

## Higher Education Assessment and Marking Regulations Policy

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*\* Policies will be reviewed more frequently if legal changes or good practice require*

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### Contents

<b>1. Background and Rationale .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2. Scope of the Regulations .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>3. HE Assessment Requirements .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>4. Assessment Briefs .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>5. Submission Methods and Use of Turnitin:.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>6. Student Feedback on Completed Assessments: .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>7. Special Arrangements .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>8. Extenuating Circumstances .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>9. Late submission and re-assessment: .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>10. Marking and feedback.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>11. Academic misconduct: .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>12. Assessment Appeals: .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>13. Regulations Governing the Conduct of Time-Based Assessments (Examinations) .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>14. Office for Students .....</b>	<b>9</b>

## 1. Background and Rationale

The Quality Assurance Agency (“QAA”) Quality Code sets out the following Expectation (B6) regarding the assessment of students which higher education providers are required to meet:

*“Higher education providers operate equitable, valid and reliable processes of assessment, including for the recognition of prior learning, which enable every student to demonstrate the extent to which they have achieved the intended learning outcomes for the credit or qualification being sought.”*

## 2. Scope of the Regulations

This policy encompasses all Higher Education (“HE”) students undertaking a qualification at North Kent College (“the College”) with sites based in Dartford, Gravesend, Tonbridge and Hadlow.

For University of Greenwich awarded programmes, staff and students are required to follow the **“University of Greenwich Academic Regulations for Taught Awards”**.

For University of Kent awarded programmes, staff and students are required to follow the **“University of Kent Academic Regulations for Taught Awards”**.

For Canterbury Christ Church awarded programmes, staff and students are required to follow the **“Canterbury Christ Church Academic Regulations for Taught Awards”**.

For Pearson awarded programmes, staff and students are required to follow regulations provided within the **“BTEC Centre Guide to Assessment (Level 4 to 7)”** document.

All higher education programmes follow the general assessment principals set out within the generic North Kent College **“Assessment and Marking Policy”**, unless they are superseded by any of the following:

- 2.1. **“University Academic Regulations for Taught Awards”** (for University of Greenwich, University of Kent and Canterbury Christ Church University awarded programmes);
- 2.2. **“BTEC Centre Guide to Assessment (Level 4 to 7)”** Pearson Academic Regulations (for Pearson awarded programmes); and
- 2.3. HE-specific regulations specified in this document.

### **3. HE Assessment Requirements**

Assessment at a HE level should be:

- 3.1. set at the appropriate level on the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications ("FHEQ");
- 3.2. integral to programme design and QAA Subject-Benchmark Statements;
- 3.3. clearly mapped to the module outcomes;
- 3.4. devised in accordance with previous feedback provided by external examiners;
- 3.5. adequately internally moderated prior to being made available to students;
- 3.6. reviewed and evaluated on a yearly basis;
- 3.7. fair to all students and free from bias;
- 3.8. valid, explicit, transparent and reliable;
- 3.9. timely and incremental;
- 3.10. consistent;
- 3.11. manageable and efficient;
- 3.12. undertaken by staff who are appropriately qualified and competent to perform the task;
- 3.13. in line with relevant regulations and policies;
- 3.14. carried out securely;
- 3.15. varied throughout a programme of study;
- 3.16. designed to limit academic misconduct; and
- 3.17. made available to students in appropriate and accessible forms, including virtual learning environments.

### **4. Assessment Briefs**

Assessment briefs may be available in paper or electronic formats. All assignment briefs must be internally verified prior to being made available to students, and should contain each of the following:

- 4.1. method of assessment e.g. essay, portfolio, written exam, practical assessment, presentation;
- 4.2. method of submission e.g. Turnitin, Moodle, paper format;
- 4.3. deadline(s);
- 4.4. information relating to word count or duration of assessment;
- 4.5. assessment criteria;
- 4.6. scenario/tasks;
- 4.7. marking criteria;
- 4.8. word count (where applicable);
- 4.9. designated area/method to record student comments upon receiving their feedback (including signature and date);
- 4.10. designated area/method to record internal verification feedback (including signature and date); and
- 4.11. student declaration stating that it is their own work (to be signed and dated by the student).

## **5. Submission Methods and Use of Turnitin:**

Where available and applicable, Turnitin should be used by HE assessors to monitor instances of plagiarism. In addition to this purpose, Turnitin also provides an electronic means of receipted submission, allows word count to be monitored, and allows for online marking and feedback.

Assignment briefs should clearly state the required submission method (e.g. Turnitin, paper copy, e-portfolio, Moodle).

## **6. Student Feedback on Completed Assessments:**

All assessment briefs should have allocated space or opportunity to gain feedback from students regarding the completed assessments. This allows for the following:

- 6.1. students to acknowledge and accept the grades awarded;
- 6.2. an *informal* enquiry as to the validity/accuracy of the grade if a student believes that they have a justified grievance related to an individual assessment decision. This should be used where an applicant feels that the wrong assessment grade has been recorded, rather than to appeal

against 'academic judgement', which is deemed inappropriate within higher education. For further guidance, staff and students are recommended to read the College's **"HE Student Assessment Appeals Policy"**;

- 6.3. to comment on specific aspects of feedback that may have been helpful to them; and
- 6.4. to identify future areas of improvement and create goals based upon feedback given.

It may not always be appropriate for students to write long passages of text but, at the very least, students should be encouraged to sign and date the completed assessment and write "Grade accepted".

## **7. Special Arrangements**

Special assessment arrangements may be made for higher education students who have provided evidence of an applicable and valid "Needs Assessment Report". Assessment arrangements are governed by the recommendations made within the "Needs Assessment Report", must conform to regulations specified by the awarding body (i.e. University of Greenwich, University of Kent, CCCU or Pearson) and must be agreed and confirmed to the student beforehand. Agreed special arrangements may include additional time to complete assessment, use of a scribe, or completion of an alternative assessment method. The granting of additional time to complete the coursework does not affect the student's right to submit a request for an extension on the grounds of extenuating circumstances.

## **8. Extenuating Circumstances**

Students who are suffering from a serious illness or other problems and which are outside their control and which may prevent them from showing their real level of performance, may wish to put forward extenuating claims for consideration. In this case, staff and students should refer to one of the following documents:

- 8.1. University **"Regulations Governing Student Claims of Extenuating Circumstances"**

Students should make individual representation to individual Programme Leaders and accepted claims may result in the student being able to submit or conduct assessments at an agreed later date.

## 9. Late submission and re-assessment:

Students on university franchised programmes, should refer to the university policies which are set out below:

[Extenuating circumstances | Student Services | University of Greenwich](#)

[Mitigating Circumstances \('Concessions'\) - Central Student Administration - University of Kent](#)

[Extenuating circumstances - Canterbury Christ Church University](#)

### **Pearson Programmes:**

The generic grading descriptors published in each BTEC Higher National specification should be used to devise contextualised merit and distinction grading criteria that require evidence of meeting time-related activities (tutors are referred to the [btec-centre-guide-to-assessment-level-4-7.pdf \(pearson.com\)](#)). This means that students who submit work after the published deadline and who have not been granted an extension will not be able to meet the merit and distinction grade descriptors for Pearson Programmes.

Module tutors may decide not to assess late work until the end of the academic year. In this case, students will not be notified of the grade achieved until after the Assessment Board. Failed assessments are subject to the rulings of the assessment board, which may include a summer reassessment, or failure of the module.

If work is submitted more than two weeks late, students may be asked by the module tutor to complete an alternative assessment or even repeat the module at a later date. This decision will depend on the nature and content of the assessment.

The module tutor (in agreement with the programme leader) may opt to conduct a re-take of the alternative assessment under supervised conditions – even if this was not necessary for the original assessment. This is to avoid possible plagiarism.

For failed assessments, under normal circumstances a student will not be allowed to retake the assessment unless permitted to do so by the assessment board in the form of a “summer re-assessment”. If a summer re-assessment has been awarded, providing the original assessment allowed for achievement of Merit and Distinction criteria, grading of the re-assessed assignment grade should be capped at a “pass level”.

## 10. Marking and feedback

Work that has been submitted on time should be marked in a timely fashion and returned to the student. Where there are not exceptional circumstances, 15 working days will constitute a reasonable time and all work submitted on time should be assessed and returned to students within this time.

A sample of marked work (in accordance to Awarding Body) is internally verified prior to being returned to the students. The internal verifier should add comments onto the assignment front sheet of each of the sampled assignments.

## 11. Academic misconduct:

Assessment tasks are designed to reduce, as far as is practicable, the possibility of plagiarism and collusion and other instances of academic misconduct. Students should be made aware of the use of Turnitin to assist in the avoidance of plagiarism. For University programmes, guidance provided within the “**University of Academic Regulations for Taught Awards**” should be followed.

## 12. Assessment Appeals:

Students who feel that they have been unfairly treated within an assessment procedure or grade should be referred to the “**HE Student Assessment Appeals Policy**”.

## 13. Regulations Governing the Conduct of Time-Based Assessments (Examinations)

For University awarded programmes, staff and students are required to follow the University “**Academic Regulations for Taught Awards**” section relating to Examinations. [Academic Regulations for Taught Awards | Documents | University of Greenwich](#)

For Pearson programmes, the following regulations apply:

- 13.1. all bags, books, pencil cases etc. must be left in the designated area at the back or to the side of the examination room as instructed by the invigilators and must not be beside the desks. All gangways should remain clear of obstruction;
- 13.2. all mobile phones, pagers and personal stereos must be switched off and must not be placed on the examination desk or be on one's person;
- 13.3. soft drinks in small plastic bottles are permitted at the discretion of the invigilators;
- 13.4. consumption of food is permitted on proven medical grounds only;

- 13.5. students are not permitted to wear hats and coats unless authorised to do so by the invigilator;
- 13.6. on entering the examination room a candidate becomes subject to the authority of the invigilator;
- 13.7. strict silence must be observed at all times in the examination room. The examination is deemed to be in progress from the time candidates enter the room until all the scripts have been collected;
- 13.8. candidates must not speak to or otherwise communicate with any other candidates throughout the examination;
- 13.9. a candidate who causes a disturbance during the examination will be required to leave the room and may be subject to an Assessment Offence report;
- 13.10. a candidate may not make use of any unauthorised book, document, notes or other inappropriate aid, nor communicate with any person other than the invigilator, nor attempt to complete his or her script by any other unfair means;
- 13.11. all stationery to be used must be checked by the invigilator prior to the exam;
- 13.12. all answers must be in English, unless otherwise instructed;
- 13.13. once a seen paper has been distributed, there should be no consultation between staff and candidates regarding the contents of the paper, except in the case of a possible inaccuracy;
- 13.14. it is the candidate's responsibility to inform the invigilator of illness occurring during an examination and to provide documented proof of the illness by the published deadline for the submission of extenuating circumstances;
- 13.15. any candidates who finish early or need to leave the exam must raise their hand and hand in their answer script to the invigilator before leaving their desk. They may leave the room only when given permission to do so by the invigilator. They must leave the room quietly, in order not to disturb other candidates. Candidates will not be permitted to re-enter the room once their script has been collected;
- 13.16. students who have been granted permission to leave the room and return to the exam, due to authenticated reasons such as a medical problem, will remain under exam conditions throughout;



- 13.17. candidates may not leave the examination room for the first 30 minutes from the beginning of an exam, nor for the last 15 minutes prior to the end of an exam;
- 13.18. candidates must stop writing when advised by the invigilator that the exam has ended. Any candidates who continue to write after the end of the exam may be subject to an Assessment Offence report;
- 13.19. candidates must remain seated and silent until all answer scripts have been collected and the invigilator gives permission to leave the room;
- 13.20. candidates may not remove from the examination room any examination stationery, or any other examination aids provided by the College;
- 13.21. candidates are required to clear all rubbish from their examination desk and put it in the bin on exit from the examination hall;
- 13.22. if a candidate is absent from a scheduled examination due to illness or serious unforeseen and unavoidable difficulty he or she must use the appropriate Extenuating Circumstances Procedure and submit appropriate documentary evidence, e.g. medical certificate, by the published deadline;
- 13.23. failure by a candidate to present himself or herself at the time appointed or failure to submit work having so presented himself or herself, without valid cause, shall normally be deemed to constitute failure in that assessment;
- 13.24. candidates are asked to observe requests for silence around the areas of the College where examinations are taking place; and
- 13.25. in case of an emergency evacuation an alarm will sound and candidates will be requested by the invigilator to leave by the fire exits in an orderly manner. Candidates may not return to the examination room until instructed to do so by the invigilator.

#### **14. Office for Students**

To register with the Office for Students ("OfS") a higher education provider must demonstrate that it meets threshold requirements relating to teaching quality, student protection, student support, financial sustainability, sound governance and management, and more. In some cases, it may be required to take action to improve access and participation for underrepresented groups. Students can be confident that a registered higher education provider meets these baseline requirements, and that OfS are monitoring it as its regulator. North Kent College is registered with the OfS.