replicate the original type of assessment, e.g. the original assessment is a group presentation; the relevant head of curriculum in consultation with the HE Academic Registrar may approve an alternative assessment type.

Non-attendance at a resit examination or failure to submit other reassessment work by the deadline without an approved Personal Mitigating Circumstances application will result in a mark of zero or F4 being recorded. Where a reassessment mark is lower than the original

mark the original mark will stand and will be used to calculate any module and stage aggregates.

Any module(s) that is reassessed will be capped at the minimum pass mark.

A4.4 ACADEMIC PROGRESSION AND AWARD

A4.4.1 STUDENT DEBT

As set out in the College's HE Student Debt Policy, where a student has outstanding debts owed to the College and relating to tuition fees the College will withhold all related transcripts, results and certificates until any outstanding debt is cleared in full.

A4.4.2 AGGREGATION PRECISION

The aggregate score for each module shall be rounded to one decimal point and consist of the weighted average of the scores of all contributing assessments. Aggregate stage scores shall be rounded to one decimal point and consist of the weighted average scores from all contributing modules.

A4.4.3 PASS FAIL ASSESSMENTS

Some assessments and/or modules in some awards may be assessed on a pass / fail basis only. Pass / fail assessments will be excluded from the calculation of the overall mark for a module, and pass / fail modules will be excluded from the calculation of average marks for a stage or an award.

A4.4.4 ULTIMATE AUTHORITY

The right to confer Blackpool and The Fylde College awards is reserved to the relevant Programme Board of Examiners. In the case of external awarding bodies this right is reserved to the highest academic authority of the awarding institution or body. Where students are told of the outcomes of board of examiners before the recommendations made have been confirmed, students must be informed that decisions are subject to approval.

A4.4.5 TRANSCRIPTS

Each student leaving a Blackpool and The Fylde College programme will be provided with a Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR) or transcript illustrating each module the student has completed. The transcript will indicate the level of achievement the student has demonstrated in each module, this will be indicated by the printing of the overall score for each module.

A4.4.6 CONDONATION

On the completion of a stage and whether a student is being considered for progression or for an award, where a student has failed one or more modules within the stage the relevant Programme Board of Examiners shall consider condonation of the failed module(s). Condonation will normally only be considered where a student has exhausted all reassessment opportunities except where a student is on the final year of their study. A Programme Board of Examiners may, at their absolute discretion, condone failed modules totalling not more than 20 credits for the stage providing that the aggregate score for each/any module condoned is 7.0 or higher.

A4.4.7 PROGRESSION

In order to progress between the stages of an award, students must:

- a) Have accumulated sufficient credit (passed or condoned) to meet the requirements of the stage.
- b) Have earned this credit by means of a valid combination of modules in accordance with the relevant validation document.
- c) Have a weighted average aggregate score for the stage of 9.0 or more.

A4.5 CLASSIFICATION OF AWARDS

An overall aggregate score for the award of a foundation degree shall be determined from all credits at levels 4 and 5 weighted at 30% of level 4 and 70% of level 5, rounded to one decimal place. Where the mean overall aggregation score falls within one of the:

- **Classification** types defined in the table below, the Programme Boards of Examiners will recommend the award of a foundation degree with the specified class.
- **Borderline** ranges defined in the table below the Programme Boards of Examiners will award the higher classification where half or more of the classifying credits are in the higher class. Where students do not meet this criteria they will be awarded the lower class.

Score	Class	Type
17.5 to 24.0	Distinction	Classification
17.1 to 17.4	Either Distinction or Commendation	Borderline range
14.5 to 17.0	Commendation	Classification
14.1 to 14.4	Either Commendation or Merit	Borderline range
11.5 to 14.0	Merit	Classification
11.1 to 11.4	Either Merit or Pass	Borderline range
9.0 to 11.0	Pass	Classification
0.0 to 8.9	Fail	Fail

A4.5.1 CONTAINED AWARDS

Any student exiting a programme that does not contain specific provision for a contained award representing 120 credits at level 4 may elect to be considered for the award of Blackpool and The Fylde College Certificate of Achievement. In order to qualify for the award of the Certificate, students are required to achieve 120 credits at level 4 or above with an overall average score of 9.0 or higher; with no more than 20 condoned credits.

Contained awards made under this regulation are unclassified and will be untitled except where 120 credits are accumulated from a single specified award where they may be given an appropriate subject title.

A4.6 BOARDS OF EXAMINERS

OVERVIEW

The process leading to the formal approval of module marks, the achievement of awards and their classification is managed through a hierarchy of formal boards.

The B7 Boards of Examiners relates to the procedures associated with these examination boards and provides details around:

- Membership
- Structure and content
- Reporting
- Agendas and minuting

A4.6.1 BOARD OF EXAMINERS RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations of boards of examiners are restricted to one of the following decisions per student:

Pass Award	<p>Successful completion of the whole of an award. The student has completed a valid combination of modules, has acquired the required credits at every level and is entitled to the award.</p> <p>The award may be made with a summative classification or grade if appropriate.</p> <p>This description is to be used where the award made completes the student's studies, even where the award was not the student's original target award.</p>
Proceed	<p>The student has reached a point at which the validation document, or other regulations, requires a formal progression decision to be taken</p>

	and the student has met the criteria for progression, normally at the end of a stage.
Refer	The student has failed to achieve the requirements to progress to the next level or to achieve the target award and has not exhausted the opportunities available to remedy the situation. In these cases the board must state the nature of the shortfall(s) and the details of how these are to be remedied. Typically, this is likely to be by reassessment.
Continuing	The student has not reached a point at which a formal progression decision is required. The student's results are being presented for approval before being entered on their record.
Fail Withdraw	The student has failed the requirements of the award and is not permitted to continue on the relevant programme.
Fail	The student has reached the completion of their programme of study and has failed the requirements of the award.
Award Exit	The student has failed the target award and is required to leave the programme but is to be granted a contained award to which they are entitled.
Chair's Action	Some item of information required to make a decision is unavailable at the board but will be available very soon. The board of examiners asks the chair to enter a recommendation on its behalf as soon as sufficient information is available.

A4.6.2 AWARD CONFIRMATION AND CERTIFICATION

This section applies to awards of Blackpool and The Fylde College only. Confirmation and certification of awards of other institutions will proceed under their own regulations.

A4.6.3 AWARD CONFIRMATION

Blackpool and The Fylde College awards are finally confirmed by the relevant Programme Boards of Examiners.

A4.6.4 CERTIFICATION

All certificates are produced and issued by the Student Administration Team, with the oversight of the HE Academic Registrar; this includes provisions for replacement certificates. Certificates may only be produced and issued in accordance with the minuted decisions of the relevant Programme Board of Examiners. No other person or body within the College may authorise the production or issue of certificates.

Any certificate relating to a Blackpool and The Fylde College award may either be collected in person from the College's Achievements Office or will be sent by recorded delivery to the home address of the student as recorded in the College's student record system. Students are responsible for informing the College of any change of address during their studies. Certificates will normally be issued within 90 days following the meeting of the relevant Programme Board of Examiners.

The HE Academic Board will approve, and periodically review, the design of certificates, the processes for their production, arrangements for secure storage of materials and data, and arrangements for the prevention of fraud.

A4.6.5 REPLACEMENT CERTIFICATES

Replacement certificates may be produced and issued only in two circumstances:

- 1) On receipt of a declaration from the holder of an award that the original certificate has been permanently lost, stolen, damaged or destroyed.
- 2) On receipt of a request from the holder of an award for a change of personal details as required by law, such as under the Gender Recognition Act 2004.

In cases where the original certificate has not been lost, stolen or destroyed, the original certificate must be returned prior to the issue of a replacement. Where a certificate has been lost, stolen or destroyed, Blackpool and The Fylde College reserves the right to require a Statutory Declaration or other evidence in support of an application. Replacement certificates will bear the same details and serial number as the originals they replace, save for any changes required by law. They will be marked 'Replacement' and bear the date of reissue in addition to the date of first issue.

Replacement certificates are deemed to be authorised by the minutes confirming the original award and may be issued without prior approval by the relevant Programme Award Board of Examiners.

A4.7 RETENTION OF MARKED WORK

A4.7.1 GENERAL

Samples of assessed, moderated and externally moderated student work must be retained for future scrutiny by either Blackpool and The Fylde College or by external quality agencies. Samples should be kept together in a coherent and accessible format.

Project reports and dissertations may be retained by Blackpool and The Fylde College and may be utilised by Learning Resources for reference purposes.

Any retained work must meet the requirements specified in the College's Data Protection Code of Practice.

A4.8 RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL)

A4.8.1 INTRODUCTION

Blackpool and The Fylde College is responsible for assessing all applications for the award of RPL credit that counts towards a Blackpool and The Fylde College programme, where a programme is that of a validating partner the partner's regulations on RPL will take precedence.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is the process used to assess and formally recognise learning which has taken place in the past. Such learning may have been:

- Undertaken at another educational institution where qualifications and academic credits were achieved – referred to as Recognition of Prior Certificated Learning (RPCL)
- Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL) Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning [APEL] this enables students to gain credit for relevant prior experience in the workplace, through life experience or via non-credit bearing courses (e.g. in house training). This requires students to provide evidence of prior workplace learning which can be matched against their current programme of study or is considered relevant towards their current programme of study. It can take the form of a reflective account of the learning experience but the curriculum area may see other sources of evidence presented such as case study, report, testimonials, publication article or a conference presentation.

Assessing experiential learning would normally involve some of the following

- Practice based documentation and reports video/audio analytical evaluations of practice
- Analysis of issues underlying practice
- Evidence of planning for practice
- Analysis and evaluation of training undertaken for practice
- Supporting statements from managers or supervisors in relation to practice
- Computer programmes
- An assessor's observation
- Taking traditional or oral examinations
- Submission of essay(s) on appropriate topics.

The format for the submission of evidence would normally be

- A statement of credit claimed

- A detailed curriculum vitae to provide a context for the claim
- A summary of the achievements (learning outcomes) claimed
- Detailed evidence supporting each of those achievements which demonstrates critical reflection, knowledge and skills acquired, a process of professional development and a capacity for autonomous study.

The basic criteria to satisfy accreditation is that:

1. The evidence is valid and reliable
2. The evidence is sufficient to demonstrate the achievements claimed
3. The evidence clearly indicates the candidate's personal efforts and attainments
4. The achievements claimed are relevant to the award toward which it will count
5. The achievements are equivalent in depth and level to the successfully completed structured learning (i.e. programme/modules) for which equal credit is to be granted
6. The achievements can be authenticated by external referees

It is crucial to maintain the quality of Blackpool and The Fylde College awards. The RPL process enables applicants to present prior learning in order to claim credit and therefore exemption from part of a programme of study. The credit or experience to be used for RPL must be relevant to the applicant's programme of study. The process of accreditation must be rigorous to ensure the integrity of the awards.

The relevance of RPL frequently declines over time. The effect of time varies by subject area and programme type. The responsibility for determining the maximum period of time that can elapse before RPL cannot be given will rest with the RPL Panel.

Where RPL is referred to in this document it should be taken to mean either type of accreditation.

Note: All RPL applications are considered on an individual case by case basis.

Where students are enrolled onto programme validated by either a partner of Blackpool and The Fylde College or where a programme is undertaken under the regulations another body. The regulations relating to RPL of the relevant body take precedence over that of Blackpool and The Fylde College's.

A4.8.2 QUALITY OF RPL PERMITTED

Blackpool and The Fylde College permits the award of credits by RPL at a single level of study. Where APEL is being considered, (either solely or in combination with APCL) this credit may only constitute one half of the award of RPL (60 credits)

The following table illustrates the level of RPL credits permitted per award.

Award	Total Credits	Maximum Credits
Foundation Degree	240	120

Note:

- RPL may only be awarded for whole, not partial, modules.
- RPL credit must be awarded at the same level as the module(s) for which exemption is sought.
- RPL credit which is more than 5 years old will not be considered.
- No APEL may be permitted for work or other experience that has already been counted for exemption purposes elsewhere.

A4.8.3 PROCEDURES FOR THE AWARD OF RPL CREDIT

Any application for RPL must be completed by the programme team and in most cases will involve close cooperation with the student. Applications must be considered prior to enrolment onto a programme. Documentation submitted in support of an application must map the RPL against the level and learning outcomes of the relevant modules.

The assessment of the application should take into account the following:

- Subject content and knowledge
- Volume of learning
- Level of learning
- Teaching, Learning and Assessment styles experience in prior certificated learning

The mapping exercise should include a matrix of module learning outcomes and must always include supporting evidence. Where APCL is claimed, a copy of the relevant certificate/transcript must be provided. All applications should be supported by the relevant external examiner and evidence of this support must to be included in with the application.

A4.8.4 RPL PANEL

Final approval of the award of RPL credits is the role of the RPL Panel as a sub-committee of the Academic Standards and Development Committee (ASDC).

The Panel will consist of:

- Head of Higher Education(Chair)
- HE Academic Registrar
- The relevant Programme Leader/Curriculum Manager
- HE Student Administration Manager (Minutes)

The Panel may decide one of four outcomes:

- Approved, each module where RPL has be applied for have been accepted
- Partially Approved, some of the modules where RPL has be applied for are accepted
- Defer, the Panel may wish to enquire about some element of the application or may require additional evidence
- Reject

Applications are for the award of credit only, marks or grades are not allocated as part of the assessment of RPL i.e. any modules where credit has been awarded are not included in the calculations relating to degree classifications or grades.

The student transcript will clearly indicate those modules for which credit has been awarded by RPL.

A4.9 NOTIFICATION OF RESULTS

Where students are provided with marks prior to a board of examiners, it must be clearly stated that all marks are subject to moderation by the College's internal processes and to external moderation by the relevant external examiner(s). The results of individual assessments may be mailed, communicated in class or tutorial time or sent through electronic means but only to and from the College's email provision, not through an external email address.

Module marks, summative grades / classifications, awarding decisions and / or reassessment decisions agreed at a programme boards of examiners are normally final and should be reported to students promptly by telephone or by electronic means such as the College's email provision, normally within two weeks of the board of examiners meeting. Where the decision of a board of examiners is subject to confirmation by an external awarding body this should be made clear in all communications with the students concerned. Student results are not confidential personal information and may be published.

A4.10 ACADEMIC APPEALS

This section applies to appeals on academic matters only. If a student is dissatisfied with regard to any other matter they must utilise the relevant College policy, for example, the College's Complaints Procedure.

A4.10.1 ACADEMIC APPEALS AND REVIEW REQUESTS

An academic appeal is a request for a review of a decision made by the Board of Examiners or Personal Mitigating Circumstances Panel.

An academic appeal differs from a complaint and therefore appeals and complaints are considered under different procedures. A complaint is defined as a formal expression of dissatisfaction made by either a single student or a group of students about the provision of their programme of study or related academic service or facility or any other service provided by the College and therefore the Academic Appeals Procedure cannot be used to bring complaints.

Students have no right of appeal in matters of academic judgement such as marking, grading, awarding or classification. Appeals on this basis will be ruled invalid.

VALID GROUNDS FOR APPEAL

A request for an appeal against a decision may only be based on one or more of the following grounds:

- Material administrative error or irregularity in conduct of assessment which has affected the student's results and/or classification.
- The production of significant new evidence concerning personal mitigating circumstances, which for good reason had not been available to boards of examiners.
- Other grounds where unfair treatment or discrimination is alleged which is outside the exercise of academic judgement and which for good reason had not been brought to the attention of the boards of examiners.

The supporting section of Blackpool and The Fylde College's Academic Regulations Part B9 provides further detail relating to the Academic Appeals process.

A5 EXTERNAL EXAMINERS AND PROGRAMME CONSULTANTS

A5.1 EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

A5.1.1 APPOINTMENTS

All Blackpool and The Fylde College programmes require a minimum of one external examiner and as such no Blackpool and The Fylde College award shall be made without the scrutiny of an external examiner, unless considered under the exceptions below.

The HE Academic Standards and Development Committee is responsible for the appointment of external examiners and the oversight of external examiner engagement.

In exceptional circumstances where an examiner has failed to or has been unable to carry out their duties:

- a) The HE Academic Standards and Development Committee will seek to appoint a suitable temporary external examiner to the programme(s) affected. This may also include the appointment of an existing external examiner for another Blackpool and The Fylde College programme to oversee the awards of another programme on a temporary basis (providing that the programme is within their area of expertise).
- b) If after every reasonable effort has been made to appoint an appropriate temporary external examiner the HE Academic Standards and Development Committee may, by minuted resolution, permit affected awards to be made without external scrutiny.

A5.1.2 FUNCTION OF EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

The function of this procedure is to ensure that Blackpool and The Fylde College appoints appropriate external examiners who are able to assure the wider community of the academic standard of Blackpool and The Fylde College's provision and awards.

External examiners are generally appointed to a programme in its entirety but may to a lesser extent be appointed to specific awards, levels, streams and/or modules.

Where the context permits, references to programmes within this section should be taken to apply equally to awards, streams and modules i.e. the scope of an individual's appointment as external examiner.

A5.1.3 CRITERIA FOR APPOINTMENT

New appointments should be considered in the context of any other external examiners for the relevant programme. External examiners do not necessarily operate in isolation and may act as a team with collective responsibility for ensuring the standard of the award.

The external examiner(s) appointed to a programme should satisfy the criteria outlined in Chapter B5 Appendix D of the Blackpool and The Fylde College Academic Regulations which summarise the person specification.

A5.1.4 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

External examiners must not be in the following categories or circumstances:

- a member of any governing body or committee of Blackpool and The Fylde College or any of its validating partners, or a current employee of the College or one of its validating partners
- anyone with a close professional, contractual or personal relationship with a member of staff or student involved with the programme of study
- anyone required to assess colleagues who are recruited as students to the programme of study
- anyone who is, or knows they will be, in a position to influence significantly the future of students on the programme of study
- anyone significantly involved in recent or current substantive collaborative research activities with a member of staff closely involved in the delivery, management or assessment of the programme(s) or modules in question
- former staff of the College unless a period of five years has elapsed
- former students of the College unless a period of five years has elapsed
- all students taught by or with the external examiner
- in a reciprocal arrangement involving cognate programmes at another institution
- the succession of an external examiner by a colleague from the examiner's home department and institution
- the appointment of more than one external examiner from the same department of the same institution
- any other category or circumstance that the HE Academic Standards and Development Committee deems prejudicial to the appointment of an external examiner

A5.1.5 TERMS OF OFFICE

- The duration of an external examiner's appointment will normally be for four years, with an exceptional extension of one year to ensure continuity.
- An external examiner may be reappointed in exceptional circumstances but only after a period of five years or more has elapsed since their last appointment.
- External examiners should normally not hold any more than two external examiner appointments for taught programmes/modules at any one time, whether at Blackpool and The Fylde College or at other institutions.
- An external examiner who wishes to resign before the expiry of their normal period of office is required to write formally to the HE Academic Standards and Development Committee, giving notice as set out in their letter of appointment.

- The HE Academic Standards and Development Committee may terminate an external examiner's appointment before the expiry of their normal period of office on the grounds of failure by the external examiner to fulfil their obligations or if a conflict of interest arises which cannot be satisfactorily resolved.

A5.1.6 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

The roles and responsibilities of external examiners at Blackpool and the Fylde College are outlined in Chapter B5 Appendix E of the Blackpool and The Fylde College Academic Regulations.

A5.1.7 RATIFICATION OF OUTCOMES

External examiners will be asked to confirm after each Programme Board of Examiners that they endorse the outcomes of the assessment processes that they have been appointed to scrutinise.

This endorsement may be by signing a confirmation document at the end of the board, or by exchange of emails or written confirmation after the board.

Any decisions taken by a Programme Board of Examiners in the absence of such an endorsement are subject to endorsement being received after the board.

It is normally expected that Blackpool and The Fylde College will not make awards that the relevant external examiner is unwilling to endorse. However, the final decision in such cases, and in cases where an examiner fails to provide either endorsement or reasons for non-endorsement, is reserved to the HE Academic Registrar.

Should an external examiner be unwilling to endorse the outcomes of any board, they must provide reasons for this decision in writing or by email and must recommend alternative outcome(s) that they would be willing to endorse.

Where an examiner is unable to endorse the outcomes of a Programme Board of Examiners the matter must be brought to the attention of the HE Academic Registrar through the minutes of the relevant Board and as detailed above the HE Academic Registrar may decide to ratify the board's decision without the agreement of the external examiner. In any case, the HE Academic Registrar will lead an investigation into the recommendations made by the external examiner in order to determine the appropriate course of action.

Only the HE Academic Registrar may notify students of any outcome where an External Examiner has not endorsed awards.

A5.1.8 SERIOUS CONCERNS

Where an external examiner has, by whatever means, made serious concerns known to the Principal and Chief Executive, the Principal and Chief Executive will ensure that these

concerns are investigated and that both the external examiner and the HE Academic Board receive a timely, considered response outlining any actions to be taken as a result.

Where an external examiner expresses serious concerns about a programme before the Programme Board of Examiners has conferred awards to students on that programme, the Principal and Chief Executive shall have the discretion to delay the conferment of awards until after the concerns have been investigated and to require that the Board considers the outcomes of that investigation and any resulting actions prior to conferring awards.

The HE Academic Registrar shall ensure that staff and/or students are informed in a timely manner wherever they are affected by the implications of serious concerns, or the actions arising from them.

A5.2 EXTERNAL ADVISOR – CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

The validation process identified in section A3 above and Part B4 of the Blackpool and The Fylde College Academic Regulations requires that a suitably qualified external advisor is identified to support the development of Blackpool and The Fylde College curricula.

The HE Academic Standards and Development Committee will approve appointment processes and terms of reference for external advisors.

A6 ADMISSIONS

Part A6 and its supporting Part B have been developed with reference to the Admissions to Higher Education Steering Group (The 'Schwartz Report', September 2004) paper, Fair admissions to higher education: recommendations for good practice and with the Quality Code. The five main principles in the Schwartz Report state that a fair admissions system should:

- Be transparent, and provide consistent and efficient information
- Select students who are able to complete the course as judged by their achievements and potential
- Use assessment methods that are reliable and valid
- Minimise barriers to applicants
- Be professional in every respect and underpinned by institutional structures and processes.

A6.1 OVERVIEW

Blackpool and The Fylde College is committed to providing high quality, flexible and easily accessible education and training for individuals, organisations and the local community. The College fosters a diverse learning community in which students will meet people from different cultures, thereby enhancing their skills of critical reasoning, teamwork and communication, and thus preparing them for successful participation in their chosen careers and roles.

The College accepts that it is not possible to legislate for every circumstance which might arise in the admission process but strives to ensure that it provides a fair and equitable service to all students.

All applicants will be offered the opportunity to declare a disability. Applicants with disabilities or learning difficulties are asked to disclose these during the application process so that suitable support arrangements can be made before they start their programme. The College may require further information to determine the level of support needs and will make every effort to provide reasonable adjustments.

The College reserves the right to draw upon all information from previous applications (including correspondence, personal statements, references, or interview) or any previous registrations as a student when assessing suitability for a chosen programme and will observe the procedures and deadlines for the handling of applications as set out by Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS).

A6.2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

A6.2.1 AIMS

The College is committed to providing an admissions process that ensures fairness, transparency and equal opportunities within the legal framework of the United Kingdom.

The College welcomes applications from candidates regardless of their background and aims to eliminate discrimination on the grounds of gender, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, sexual orientation, political beliefs, religious beliefs or practices, disability, marital status, family circumstances, parental/carer status, spent criminal convictions, age, or any other inappropriate ground.

The College aims to provide accurate information and advice to prospective students concerning its opportunities for higher education study which will help them to make an informed choice regarding the programmes which most suit their interests and skills.

The College also recognises that making an application for higher education is an important decision and it is committed to providing potential applicants with accurate and clear information from the outset. Such information will include, for example, entry requirements, financial costs, and the availability of financial support.

The College aims to:

- Attract applicants who will benefit from the opportunities afforded by higher level study
- Recruit students from a wide range of backgrounds who have the potential and motivation to succeed
- Foster a diverse learning community which contributes to the intellectual and cultural vitality of the College

These aims will be achieved by:

- Raising aspirations and encouraging applications from all those with the motivation and academic ability to thrive, whatever their background
- Assessing each application carefully and fairly
- Offering places to applicants who have the potential to achieve

A6.2.2 OBJECTIVES

Blackpool and The Fylde College affirms the right of all potential students to receive:

- Full and detailed information about programme provision and additional services and facilities to enable applicants to make an informed decision
- Appropriate guidance, where necessary or requested
- Access to transparent entry criteria

- An induction to the College services and facilities and to their chosen learning programme, once they have enrolled

All decisions relating to admissions will be based on:

- Transparency
- Equality of opportunity
- Respect for the rights of the individual
- Consistency of practice and procedures
- Confidentiality and disclosure protocols

A6.3 ENTRY CRITERIA

Admission to a programme of study shall be subject to the principle that the College has a reasonable expectation that the applicant will be able to fulfil the objectives of the programme and achieve the standard required for the award.

Published entry criteria for programmes represent the usual level of academic attainment an applicant is expected to achieve prior to being admitted to that programme. These criteria are not intended to provide a guarantee that all applicants who satisfy the criteria may be offered a place, nor that all applicants to be made an offer will receive an identical offer to one another.

Entry criteria will be periodically reviewed in consultation with relevant members of academic staff. Such criteria will not normally be changed during an admissions cycle. The criteria published on the College web site will be the most up-to-date and will always take precedence over that contained in hard copy publications, and/or third party websites.

The College is committed to giving full and fair consideration to all relevant academic qualification information presented by each applicant. Whilst the College expresses its typical academic admissions criteria in the terms of a range of the most commonly presented qualifications, the College welcomes applications from candidates who have (or who will) achieve an equivalent standard in a range of other qualifications, including those offered internationally.

The College also welcomes applications from those who can demonstrate relevant professional, industrial or commercial experience and expertise who may not meet the specified academic qualification requirements.

Applicants who have already studied relevant higher education modules and/or qualifications may be eligible for the consideration under the College RPL/APEL process in order to gain advanced entry onto their chosen programme of study.

Admissions and designated curriculum staff are expected to use professional judgement in assessing the academic potential of individual candidates, taking a number of factors into

account, including educational and social context, and the motivation and commitment of the applicant.

Criteria for assessing the Personal Statement may include:

- Demonstrated interest in and commitment to the subject
- Evidence of clear thinking and understanding
- Appropriateness of the programme in relation to the candidate's declared interests and aspirations
- Non-academic achievement and/or experience, or extra-curricular interests, that indicate the likely contribution a candidate will make to the life of the College
- Exceptional individual circumstances or personal barriers to learning e.g. extended illness or being in local authority care
- Other relevant skills – e.g. foreign languages

Suitably qualified applicants should normally be aged 18 years or over at the start of their programme of study.

In the case of specific employer sponsored programmes such as those at the Nautical Campus or those with BAE, entrants must be employed as a condition of entry on to their programme. In such cases the employers will undertake relevant and appropriate selection processes.

A6.3.1 INTERVIEWS AND AUDITIONS

Entry to some programmes of study may require an interview, audition or similar assessment. Any programmes with this requirement will ensure all candidates are fully informed regarding the process, including the rationale, information about how the process will be conducted and the criteria on which candidates will be judged. The process and outcomes must be documented.

A6.3.2 ADDITIONAL SELECTION INSTRUMENTS

In general there is no requirement for applicants to provide supplementary written evidence to support an application. However exceptionally, it may in certain circumstances be appropriate to request additional written evidence in non-standard applications, for example to give further consideration to a candidate whose UCAS form does not provide sufficient information on which to base a decision.

In all cases where additional selection instruments are used, applicants declaring a disability will be offered reasonable and appropriate adjustments.

Where additional selection instruments have been used, the process and outcomes must be documented

A6.3.4 ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

Where English is not the applicant's first language the College will request that the applicant meets the requirements of the Home Office's English Language Test. A student's test certificate cannot be dated later than 2 years before the programme starts.

Exceptions to this may be where the applicant has studied a level 3 programme in the UK or can demonstrate that they have lived in the UK for sufficient time and do not require a test. Each individual case will be considered on its own merit based on the subject to be taught and reasonableness of adjustments required.

A6.3.5 UK VISAS AND IMMIGRATION

To ensure compliance with UK Visas and Immigration, students requiring a Tier 4 (student) visa to enter the UK and whose first language is not English are required to undertake a Secure English Language Test (SELT) provided by IELTS.

Students who do not originate from the European Union/European Economic Area are subject to the restrictions outlined by UK Visas and Immigration. Any offer made for a place is subject to the student having the correct immigration clearance normally covering the full duration of their intended programme of study. Further information is contained within the College's Home Office UKVI Policy.

A6.4 CRIMINAL RECORDS

The application process requires applicants to disclose relevant unspent criminal convictions. Where a relevant conviction is disclosed we will take this into account when considering the application. For some programmes, e.g. teaching, health, social work and others where studies necessitate interaction with children and/or vulnerable adults, applicants must declare all criminal convictions including spent sentences and cautions and bind-over orders.

Applications may in some cases need to meet the requirements of any Professional or Statutory Body. The College has a duty of care to its staff and student community and is therefore obliged to ensure that the admission of a particular individual will not endanger that community or any individual or group within it.

Initial consideration of an application from a person with a criminal conviction which has not been spent under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act, or from someone undergoing police investigation and/or is on bail for an alleged offence, cannot be made solely on academic judgement as to her/his ability to benefit from the programme applied for.

It is not appropriate to reject the applicant with a criminal conviction on that basis alone but the duty of care the College has to all stakeholders and the wider community require careful consideration of each individual case. If the applicant is considered academically capable of

benefiting from a programme, the relevant Head of Curriculum will make a judgement based on as much information as possible.

If information concerning criminal convictions or police investigations only comes to light after an offer has been made, or a student has been enrolled, the above procedures must still be adhered to. Each case should be assessed individually, but the College reserves the right to withdraw offers and to terminate registration on the grounds of admission obtained by deception.

A6.5 DUTY OF CARE

The College has a duty of care to its staff and student community and is therefore obliged to ensure that the admission of a particular individual will not endanger or intimidate that community or any individual or group within it. Where an application may cause concern the application will be referred to the Student Support and Wellbeing Team.

Applications relating to someone with a disability or medical condition that may endanger or intimidate an individual or group cannot be made solely on academic judgement. In such cases it would not be appropriate to reject such an applicant on this basis alone and may also be considered discriminatory. There is however a duty of care owed to the College and the wider community; any such applications that may fall into this category will require careful consideration on an individual basis.

If the applicant is considered academically capable of benefiting from a programme, the Student Support and Wellbeing Team will obtain as much information as possible about the individual. The applicant will be asked to provide references from suitably qualified professionals, if necessary.

References from medical professionals, employers or social workers, who can offer evidence that any behaviour would no longer pose a threat, are acceptable to support an application but are not to be used in isolation. Those involved in admissions decisions of this nature must consider the duty of care they owe to all stakeholders and provide a measured assessment of the application supported, wherever possible, by documentary evidence. Consideration must be made of the need to inform other College services but only where this is an essential requirement.

A6.6 DECEPTION

A6.6.1 DEFINITIONS

The College expects that applicants will have provided full, honest, and accurate information on their application form and in all subsequent communications. Where the College has reason to suspect that this may not be the case, it reserves the right to investigate the matter fully. The definitions adopted by UCAS are relevant to the College's Admissions regulations:

Fraud: When a person or persons conspire to deceive another person or group of persons into believing that a claim made by that person or group is genuine when in fact it is false. This could comprise false information given on an application regarding qualifications or experience, or the provision of a fake certificate or reference to support an application, or the deliberate omission of relevant information.

Plagiarism: False information copied into an application from a third party source constitutes plagiarism whether it is intentional or unintentional.

A6.6.2 DETECTION

Where an application is believed to be either fraudulent or plagiarised, the College reserves the right to:

- Request additional information to verify an application;
- Put the application process on hold whilst investigating the alleged fraudulent application and/or plagiarism;
- Withdraw the application/registration/place if it is proven, or if the College has reasonable belief, that the information provided is false, or if the applicant/student refuses to provide the requested information;

UCAS now check all personal statements using a similarity detection system, Copycatch. Each incoming personal statement is compared against a library of personal statements already in the UCAS system and a library of sample statements collected from a variety of websites and other sources, including paper publications (but filters out any instances of 'own plagiarism', i.e. if an applicant uses the same statement in two admissions cycles).

Any statements showing significant levels of similarity are reviewed by members of the UCAS Similarity Detection Service. Institutions are then notified on a daily basis of any cases where there are reasonable grounds to suspect plagiarism. At the same time, an applicant is also notified that the personal statement has been identified as potentially plagiarised. Decisions about what action, if any, to take regarding any notified cases rests with the individual institutions.

Each identified instance will be carefully reviewed to determine if there is a case to answer. If there is, an investigation will be conducted into the allegations and a decision made by Admissions in consultation with the Programme Leader and Director of HE.

The discovery, however belated, by the College of any form of fraudulent, untrue or misleading statement (including omission of pertinent facts) by an applicant on an application or enrolment form, or made at an audition or assessment, may lead to an immediate withdrawal of any offer of a place or termination of registration.

A6.7 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Director of Marketing is responsible for ensuring that the regulations and associated procedures for the administration of the admissions process are adhered to and that they

are in line with the requirements of the QAA Quality Code and the Office for Students approved, Access and Participation Plan. In addition to this the Director of Marketing is responsible for:

- Ensuring, in conjunction with Heads of Curriculum, that designated staff are appropriately trained in order to accept students on to programmes on the basis of their confirmed qualifications.
- Ensuring, in conjunction with the Head of Management Information and Funding that the information provided to applicants is up-to-date and accurate.
- Ensuring that the Admissions team are clearly informed of programme recruitment targets.

A6.8 MONITORING

The effectiveness of the admissions processes will be reviewed through:

- Regular analysis of applications by curriculum areas and subject area
- Annual analysis of conversion rates from application to enrolment
- Annual analysis of appeals in relation to admissions

A7 MANAGEMENT OF STUDY PLANS

A7.1 REGISTRATION

All students on all programmes are required to enrol annually with Blackpool and The Fylde College. Students' annual enrolments indicate the award to which they are working, the stage they have reached in that award, the agreed timescales for completion and the modules to be completed in a particular academic year.

Any student starting or continuing on a programme of study where they are required to select from optional modules, as specified in the programmes validation document, must complete the HE Optional Modules Enrolment Form.

These enrolments form a study plan and the basis of a student agreement between the student and Blackpool and The Fylde College. All changes to study are subject to approval and must be documented.

Students are expected to complete all required modules within an academic year unless they have in place an approved PMC and/or IoS submission.

A7.2 AMENDMENTS TO STUDY PLANS

During a student's enrolment there may be cause to amend their study plan. These changes can be made at various levels or through various procedures as detailed below.

Any student making an amendment to their study plan will be advised by the relevant Programme Leader as to the implications of making such a change. As a consequence of any change, a student's standing with the Student Loan Company (SLC) may also possibly change; students are therefore advised to contact the SLC before seeking an amendment to confirm their standing.

A7.3 AMENDMENTS AT CURRICULUM LEVEL

The following changes are permitted at the discretion of the relevant Curriculum Manager. The Curriculum Manager's consent must be given in writing and the agreed changes documented and passed to the HE Student Administration Manager for action. It is the responsibility of the Programme Leader to ensure that the documentation is completed accurately and in a timely manner.

A7.3.1 CHANGES IN STREAMS OR OPTIONAL MODULES

The Curriculum Manager may permit students to change the modules they study in a particular year if the changes made are acceptable within the validation of their programme and do not dilute the total volume of academic credit to be undertaken within the academic year.

The Curriculum Manager may also permit a student to transfer between streams within the same programme so long as:

- The target awards are at the same level and of the same type
- The volume and level of credit undertaken in the academic year is unchanged
- Completion of the new award can be achieved within the students existing enrolment

Students may not elect to transfer from a module where for reasons of learning, teaching or assessment it is deemed academically unsound to do so.

A7.4 AMENDMENTS AT CURRICULUM AREA LEVEL

The relevant Head of Curriculum may permit the following changes, subject to the agreement of the HE Academic Registrar who will ensure that all changes comply with all relevant regulations. It is the responsibility of the Programme Leader to ensure that the documentation is completed accurately and in a timely manner. The HE Student Administration Manager is responsible for ensuring that such changes are correctly and promptly acted on.

A7.4.1 CHANGES BETWEEN STUDY MODES

Students may be permitted to change their study mode (e.g. full- to part-time or vice versa), during their studies; such an amendment is subject to the availability of the desired mode of study.

A7.4.2 TRANSFER BETWEEN PROGRAMMES

Students may be permitted to transfer between programmes leading to different awards. Where programmes contain identical academic modules, any such modules completed on the original programme will be transferred to the student's new programme as 'credit transfer'. Other modules may be considered under RPL procedures.

A7.5 AMENDMENTS INITIATED BY PANEL DECISIONS

A7.5.1 PERSONAL MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES AND INTERRUPTION OF STUDY

A student, who has been granted either PMC (Section A4.11) or IoS (Section A4.11.6), as a result of the process, may need to amend their study plan per the procedure itself.

A7.6 LIMITED SCOPE

Changing study plans can have significant impact on the practicalities of how a student can complete their studies, and indeed whether completion is possible at all. Nothing in the above imposes a duty on Blackpool and The Fylde College to agree to any particular request for a change in study plan.

Blackpool and The Fylde College staff will endeavour to provide good advice to students who wish to change their plans but any obligation on Blackpool and The Fylde College to ensure that progression routes remain open is strictly limited to completion of the target award of the modified plan and direct progression through that plan as agreed.

Blackpool and The Fylde College specifically does not undertake to keep routes open indefinitely and IoS students must be warned that the structure and content of awards changes over time. While all reasonable steps will be taken to ensure that an IoS student is not unnecessarily disadvantaged, the grant of permission to interrupt study does not constitute a guarantee that the student will be able to return to the same programme at the same point as they left.

A7.7 ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Nothing in the above sections places any duty on Blackpool and The Fylde College to agree to any particular request from a student.

It is an overriding principle that the proposed programme, completed in the proposed manner should form an academically valid body of learning and should be fully in keeping with the expectations for achievers of the relevant award at the time it is made. For this reason, Blackpool and The Fylde College reserves the right to refuse requests for changes in study plans, or requests to return to study after a break, if it considers that the academic integrity of the relevant award would be compromised.

The following examples illustrate this premise, but are by no means exhaustive.

- Changes to a study plan that make the relevance of previous learning questionable. Such as completion of the same (e.g. Research methods) module in so different a context that credit transfer is inappropriate.
- Re-planning study such that the timescales are not consistent with maintaining currency of knowledge. For example, extending study in such a way that a major technological or legislative change happens during the programme and is not reflected in the modules the individual student has completed.
- Returning after a break during which the original programme has been retired or substantially amended.
- Returning after a break of such duration or following such illness that the knowledge, understanding and/or skill covered in modules already completed may not remain relevant.

A8 ACADEMIC MALPRACTICE

Blackpool and The Fylde College unequivocally condemns academic malpractice including acts of cheating and plagiarism.

This malpractice is any behaviour that gives an unfair advantage to a particular student. It can usefully be divided into three sub categories: cheating, fabrication of results and plagiarism.

It is an academic offence for a candidate to commit any act designed to obtain an unfair advantage with a view to achieving a higher grade or mark than they would otherwise secure. Any attempt to convey deceitfully the impression of acquired knowledge, skills, understanding, or credentials, is a serious offence and may constitute grounds for sanctions up to exclusion

A8.1 CHEATING

Cheating is any dishonest practice that presents a misleading representation of a student's true level of achievement in assessment. It can take various forms including, but not restricted to, those listed below.

A8.1.1 COURSEWORK

- Collusion, where a piece of work prepared by a group is represented as if it were the student's own
- Commission or use of work by the student which is not their own and representing it as if it were
- The commission of and or use of a paper from a commercial service, including internet sites, whether pre-written or specially prepared for the student concerned.
- Submission of work produced by another person, either by a fellow student or a person who is not a member of the College.
- Duplication of the same or almost identical work for more than one module.
- Submission of another student's work, whether with or without that student's knowledge or consent.

A8.1.2 EXAMINATION

In addition to any of the above:

- Any breach of the rules for Blackpool and The Fylde College examinations procedures, including copying from or conferring with other candidates or using unauthorised material or equipment in an examination room.
- Impersonating or allowing another to impersonate a candidate.
- Failure to abide by the instructions of a duly authorised examination invigilator.

A8.2 FABRICATION OF RESULTS

Fabrication of results occurs when a student claims to have carried out tests, experiments or observations that have not taken place or presents results not supported by the evidence with the object of obtaining an unfair advantage.

A8.3 PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism can be defined as: the action of utilising or closely imitating the language / work of another author as if the product were one's own. Blackpool and The Fylde College Academic Regulations categorise any such behaviour into one of the two types below.

A clear distinction must be drawn between inexperienced academic study and writing skills (especially among first year undergraduates and international students) and deliberate deception. The former requires remedial teaching and only the latter deserves severe penalties. Intentionality is difficult to establish, so the framework allows a first offence based on "benefit of doubt", with a relatively light penalty and a requirement that the student seeks appropriate study skills advice. Subsequent plagiarism offences are more likely to be deliberate, so the penalty system becomes progressively more serious.

Ignorance of proper procedures or of good practice in academic writing is no excuse, particularly if a student has previously been accused of plagiarism or poor academic practice, advised to seek study skills help, and fails to learn the lessons.

A8.3.1 MINOR OFFENCE

Minor offences would include poor referencing, unattributed quotations, inappropriate paraphrasing, incorrect or incomplete citations, or up to several sentences of direct copying without acknowledgement of the source. For classification of a minor offence it must be the marker's judgement that the affected text results from poor academic practice rather than a deliberate intent to deceive.

A8.3.2 MAJOR OFFENCE

A major offence shall be defined as copying multiple paragraphs in full without acknowledgement of the source, taking essays from the Internet without revealing the source, copying all or much of the work of a fellow student with or without his/her knowledge, submitting the same piece of work for assessment under multiple modules or two or more recorded minor offences.

A9 PUBLISHED INFORMATION

Section A9 and its associated Part B have been devised to meet the requirements of the Quality Assurance Agency's (QAA) Quality Code and to comply with Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) guidance relating to UK higher education providers in meeting their responsibilities under consumer protection law.

A9.1 PROGRAMME INFORMATION

A9.1.1 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The HE Academic Registrar, through the Academic Development Standards Committee (ASDC) maintains oversight of HE curriculum development including validation, revalidation, amendment and closure. As such, it is responsible for coordinating amendments to published programme information amongst all stakeholders in order to maintain accuracy and consistency across all sources.

Management, Information and Funding's responsibilities include the creation and maintenance of key programme structure information in EBS and for fulfilling the requirements of the Office for Students in relation to the Unistats dataset. In creating the structure of a programme in EBS the 'core' configuration of a programme, programme title and code, University and Colleges Admissions Services (UCAS) code, start date, end date, duration, location of study and tuition fees are, where appropriate, automatically published on the relevant programme website.

Admissions responsibilities include the creation and maintenance of information published on the UCAS website so as to reflect the information published on the College's website. Admissions also communicate with students who have applied to study on a programme when amendments are made that involve the data requirements set out in Appendix A of Part B11 Published Information.

The Director of Marketing is responsible for the creation and publication of the College Higher Education prospectus and for liaising with awarding bodies, Heads of Curriculum and programme leaders in order to agree and confirm the published content.

Programme leaders are responsible for the production and maintenance of accurate programme information which aligns directly to programme validation.

A9.1.2 PROGRAMME CLOSURE

The HE Academic Standards and Development Committee (ASDC) is responsible for considering any proposal to close a HE programme. Programme closure results in permanent withdrawal of the programme to new students, and the 'teach-out' of students currently on programme. This is differentiated from a suspension in programme recruitment which is more temporary in nature. Teach-out arrangements will consider the need to

appropriately support all students registered on programme, including those interrupting studies. Programme closure documents therefore propose:

- arrangements to deliver the programme in full to all registered students
- to offer an alternative programme within the institution where appropriate
- to offer support and guidance in helping students who wish to transfer to other provider enact their decision
- to consider cases where current students have formally interrupted their studies

Where neither of these proposed options are acceptable the opportunity to discuss refunding cost (all or in part) will be afforded to the student.

A9.1.3 HE WIDER SECTOR PROGRAMME CLOSURE

Blackpool and The Fylde College is aware of its responsibilities to the higher education wider sector and as such will always attempt to mitigate the impact of from matters such as disorderly programme closure, institutional loss of tier 4 status, or disorderly institutional closure. In doing so the College will work together with funding and representative bodies to facilitate timely and orderly transfer of displaced students from other institutions wherever possible.³

A9.2 INFORMATION PERTAINING TO HE PROVISION

A9.2.1 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The HE Academic Registrar is responsible for maintaining the accuracy of the College Wider Information Set (WIS). Where policies and procedures are identified as being available to students, it is the responsibility of the author to ensure that appropriate provision is made to publish documentation to current and prospective students.

The College also publishes a wide range of information which relates to its higher education provision. Marketing regularly review the authors and owners of published information who have the ultimate responsibility of ensuring accuracy and currency.

³ GuildHE Statement of Good Practice

<http://www.guildhe.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Statement-of-good-practice-Nov15.pdf>