

## Specialist Paper 7

# Submission of Late Work and Referrals. A guide for External Examiners and Centres

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### Introduction

This paper summarises the advice and guidance for External Examiners and centres on the late submission of learner work for summative assessment for BTEC NQF Higher Nationals.

To conform to the QAA Code of Practice, each centre will need to develop and publish its own assessment regulations relating to BTEC NQF Higher Nationals. The regulations should include a code of practice on how late submission of student work is dealt with; key principles are given below.

It is good practice for assessment regulations to:

- be made available to students as well as the programme team: key regulations could be included in the programme handbook
- be presented in an accessible and easy-to-understand format.

Centres will need to ensure that each programme team adheres to its assessment regulations at all times. Any exceptional assessment decisions will need to be approved by an Assessment Board or equivalent. Neither the programme tutor nor any other tutor has the authority to interpret the regulations without the authority of the Assessment Board.

The Edexcel External Examiner will advise whether the centre's published policies and procedures conform to Edexcel's published policies for BTEC qualifications and will monitor the effectiveness of their implementation.

### Key principles

- 1 Centres' policies and procedures should reflect the fact that BTEC Higher Nationals are vocational industry-linked programmes that prepare students for the world of work.
- 2 The assessment and grading criteria of a unit are the only standards by which a student's work can be assessed.
  - Centres are not permitted to modify or create additional pass assessment criteria.
  - Centre-devised assessment instruments must be relevant to the assessment and grading criteria of the unit by which they relate.
  - Centres are encouraged to produce clear assessments that:
    - provide a relevant scenario
    - give clear task guidance
    - use a variety of assessment methods (eg work-based projects, case studies, performance observation, etc.)
    - utilise practical skills
    - clearly demonstrate links to the assessment requirements of the unit

- utilise a variety of assessment activities which provide students with accessible opportunities to demonstrate their achievement of the assessment grading criteria.

- Centres must not be influenced by the late submission of work unless the assessment and grading criteria require evidence of:
  - meeting agreed timelines
  - the ability to plan/organise time effectively
  - the ability to work to industrial/commercial practices that include implicit timelines.
- Centres should use the generic grading descriptors published in each BTEC Higher National specification to devise contextualised merit and distinction grading criteria that require evidence of meeting time-related activities, for example:

Merit descriptor	Indicative characteristic		Distinction descriptor	Indicative characteristic
Identify and apply strategies to find appropriate solutions	An effective approach to study has been applied		Take responsibility for managing and organising activities	Substantial activities, projects or investigations have been planned, managed and organised

- It is important that centres set achievable deadlines for the submission of work and that they inform students of any repercussions for submitting work late. Centres can devise deterrents that encourage students to submit work on time. Centres must not, however, use the downgrading of late work as a deterrent.

Edexcel does not support one deterrent over another and leaves it to centres to decide which tactic to use when faced with students who occasionally or repeatedly submit work late, however two acceptable examples of deterrents are delaying feedback on the student's late work and not marking the late work. The consequences of not marking late work depends on the BTEC qualification – for a BTEC Higher National there is no compensation, so all units must be achieved at least at the pass grade. If students fail to achieve a pass in each one of their units, they may be deferred.

### Devising assessment regulations

In devising their assessment regulations, centres will need to address policy on late submission and should include statements on the following.

- The process for acceptance of late work and the consequences of submitting work past the agreed deadline. The process should state who has the authority to make the final decision on the implementation of the policy.
- Procedures for setting the date and time deadline(s) for submission of in-course assignments. It is recommended that a year timetable for issue and receipt of assessed work covering all units in a programme is developed and that unit leaders and assessors adhere to this timetable. This would reduce assessment overloading and assignment bunching.
- Procedures for setting the date, time and length of time-constrained assessments/examinations.

- A student will be informed of the grade achieved by late work only after the grade has been formalised at an Assessment Board.
- The circumstances under which work may be accepted and marked after the work of other students in the cohort has been graded and returned.
- Procedures for giving feedback to students.
- Procedures for appeal against decisions.
- Deterrents for late participation in in-class assessment.
- Deterrents for non-submission/non-participation in group work.
- Deterrents for persistent late/non-submission of work by individual students.
- A clear description of the procedures for accepting late submissions or granting reassessment opportunities. In the interests of fairness and consistency assessors or unit leaders should not make decisions regarding the acceptance of late work or awarding reassessment opportunities. The authority for this should rest with one person eg. the programme leader or with the Assessment Board. Clarity over who may or may not make decisions and the management of the process must be identified. The process for offering reassessment opportunities should be clearly set out in the Assessment Board regulations.

### **Extenuating circumstances affecting submission of work**

It is important for any assessment regulations to contain a section that deals with the process by which students can draw attention to any mitigating factors that may have affected their performance in any form of assessment. Centres will need to include statements on:

- the process for submission of extenuating/special circumstances and for notifying the Assessment Board
- who has the authority to sanction late submission of work on the grounds of mitigating factors and how students are notified of decisions
- confidentiality regarding extenuating/special circumstances claims
- examples of valid reasons for claiming extenuating circumstances
- criteria used to assess claims
- acceptable forms of documentary evidence
- procedures following disruption in time-constrained assessments
- the implications of circumstances such as short-term, long-term or chronic illness
- procedures for appeal against decisions on a claim.

### **Reassessment/resit opportunities**

Centre assessment regulations should contain statements on reassessment and resit opportunities and cover issues such as:

- clarification of who has the authority to make the decision to offer the student a reassessment opportunity, how the student is notified and the procedures for appeal against a decision
- the provision of sufficient, detailed feedback to students whose assessments have been referred to inform their resubmissions
- the appropriateness of devising a new assessment brief to cover criteria not achieved by a learner when a resubmission or reassessment of work is agreed. This may contain merit or distinction opportunities if deemed appropriate

- where reassessment of referred group work is required, a similar activity needs to be devised to enable the referral to be corrected
- the maximum number of reassessment opportunities that may be offered to a student for a single unit/module
- the maximum number of referrals/resit opportunities to be offered to a student over the whole Higher National programme.

#### Further information

Edexcel policies:

- *Assessment and Grading: Application of Criteria (AGAC 06-15)*
- *Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations for BTEC and NVQ Qualifications (RASSC 06-12)*  
and
- *QAA Code of Practice, Section 6 Assessment of Students (Sept 2006)*