

UCBC SUPPLEMENTARY REGULATIONS

FOR

HIGHER EDUCATION PEARSON BTEC HIGHER NATIONAL PROGRAMMES

**To be read in conjunction with the Pearson BTEC
Higher Nationals Centre Guide to Quality Assurance
and Assessment.**

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1. Introduction

1.1 University Centre at Blackburn College (UCBC)

These supplementary regulations apply only to Blackburn College's Higher Education Pearson BTEC provision, specifically to Higher National Certificates (HNC) and Higher National Diplomas (HND). They should be read as applying to all such Higher Education Pearson BTEC provision offered by the College irrespective of the locus of management and/or delivery, and to strictly no other part of the College's activities.

University Centre at Blackburn College is the Higher Education arm of Blackburn College. It manages and delivers all prescribed Higher Education within the College, which includes the Higher National programmes.

To avoid repetition, this distinction between the College as the legal entity and the University Centre as the delivery arm is not made in the text of these regulations.

All references to Blackburn College herein should be understood to refer to its prescribed Higher Education provision only.

Where the context requires, references to staff posts should be taken to be the appropriate posts within the University Centre staff.

1.2 Objects

Objects

The objects of Blackburn College are to enhance the quality of life and serve its communities by:

- Providing a wide range of vocationally and professionally relevant educational opportunities based on a commitment to innovation, participation and lifelong learning;
- Facilitating learning by the provision of high-quality teaching, informed and supported by the research and scholarship of staff;
- Advancing the community of learning by engaging in research in the sciences, scholarship in the humanities, and in artistic creation;
- Educating students to search for truth, to think critically, to communicate effectively, and to apply their knowledge for the common good
- Maintaining a commitment to the truth, integrity and coherence of its provision;
- The example and influence of its corporate life.

1.3 Scope & Application

These supplementary regulations outline the policies and procedures that contribute to academic quality assurance and enhancement at Blackburn College for the Pearson BTEC Higher Nationals programmes.

These supplementary regulations are designed for Pearson BTEC Higher Nationals programme and should be read and used in conjunction with the Pearson BTEC Higher National Centre Guide to Quality Assurance and Assessment. These supplementary regulations shall apply to the maximum extent possible within the requirements of the relevant awarding body, but in the case of conflict of regulations those of the awarding body shall take precedence.

These supplementary regulations shall continue in force until and unless amended or revoked by the Academic Board.

These regulations supersede all previous regulations and shall apply to all Blackburn College staff and students from the date of implementation in relation to Pearson BTEC Higher Nationals programmes.

1.4 Competent Authority

The final authority regarding interpretation and implementation of Blackburn College Policies and Regulations shall be with the Academic Board.

The Academic Board may, by minuted resolution, constitute sub-committees to administer the operation of the whole of these supplementary 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 Academic Board and shall report its decisions in writing to be included in the minutes of the next scheduled Academic Board meeting.

Where the Academic Board is satisfied that these supplementary regulations result in a significant disadvantage to any student who was already enrolled on their programme prior to the date of implementation or change, it shall have discretion to authorise variations from these supplementary regulations to ensure that the student is treated fairly. All such variations must be explicitly authorised in writing by the Academic Board.

2 Structure

2.1 Revising Authority

This document (Supplementary Regulations for Higher Education Pearson BTEC Higher National programmes) may only be changed by minuted resolution of the full Academic Board. Such changes have effect from the date of the Academic Board meeting at which they are approved unless a later date is explicitly included in the relevant resolution. By exception changes can be approved via Chairs action where immediate action is required.

Authority to approve all Academic Processes and Procedures relating to the implementation and administration of these regulations (including all rules, protocols, procedures, guidance, administrative arrangements and forms pertaining to them) can be delegated to other sub-committees, but this delegation may be revoked or amended by minuted resolution of the Academic Board.

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

2.2 Application

As stated in section 1.3, these supplementary regulations apply to awards it delivers on behalf of Pearson only to the extent permitted by the regulations of the relevant awarding body outlined in the Pearson BTEC Higher National Centre Guide to Quality Assurance and Assessment document.

3 Submission, Due Dates and Late Work

3.1.1 Submission

Submissions of written coursework, dissertations and projects will be made in accordance with arrangements approved by HE Quality and, where needed, Academic Board. For written submissions this will normally either be by electronic means or delivery to a 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.

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.

3.1.2 Due dates

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

Other assessments will have a due date for completion. The due time on that date will be taken to be 5pm, unless specifically notified. This date will be determined by the module tutor in consultation with the programme team and will be clearly stated on all assessment instruments.

3.1.3 Extensions of Due Dates

In cases where students request additional time to complete non-examination assessment work and that request is received before the original due date then the relevant programme leader will have the discretion to allow an extension of the original date not exceeding one term week. Programme leaders should take note of the dates of relevant assessment boards when considering extension requests and should seek to ensure that students' results will be available to the earliest board that is consistent with fair consideration of the students' circumstances. Mandatory guidance will be published to aid the programme leader in the exercise of their discretion.

In cases where an extension of more than one week is requested or where the programme leader feels it would be justified to grant a request that falls outside the guidance then the

matter must be referred to the Head of School (or their nominee) who will determine the length of extension allowed, if any.

The Head of School (or their nominee) may also vary examination arrangements for a student by, for example, allowing a change of the examination date or allowing a re-sit paper to be taken as a first attempt.

Due care must be taken in setting a new due date for an assessment to ensure that the student 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.

Where it is deemed necessary to ensure the integrity of the assessment process, an alternative assessment instrument may be used when an extension or alternative examination date is granted.

Extensions and/or deferrals will be confirmed to the student in writing a new due date and/or examination date. Dates may not be extended more than once without the permission of the Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement or their nominee.

Where an extension or alternative examination date has been granted, the new date will become the due date for that student. A record of the new due date and the reasons for the extension must be kept and must be available to the Assessment Boards.

Students requesting greater concessions than allowed above must apply for Mitigating Circumstances through the Mitigating Circumstances Panel within the specified deadlines, which is outlined in section 4.

3.1.4 Submissions of Late Work

Work which is submitted after the designated deadline (including any formally approved extensions) for an assessment is deemed late.

There may be module/unit and /or programme specific requirements or Professional and Statutory Regulations where late submission is not appropriate or applicable. These exceptions should be outlined in the programme specification, programme handbook or 'assessment brief' as appropriate.

A student that is likely to miss a deadline should discuss the situation as early as possible with the personal academic tutor and the module leader.

Where a student has a valid reason for late submission, which does not amount to an exceptional circumstance, the relevant Programme Leader can authorise a late submission request granting an extension of up to a maximum of 7 days with no grade penalty. In cases where an extension of more than one week is requested or where the Programme Leader feels it would be justified to grant a request that falls outside the guidance then the matter must be referred to the Head of School (or their nominee) who will determine the length of extension allowed, if any.

The time stamp of the work will be indicated by the submission date recorded in the electronic submission or in the event of a manual submission of technical drawings clearly evidenced by the receipt issued.

If serious circumstances beyond a student's control affect their ability to complete an assessment they may submit a Mitigating Circumstances application within 48 hours of the relevant deadline or examination. This must be accompanied by evidence and the work done to date, by the original assessment submission deadline. (See section 4 for more information on Mitigating Circumstances).

Where coursework is submitted between one and three days after the published deadline without an agreed extension the mark awarded for the assessment will be reduced in accordance with the table below.

Quality of Work	Grade Awarded
Distinction	Merit
Merit	Pass
Pass	Fail

For the purposes of calculating the three-day limit, any work due for submission on Saturday or Sunday will be deemed to be on time if it is submitted by 10:00 on the following Monday.

Where coursework is more than three days late without an agreed extension a Fail mark will be awarded. Where coursework is submitted late after an agreed extension, these penalties will be applied based on the extended due date.

As outlined in the Pearson BTEC Higher Nationals Centre Guide to Quality Assurance and Assessment (page 76) any work that is submitted late should be assessed 'without penalty' in the first instance, the late submission should be recorded, and the student should be made aware that the lateness of submission may have an impact on the grade as outlined in the table above. In addition, the student should be informed that they may wish to submit 'mitigating circumstances'; within the specified deadlines, if there are circumstances that have related to the late submission, which is outlined in section 4. If the student applies for Mitigating circumstances, then the decision of the panel will decide the outcome. If the student does not apply for Mitigating circumstances, then the late penalty as outlined above will apply.

4. Mitigating or Exceptional Circumstances and Suspension of study

4.1.1 Student Facing Panel Membership and Terms of Reference

The membership and terms of reference of the Student Facing Panel (SFP) will be determined by HE Quality. The SFP relates to student matters regarding mitigating/exceptional circumstances, but also to repeat unit/year, academic malpractice and suspensions of study, all of which are discussed in other areas of these regulations.

The SFP may co-opt other voting and non-voting members at its own absolute discretion. It may also invite students and/or members of staff to appear to give evidence in person.

The Chair of the Student Facing Panel formally records the outcome decision for each case, and informs the students and Programme Leaders individually of the outcome. The Chair also informs Chairs of Assessment/Award Boards, as well as other relevant parties, such as MIS-HE, Student Support Teams and the Finance Team, as appropriate.

SFP recommendations for the granting of concessions must be specific about the action(s) recommended, their scope (modules/units and assessments affected) and limitations (especially in terms of time). For example, the SFP may recommend that a student should be allowed to sit a missed examination at the next opportunity as a first attempt and it may recommend that a student should be reassessed in a particular module/unit when a particular medical problem has passed.

In the cases of students with problems of protracted nature the expiry date should be set shortly after a later SFP meeting. That meeting should consider the case again and, if appropriate, set a new expiry date. In such cases, the SFP should consider whether a further extension of concessions is academically sound and whether or not the student concerned is fit (or likely to become fit) to study before agreeing a new expiry date. The panel is under no obligation to extend concessions where a student is unfit to study and not likely to become fit within a reasonable period of time, or where to do so would be academically unsound.

The decisions of the SFP relating to validity of claims are taken by Assessment and Award boards without discussion and the information remains confidential. Recommendations relating to concessions are subject to Assessment board approval.

In order to avoid unhelpful delays, staff and students will act on recommendations of the SFP so long as it is made clear to all parties that these recommendations are subject to assessment board approval and that the relevant assessment board may overturn recommendations and impose requirements of its own.

The mitigating circumstances process does not determine the precise timings or arrangements for affected assessments, merely extent of concessions to be granted. It is a matter for the relevant programme team to make the necessary arrangements which

should be treated as extensions to due dates but without the need for further formal approval.

Mitigating circumstances applications should normally be submitted within 48 hours of the relevant deadline or examination; where this is not possible the application should provide satisfactory evidence to explain the delay in submission.

4.1.2 Mitigating Circumstances Criteria

The following details the grounds which will or may be considered by the Student Facing Panel regarding mitigating circumstances:

Examples of circumstances beyond the reasonable control of the student:

- bereavement (near relative only)
- serious accident, illness or serious infectious disease
- burglary and theft
- jury service
- maternity/paternity or adoptive leave
- major financial problems leading to acute stress

Examples of situations which may be considered beyond the reasonable control of the student:

- medical operation (if approved prior to the point of assessment or an emergency)
- hospital tests (if approved prior to the point of assessment or an emergency)
- being taken ill during an examination
- significant accident, injury, acute ailment or condition
- unanticipated and unavoidable professional obligations
- private or public transport failure leading to significant delays
- accommodation difficulties

In every case it will be necessary for the student to show that the impact of these circumstances was significant, unavoidable and not known to them in advance, not reasonably foreseeable, and that any action(s) the student could have reasonably have been expected to have taken to limit their impact had been taken.

The following circumstances will not normally be considered by the Board:

- accidents to friends or relatives (unless within 3 days prior to deadline or examination or where student is sole carer)
- family illness (except in an emergency (up to 3 days before a deadline or examination) or where the student is the sole carer)

examination anxiety/nerves
minor accidents or injuries
pregnancy
cold, cough, throat infection, unspecified viral infection (minor illness)
childcare problems that could have been anticipated
domestic problems (unless supported by independent evidence)
mistaking the deadline, or time management problems (including alarm not going off)
general financial problems
legal problems (unless required to attend Court on the day of the assessment)
holidays or booked travel arrangements
house moves
notes burned or stolen (unless supported by a fire or police report)
intermittent or last-minute computing equipment problems (discs, machines, printers, viruses)
inclement weather (unless exceptional/severe conditions)
ignorance of the Regulations or examination/assessment arrangement
inadequate planning and time management
having more than one examination on the same day
any event that could reasonably have been expected or anticipated.

4.1.3 Mitigating Circumstances Affecting Groups of Students

Particular conditions (e.g. disruption in an examination due to noise or computer problems, staff illness during the study period, procedural errors) may affect groups of students and their performance. Such problems should be identified by the Invigilator or other member of staff and reported to the relevant Assessment Board.

The nature of the event, the length of time it extended over, the students/module/unit affected and action taken/recommended (for example adjustments to the marks following discussion in the moderation process) should be indicated. The board will then act to take action where justified. The Programme Leader should inform students that Blackburn College will initiate the relevant action so avoiding the need for multiple individual submissions by students.

4.1.4 Evidence required to support claims for mitigating circumstances

Students must keep their Programme Leader informed of any adverse personal circumstances. All claims for consideration of Mitigating Circumstances must be supported by documentary evidence.

If an examination is missed due to medical problems the student must attempt to seek medical attention as quickly as possible, and attach a medical certificate to the claim. Medical certificates dated days later may not be regarded as sufficient evidence. The certificate must

relate specifically to the time of the illness and must contain a clear medical opinion that the student was unfit to take the examination.

Normally, the evidence supporting an application to HE Quality should be provided from sources independent of the student and Blackburn College staff. Only in the most exceptional circumstances may the Board accept evidence that is not independently certified.

4.1.5 Decisions of the Mitigating Circumstances Panel

The Student Facing Panel's decisions on the validity of students' MC claims, but not the detail of the claims, are reported to the relevant Assessment Board. SFP recommendations are subject to Assessment Board approval and an Assessment Board may overturn recommendations and impose requirements of its own.

4.1.6 Notification of Outcome to Students and Appeals

The SFP will report its decisions and any recommendations to the Student and Programme Leader, normally within 3 working days of the Panel meeting, and decisions will be available at the next relevant Assessment and Award Board. Where a student disagrees with the outcome of the SFP and is able to present additional relevant evidence, they may appeal to the next scheduled SFP.

4.1.7 Continuation of Study

A student whose case is under consideration by the Mitigating Circumstances Panel or who is appealing against a SFP decision shall have the right to continue with their current programme whether or not formal progression requirements have been met until such time as a final decision is reached, provided they is in good standing with Blackburn College. Students should be aware that there may be financial implications and that they could be liable for fees should their MC claim be unsuccessful.

Similarly, a student whose agreed SFP concession(s) have not yet expired shall have the right to continue with their current programme whether or not formal progression requirements have been met until the expiry of that/those concession(s), provided they is in good standing with Blackburn College.

This right is designed solely to ensure that a student whose MC appeal is upheld is not academically disadvantaged and it shall not be interpreted as acceptance of a failed student on a subsequent stage of the programme. Any continuation of study under these circumstances is at the student's own risk and failure to meet progression requirements after all MCP concessions have expired and any appeal has been decided may result in exclusion from the relevant programme.

4.1.8 Confidentiality

In applying to the SFP, students give their consent for their personal circumstances to be discussed by the panel. The MCP will keep this information confidential to its members and will not permit its use or disclosure outside the Board.

If a student's application involves a very sensitive personal matter or concerns a member of Blackburn College staff who may be a member of the MCP considering their case then the student should place their application in a sealed envelope marked 'for the personal attention of the Chair of the Student Facing Panel'. The Chair of the SFP will exercise their professional judgement on the extent of disclosure necessary for a fair decision to be made.

4.2 Suspension of Study

Students wishing to suspend their studies temporarily may request a suspension of their studies. Such requests should normally be for periods of not less than one semester. Students should not normally be granted suspensions of study totalling more than two years for the same programme of study.

Suspension of study is not a right and students must give a satisfactory reason and/or evidence supporting their request(s). The types of requests likely to gain agreement are informed by, but not limited to, the criteria for consideration of Mitigating Circumstances (see section 4).

When approving a suspension of study students must be fully aware of the impact of such a decision on their progress and any financial support they receive.

Where the SFP have granted a suspension of study, the Chair of the SFP must ensure that the students 'estimated completion date' recorded on BTEC/Pearson system is updated to reflect the new estimated date of completion.

Capacity to study

Where Blackburn College considers that a student's capacity to study is impaired it will invoke the Blackburn College Appropriateness to Study Policy.

4.3 Repeat units/year

Allowing a student to repeat a unit, year or level can give an unfair advantage over others and care should be taken not to grant them inappropriately. The College will follow the guidance in the *Repeat units* section found in the Pearson BTEC Higher National Centre Guide to Quality Assurance and Assessment. Any request for a repeat year will be considered on a case by case basis based on significant extenuating circumstances, evidenced by a reliable source, that a student's opportunity or capacity to study was significantly compromised during their studies. A repeat year will be reviewed by the Student Facing panel, in consultation with Pearson.

4.4 Academic Standing, Probation and Recovery

A student remains in 'good academic standing' so long as, with any proper adjustments required under these regulations in respect of their personal circumstances, they are making satisfactory progress towards their intended award.

A student may cease to be in good academic standing by:

- a) having unsatisfactory attendance or engagement;
- b) being late in submitting assessments or failing to submit assessments;
- c) failing assessments at the first attempt;
- or
- d) being subject to disciplinary proceedings or penalties

A student who ceases to be in good academic standing is thereby on Academic Probation.

A student on Academic Probation is required to:

- a) meet with their personal tutor to discuss their situation;
- b) provide a detailed self-assessment of the reasons behind their situation and the actions required to prevent any recurrence;
- and
- c) enter into and adhere to an Academic Recovery Plan designed to return them to good academic standing over the minimum realistic period of time.

An Academic Recovery Plan should provide the student with the minimum departure from the normal requirements of their programme of study necessary to provide them with a realistic opportunity to return to good academic standing and should not offer the student an unfair advantage over other students who have remained in good academic standing.

Each Academic Recovery Plan will specify:

- a) minimum acceptable levels of attendance and engagement;
- b) any specific actions required of the student;
- c) details of any amended or extended deadlines of assessments agreed as part of the plan (these deadlines will be treated as replacement due dates for these assessments);
- d) details of any failed assessments that the student is to be permitted to resubmit (these assessments will be capped at the bare minimum pass grade for the relevant programme);
- e) details of compulsory tutorials to review the student's progress.
- and
- f) any required engagement with other College processes or bodies.

A student will return to good academic standing once the requirements of their Academic Recovery Plan have been complied with in full provided that their academic results on completion of the plan do not exclude the possibility of the achievement of an award.

A student who does not comply with the requirements of their Academic Recovery Plan will be reported to the Quality Summit.

Where a student fails to meet the conditions of their recovery plan they should be withdrawn in accordance with Blackburn College processes and policy.

4.4.1 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 Blackburn College to agree to any particular request for a change in study plan.

Blackburn College staff will endeavour to give good advice to students who wish to change their plans but any obligation on Blackburn 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.

Blackburn College specifically does not undertake to keep routes open indefinitely and intercalating 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 intercalating student is not unnecessarily disadvantaged, the grant of permission to intercalate does not constitute a guarantee that the student will be able to return to the same programme at the same point as the student left.

4.4.2 Academic Integrity

Nothing in the above places any duty on Blackburn 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, Blackburn 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 point 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 secure.

5. Access Arrangements, Reasonable adjustments, and special consideration in internal assessments

The College and Pearson support access to our higher national vocational qualifications for students who are eligible for reasonable adjustment and/or special consideration in assessments, without compromising the assessment of the skills, knowledge, understanding, behaviours, or competence being measured.

The College will follow the guidance in the *Meeting assessment deadlines and mitigating circumstances* section found in the Pearson BTEC Higher National Centre Guide to Quality Assurance and Assessment and also the Pearson *Supplementary guidance for reasonable adjustments and special consideration in internal assessments* document.

5.1 Reasonable Adjustments (JCQ Definition):

The Equality Act 2010 requires an Awarding Body to make reasonable adjustments where a disabled person would be at a substantial disadvantage in undertaking an assessment. A reasonable adjustment for a particular person may be unique to that individual.

How reasonable the adjustment is will depend on a number of factors including the needs of the disabled student. An adjustment may not be considered reasonable if it involves unreasonable costs, timeframes or affects the security or integrity of the assessment.

There is no duty on the Awarding Bodies to make any adjustment to the assessment objectives being tested in an assessment.

Any request for an adjustment to an internally assessed exam needs to be made to the Access Arrangements panel, along with the supporting evidence. Students are required to make requests for access arrangements for examinations in the first semester by a date specified in November each year. There is no requirement for a second application to be made for examinations in the second semester, however a date will be published by which new or revised applications must be made if they are to be considered for second semester examinations. The College cannot guarantee to process requests unless they are made by the relevant deadline.

Details of the arrangements for any individual shall be agreed by the Access Arrangement Panel in accordance with guidelines approved by the College. Information will be recorded on Promonitor and shared with the Programme Leader and decisions will be available at the next relevant Assessment and Award Board.

Any request for an adjustment to an internally assessed assessment that is not an exam needs to be made to Assessment Arrangements Panel for Adapted and/or Alternative Assessment, which is part of the Student Facing Panel, along with the supporting evidence. The request needs to be made before the student starts the assessment. Information will be recorded on Promonitor and shared with the Programme Leader and decisions will be available at the next relevant Assessment and Award Board.

Any reasonable adjustment that is put in place for a student needs to be recorded by the Programme Leader using the RA1 form [Application of Reasonable Adjustment for \(pearson.com\)](#) and needs to be stored with the students records for three years. The record needs to be available to Pearson, if requested. The form also needs to be sent to the Standards Verifier/External Examiner if the unit is sampled.

If the College is unsure about a students ability to achieve the assessment criteria or feel that the proposed reasonable adjustment may affect the validity or reliability of assessment then further clarity can be sought from Pearson through the Pearson Support Portal.

5.2 Special Consideration (Pearson Definition):

Special consideration is an allowance to reflect temporary illness, injury or indisposition that occurred at the time of assessment. Any special consideration granted is not intended to fully compensate for the difficulty the learner faced at the time of assessment and can only be a small adjustment to ensure that the integrity of the assessment is not compromised.

For further guidance on when to apply for special consideration and the evidence required please refer to the Pearson *Supplementary guidance for reasonable adjustments and special consideration in internal assessments* document. An SC1 form [SC1 QCF - Application for Special Consideration.docx \(live.com\)](#) must be completed when applying for special consideration.

Any decisions made in regards to Special Consideration will be available at the next relevant Assessment and Award Board.

6. Academic Malpractice

Blackburn College unequivocally condemns academic malpractice including acts of cheating and plagiarism. To note Academic Malpractice is also referred to as Academic Misconduct at UCBC.

Academic malpractice is any behaviour that gives an unfair advantage to a student or groups of students. 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 for themselves 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.

6.1 Cheating

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

6.1.1 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.
- Purchase of a paper from a commercial service, including internet sites (sometimes called 'essay mills'), 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 unit
- The act of copying or paraphrasing a paper from a source text, whether in manuscript, printed or electronic form, without appropriate acknowledgement.
- Submission of another student's work, whether with or without that student's knowledge or consent.

6.1.2 Examination

In addition to any of the above that apply:

- Any breach of the rules for Blackburn College examinations procedures (or those of a validating partner or professional body), 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.
- Introducing examination scripts into the examination process otherwise than in the course of an examination.
- Failure to abide by the instructions of a duly authorised examination invigilator.

6.2 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.

6.3 Plagiarism

Plagiarism is to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own or use (another's production) without crediting the source.

6.3.1 Deliberate plagiarism

Some students who plagiarise do so deliberately, with intent to deceive. This conscious, pre-mediated form of cheating is regarded as a particularly serious breach of the core values of academic integrity and one of the worst forms of cheating, for which Blackburn College has zero tolerance.

6.3.2 Accidental plagiarism

Many students who plagiarise probably do so inadvertently, without realising it – because of inexperienced study skills, including note taking, referencing and citations. Many students (particularly those from different cultures and educational systems) find UK academic referencing/acknowledgement systems and conventions awkward, and proof-reading is not always easy for dyslexic students and some visually impaired students.

6.3.3 False Authorship

False Authorship is a form of plagiarism where the student has deliberately engaged with a third party and/or software tool to complete an assessment, either in part or whole. This engagement can be direct or through an intermediary. This may include work produced by another individual, an essay mill, a commercial service, or through the use of Artificial

Intelligence software. As it is the authorship of work that is contested, there is no requirement to prove that the work has been purchased. The submission of undeclared work which is either generated and/or improved by language model software for the purposes of gaining marks/grades will be regarded as False Authorship and interpreted as an attempt to gain an intentional unfair academic advantage.

6.4 Malpractice proceedings

6.4.1 Roles and responsibilities

Coursework marker: will have the primary responsibility for detecting plagiarism in student work, using their specialist knowledge and academic judgement to decide what is and what is not acceptable within that subject. They should refer any suspected cases, annotated clearly, to the Academic Misconduct Panel (AMP) and programme leader, who should record each case, along with any evidence in support of the claim.

Students must be informed (preferably in writing) at the earliest opportunity of the nature of the alleged malpractice and of the possible consequences should malpractice be proven. This will be carried out where possible by the coursework marker and where this is not possible by the programme leader, of the fact that an assessment has been referred to the AMP.

For the avoidance of doubt, work referred to the AMP should be marked / graded on its academic merit taken at face value and normal feedback given so that should the AMP rule that the original mark should stand the student is not academically disadvantaged. Students who are given feedback in the period between referral to the AMP and a final decision being reached must be informed that the assessment has been referred AMP and that feedback is being given on the work at face value.

The Head of Centre (or nominee) will also ensure that the student is informed of the details of the referral and the evidence offered in support of it.

6.4.2 Process

Academic Malpractice/Misconduct proceedings will be considered by an Academic Misconduct Panel (AMP) appointed for the purpose by HE Quality. The AMP will manage the Pearson process as detailed below. Referrals of academic malpractice will be checked on receipt to ensure that they fall within the remit of the panel, are complete and are supported by prima facie evidence.

Cases of suspected student malpractice in internal assessments must be reported to Pearson if the learner has signed the declaration of authentication. Heads of Centre (or nominee) should complete JCQ Form M1 (found at [Malpractice - JCQ Joint Council for Qualifications](#)) and submit this along with all supporting documentation to the Pearsons Investigations Processing team at candidatemaalpractice@pearson.com. Where students have not completed a declaration of authentication the incident does not need to be reported and centres should follow their internal malpractice/academic misconduct policy in resolving the matter.

For suspected malpractice where the student has not signed the declaration of authentication, the case and supporting evidence is considered and processed by Blackburn College's Student Facing Panel (SFP). The outcomes of the suspected malpractice remain the same as those sanctions outlined in section 6.6.1, however, this is determined in centre by the Student Facing Panel, with additional support added, where appropriate, by Academic Coaches to ensure signage compliance moving forward, along with overall support for the student regarding the avoidance of future malpractice.

The guidance for Centre Support on Malpractice at Pearson is available to provide for further information, this is available at www.pearson.com.

6.5 Evidence requirement

Pearsons JCQ/M1 form must be completed prior to reporting the suspected candidate malpractice in the conduct of examinations or assessments. It can also be used to provide a report on investigations into instances of suspected malpractice.

It is essential that Pearson is notified immediately of instances of suspected candidate malpractice. The Module Leader or Programme Leader will complete the Pearson JCQ/M1 form and present this with supporting evidence to Blackburn College's Student Facing Panel. The Student Facing Panel will then forward to Pearson for processing.

This form is intended to be used as the basis for the report. This form and supporting information should be submitted by email by the Student Facing Panel. All supporting documents should be scanned and attached (preferably as PDF documents) to the same email, and the originals retained within the centre. The awarding body concerned will acknowledge receipt of this form.

Reports on investigations from centres must include:

- A detailed account of the circumstances surrounding the suspected candidate malpractice including, in the case of disruptive behaviour, an indication as to whether the behaviour continued after warnings were given, and whether the candidate was removed from the examination room/assessment situation or not.
- The procedures for advising candidates of the regulations concerning the conduct of examinations and/or assessments.
- A report of any investigation carried out subsequently by the centre.
- Signed and dated statements from the staff concerned (e.g. invigilators, assessors, teachers, tutors, etc.) on the centre's official letterheaded paper.
- Signed and dated statements from the candidate(s) concerned or a clear indication that they have been given the opportunity to make a statement; (In circumstances which make it inappropriate to interview the candidate, the centre should discuss the case in confidence with the awarding body.)
- seating plans of the examination room (if appropriate).

6.6 Sanctions applied against candidates

The College will follow the Pearson regulations referring to the JCQ Suspected Malpractice Policies (Section 10 and also Appendix 6). *Where the declaration of authentication has been signed by the student, the below sanctions are decided by Pearson and communicated through Blackburn College's Student Facing Panel.

6.6.1 Standard sanctions

Candidates may be subject to one or more sanctions. Awarding bodies may, at their discretion, impose the following sanctions against candidates*:

1. Warning

The candidate is issued with a warning that if the candidate commits malpractice within a set period, further specified sanctions will be applied.

2. Loss of all marks for a section

The candidate loses all the marks gained for a discrete section of the work.

A section may be part of a component, or a single piece of nonexamination assessment if this consists of several items.

3. Loss of all marks for a component

The candidate loses all the marks gained for a component.

A component is more often a feature of a linear qualification than a unitised qualification, and so this sanction can be regarded as an alternative to sanction 4. Some units also have components, in which case a level of sanction between numbers 2 and 4 is possible.

4. Loss of all marks for a unit

The candidate loses all the marks gained for a unit. This sanction can only be applied to qualifications which are unitised.

For linear qualifications, the option is sanction 3. This sanction usually allows the candidate to aggregate or request certification in that series, albeit with a reduced mark or grade.

5. Disqualification from a unit

The candidate is disqualified from the unit. This sanction is only available if the qualification is unitised. For linear qualifications the option is sanction 7.

The effect of this sanction is to prevent the candidate aggregating or requesting certification in that series, if the candidate has applied for it.

6. Disqualification from all units in one or more qualifications

If circumstances justify, sanction 5 may be applied to other units taken during the same examination or assessment series. (Units which have been banked in previous examination

series are retained.) This sanction is only available if the qualification is unitised. For linear qualifications the option is sanction 8.

7. Disqualification from a whole qualification

The candidate is disqualified from the whole qualification taken in that series or academic year. This sanction can be applied to unitised qualifications only if the candidate has requested aggregation. Any units banked in a previous examination series are retained, but the units taken in the present series and the aggregation opportunity are lost. If a candidate has not requested aggregation, the option is sanction 6. It may also be used with linear qualifications.

8. Disqualification from all qualifications taken in that series

If circumstances justify, sanction 7 may be applied to other qualifications. This sanction can be applied to unitised qualifications only if the candidate has requested aggregation. Any units banked in a previous examination series are retained, but the units taken in the present series and the aggregation opportunity are lost. If a candidate has not requested aggregation, the option is sanction 6. It may also be used with linear qualifications.

9. Candidate debarral

The candidate is barred from entering for one or more examinations for a set period of time. This sanction is applied in conjunction with any of the other sanctions above, if the circumstances warrant it.

6.7 The warning letter

Pearson will notify the college of the outcome for each offence of Academic Malpractice and the Student Facing Panel will send the student a formal letter which:

- Spells out what the student has done wrong, and why it is wrong.
- Points them towards appropriate sources of study skills help.
- Reminds them of the need to discuss their work with academic staff if the student is uncertain about how to avoid subsequent allegations.
- Warns of the serious consequences of subsequent offences and spells out the sanctions that will be applied.
- Outlines the student's rights of appeal.

6.8 Award Boards

The decisions and recommendations of the Final Award Board will normally be regarded as the cut-off point beyond which allegations of malpractice/misconduct will not be reported, and passed which no sanctions will normally be applied.

6.9 Appeals of Malpractice sanctions

Pearson have established procedures for considering appeals against sanctions arising from malpractice decisions.

The following individuals have a right to appeal against decisions of the Pearson Malpractice Committee or officers acting on its behalf:

- Heads of Centre, who may appeal on behalf of candidates entered or registered through the centre.
- private (external) candidates.
- third parties who have been barred from taking or delivery of the awarding body's examinations or assessments.

Appeals must normally be made within 14 days of receiving the outcome of the Malpractice Committee's decision. Guidance for this will be included in the notification sent to the student by the Student Facing Panel at Blackburn College.

<https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/appeals>

7 Assessment Boards

7.1.1 Pearson Assessment Boards¹

The main purpose of an Assessment Board is to make recommendations on:

- The grades achieved by students on the individual modules or units
- Extenuating circumstances
- Cases of cheating and plagiarism
- Progression of students onto the next stage of the programme
- The awards to be made to students
- Referrals and deferrals
- Assessment Boards may also monitor academic standards

The Pearson Assessment Board delegates responsibility to make recommendations on Extenuating/ Mitigating circumstances, cases of cheating and plagiarism (Academic Misconduct) to the Student Facing Panel (SFP) who will make their decisions available to the Assessment Board.

7.1.2 Membership of Pearson Assessment Boards

No student may be a member of any module, assessment/award board or attend any meeting of these boards other than as a student for assessment. However, where a person who would normally be a member of a board is also registered as a student on an award they may act in their normal capacity subject to the provisions below see 6.1.3.

Assessment Boards for Pearson qualifications

Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement (or appropriate senior nominee) (Chair)

Head of School

Curriculum Manager

Academic Registrar (or nominee)

At least one HE Quality Team member (or nominee) to record decisions and take minutes

MIS-HE to record the marks

Programme Leaders for all programmes involved (or appointee if unavailable)

All members of the programme team, for which units are being presented (or appointee if unavailable)

Relevant External Examiners (EE) will be invited. (To note that if a Pearson EE attends the Assessment Board, it is in the capacity of an adviser; they will have no power to veto at the Board).

¹ Blackburn College Pearson Assessment Board act with delegated authority for Pearson BTEC Higher National programmes. For these awards these procedures apply but the awarding regulations of Pearson set out in the BTEC Higher Nationals Centre Guide to Quality Assurance and Assessment will take precedence over these regulations. Assessment Boards must ensure that their recommendations are in line with Pearsons BTEC Higher Nationals Centre Guide to Quality Assurance and Assessment.

Quorum

The Quorum of the Pearson Assessment Boards shall be six members, including the Chair. Should the meeting be inquorate then it will be necessary to postpone and reconvene the Assessment Board until the first available opportunity for the Assessment Board to be quorate.

7.1.3 Conflicts of Interest for Pearson Assessment Boards

Any member of any Assessment Board, who is aware of any conflict of interest (for example being a student on, or being related to or a close friend of any student on a programme to be considered by that board) must declare that interest as soon as the possibility arises.

Such conflicts of interest must be reported to the Chair of the relevant board and the details must be recorded in the minutes of the board. No-one with such a conflict of interest may take part in any board discussion relating to the student(s).

Any board member or other person in attendance at a board who is also a student whose case is to be considered at that board must leave the meeting for the duration of the discussion of their case.

Any other person who has declared a conflict of interest may, with the permission of the Chair, be permitted to remain in attendance for the duration of the discussion.

7.1.4 Provision for Chairs Action at Pearson Assessment Boards

Chairs Actions will normally take place only in extenuating circumstances and where a decision has not been able to be made during the Assessment Board. The Chairs Action decision should be recorded in the minutes as such and the minutes updated, as a post meeting update, once a decision on the Chairs Action has been reached. A Chairs Action report form should also be used to record the reason for the Chairs Action and the outcome after the Chairs Action has been made.

7.2 Notification of Results

The marks awarded for coursework assignments, examinations and other assessments should be communicated to students promptly after assessment, normally within three weeks of the submission / examination date. In some rare circumstances, for example where reporting results to one student or group would give an unfair advantage to another student / group as yet unassessed, it may be necessary to withhold results longer than 3 weeks.

It must be clearly stated that all such marks are subject to moderation by internal verification and/or external examiners and are, as such, a guide to students' performance and not final grading decisions. The results of individual assessments may be posted, communicated in class or tutorial time or sent by electronic means.

Unit marks, summative grades / classifications, awarding decisions and / or reassessment decisions agreed at assessment and/or award boards are normally final and should be reported to students promptly by electronic means such as email, Moodle, etc., normally within two weeks of the board meeting. Where the decision of a board is subject to confirmation by an external awarding body this should be made clear in all communications with the students concerned.

In some exceptional circumstances (such as, for example, some borderline cases) external awarding bodies may require that the decisions of boards are withheld until after confirmation. In such cases, the students concerned should be informed promptly of their situation. The final decision should be reported to the student as soon as possible.

Student results are not confidential personal information and may be published.

8 Student Appeals

8.1 Academic Appeals

This section applies to appeals on academic matters only. Appeals relating to decisions on other matters, such as for example student discipline or malpractice/maladministration are provided for under other policies. For clarity the definition of ‘malpractice’, which includes maladministration, is any act, default or practice which *compromises, or attempts to compromise the process of assessment, the integrity of any qualification, or the validity of a result or certificate; and/or damages the authority, reputation or credibility of any awarding organisation or centre or any officer, employee or agent of any awarding organisation or centre* :definition by Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ). Section 6 of this document outlines the process for Academic malpractice.

For the purposes of this section the word ‘appeal’ refers to appeals against examination/assessment board decisions, requests to review academic decisions and student challenges on academic matters.

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.

8.1.1 Valid grounds for appeal

A request for an appeal against a Board 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;
- the production of significant new evidence concerning extenuating or 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.

Process

The process for of Academic Appeals is evidence-based, therefore appropriate supporting documentation must be provided in order for the appeal to be heard. Appeals that are submitted without evidence will be rejected without being heard by the panel.

First Stage Appeal

The student must appeal in writing to the HE Quality Team at Blackburn College stating the precise ground(s) for the appeal within 14 days of the original notification. Appeals received outside this timescale will be ruled invalid. Any relevant documentary evidence should be provided.

As an appeal may be received by a student who is in the rework period following notification of results from the Assessment Board, as outlined in the Resubmission section of the Pearson BTEC Higher National Centre Guide to Quality Assurance and Assessment, then the student must continue with the rework and meet the deadlines for resubmission whilst the appeal process is being undertaken.

First stage appeals will be heard by an Academic Appeals Panel convened by a member of the HE Quality Team for this purpose, which must contain at least two academics unconnected with the student or the student's programme of study, and a member of professional services staff. A student representative will be appointed where possible.

Students' applications for consideration by the panel will be checked on receipt to ensure that they fall within the remit of the panel, are complete and are supported by prima facie evidence where relevant. If an application is judged at this stage not to be within the panel remit, to be incomplete or not supported by prima facie evidence, where relevant, the application will be rejected without being considered by the panel. Such rejection will be deemed to be the decision of the panel meeting that would otherwise have considered the application and will be recorded in the minutes of that meeting.

A member of the HE Quality Team will convene panels to hear appeals and is responsible for arranging times for hearings with students. Students have a right to be accompanied by a representative or friend at any hearings in the Appeals process.

The Academic Registrar (or a delegated member of HEQ) is responsible for ensuring the student is informed both verbally (at the meeting) and in writing of the outcome of the appeal which may be:

- The appeal is upheld and referred back to the relevant Board for reconsideration
- The appeal is upheld and the Academic Registrar (or nominee) takes immediate action on behalf of the Assessment Board
- The appeal is turned down

Where a first stage appeal is turned down, the student has a right to a second stage appeal if they are dissatisfied with the outcome.

Second Stage Appeal

A second stage appeal will not be called if a first stage appeal has not been held. Requests for second stage appeals must be made in writing to the HE Quality Team within 14 days of the first stage appeal hearing. Any relevant documentary evidence must be provided.

Extenuating circumstances that were not declared either at the time of the relevant assessment board meeting or at the first stage appeal will be ruled invalid unless it can be shown that the evidence was for good reason not available earlier.

Stage two appeals will be heard by a panel convened by the Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement in the same manner as for Stage 1 appeals. The powers of an Appeal Panel are:

- To determine the validity of the grounds for the appeal. The appeal will not proceed if the panel does not deem the grounds to be valid;
- To uphold the appeal based on the evidence presented and to refer the matter back to the relevant Board;
- To uphold the appeal and the Academic Registrar (or nominee) takes immediate action on behalf of the Assessment Board
- To turn down the appeal and to uphold the original decision of the relevant Board.

The Academic Registrar (or nominee) is responsible for ensuring that the appellant and the Chair of the relevant Board are informed in writing of the decision of the Appeal Panel and the reasons for the decision, normally within 5 working days of the appeal being held.

Third Stage Appeal

Where an appeal is turned down at the second stage the student may have a final right to resort to the appeals processes of an external body, which in this case is Pearson. In such cases it is a strict requirement of these regulations that any such appeal must pass through the Blackburn College appeals process before proceeding to any external body. The timescale for submitting a final third stage appeal will be communicated to the student within the information provided at the second stage appeal, this will normally be within 14 days.

A student whose case is under consideration via an appeal shall have the right to continue with their current programme (provided they are in good standing with Blackburn College) until such time as a final decision is reached. Such a student will not be permitted to enrol for any programme, stage or module or unit for which their entitlement to enrol rests on the outcome of the appeal, but may be permitted to attend classes while the appeal is being considered. This right is designed solely to ensure that a student whose appeal is upheld is not academically disadvantaged and it shall not be interpreted as acceptance of a failed student on a subsequent stage of the programme.

Students should be aware that there may be financial implications and that they could be liable for fees should their appeal be unsuccessful.

In the case of second stage appeals students will be supplied with a Completion of Proceedings letter and would have the right to take the matter to the relevant awarding body and/or to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator. Details of methods, timescales and institutional contacts are supplied to students in the emails by which all appellants receive formal notification of Panel decisions.

9 Student Complaints

9.1 Blackburn College commitment to complaints

Blackburn College is committed to providing a high-quality learning experience for all students, however, the College recognises that there may be times when a student may feel the need to raise concerns or even make complaints about aspects of their experience at the College. The College wants to learn from complaints to improve the student experience in future.

Through the Compliments and Complaints procedure, the College commits to:

- Taking all complaints seriously
- Responding to complaints in a timely manner and updating the complainant on any unforeseen delays
- Handling complaints confidentially and only disclosing information as necessary to progress the complaint
- Providing responses to all aspects of the complaint

9.2 Compliments and Complaints Procedure

The Compliments and Complaints Procedure is available via the Blackburn College website and provides guidance on the acceptable grounds for a complaint, the difference between raising a concern and making a complaint and how to complain. It also provides details of how the complaint will be dealt with.

At any time, the student can contact Complaints@blackburn.ac.uk for further details and clarity around the complaints procedure and its contents or seek advice. Students may also wish to seek further guidance from the Programme Leader or Head of School.

The Colleges [Complaints and Compliments Procedure \(blackburn.ac.uk\)](https://blackburn.ac.uk) are set out separately.

10 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

The College recognises that students may have gained significant knowledge and skills prior to joining the College that are relevant to the award(s) for which they are admitted, and that there should be fair and transparent mechanisms by which students can gain formal recognition for these achievements. The provisions of this section provide a transparent, fair, consistent and coherent approach to the treatment of recognition of prior learning.

The College will follow the guidance in the *Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)* section found in the Pearson BTEC Higher National Centre Guide to Quality Assurance and Assessment.

10.1 Definitions

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is the generic term used for the recognition of certificated, non-certificated, work-based and experiential learning that occurs prior to the commencement of study at the College.

RPL is defined as follows:

- Recognition of prior certificated learning (RPCL) is the official recognition of units, courses and/or credits previously recognised by an education provider where such learning has been formally assessed in order to contribute to an award.
- Recognition of prior experiential learning (RPEL) is the official recognition of learning, which has occurred through life and work experience or training / study and that has not been formally attested as above. This learning will be demonstrated for the award of credit by documenting and/or reflecting on those experiences gathered outside formal education.

10.2 Admissions and Recognition of Prior Learning

Consideration of prior learning for admission to a programme at a normal entry point is an admissions matter and rests on an academic judgement of a student's suitability for a programme, not the award of credit, and therefore is not within the scope of this section. RPL for admission falls within the scope of this section only if, and to the extent that, it involves the recording of credits that will contribute to those considered for an award and/or to any classification of an award.

10.3 General RPL Regulations

- The availability of and procedures for obtaining RPL must be clearly publicised to prospective and current students, but the onus for making an application for RPL rests on the student.

- RPL is dependent on the provision by the applicant of documentary evidence of the achievement of learning at the appropriate level. Care must be taken to ensure that the evidence provided is authentic and current.
- RPEL credit is awarded for authenticated documentary evidence of achievement of learning or the outcomes of that learning, not solely for specific experiences, engagement in activities or attendance.
- The evidence supporting an RPL claim must meet the following criteria:
 - Authenticity and sufficiency – the learning must have been undertaken by the applicant and have been fully achieved;
 - Relevance/Equivalence - the evidence produced must relate sufficiently well to the module or programme outcomes against which a claim being made;
 - Quality - the structure, process and outcomes of the learning experience must be of comparable quality to taught learning experiences having due regard to the academic level claimed;
 - Currency – the evidence must relate to the student’s current level of knowledge and skill and must embody the current state of knowledge in the relevant cognate area. Evidence of further development or updating will normally be required if the learning relating to an RPL claim is more than five years old.
- The evidence offered can be assessed by any appropriate method including, but not limited to written evidence, the presentation of portfolios, oral testing or presentation, observation of performance, etc. A record must be kept of all evidence provided such that the relevant external examiner can adequately review the integrity of any credit granted.
- Credits awarded by RPL must be identified as such in information presented to assessment and/or award boards.
- The evidence gathered needs to meet the standards of the unit, or part of a unit, that the evidence is being used for. Evidence from a learner’s past experience could include: Home or family life; Non-certificated education or learning; Paid work; Community or voluntary work.
- RPL cannot be applied for external assessment, set exams or set assignments.
- When using RPL for Higher National awards, the underlying principle is that assessed evidence from certified learning should be at the same level of education for which RPL is being used. Pearson also acknowledges that RPL can be undertaken through assessment of previous experiential learning. However, a Higher Education award which has been certified by Pearson, cannot be used as prior learning to contribute to the achievement of another Pearson higher education award of an equivalent level. An award is defined as a completed qualification (Higher National Certificate or Higher National Diploma). Individual units are not defined as an award and can be used for RPL.
- Where RPL is used to determine whether learning outcomes have been met on a Pearson Higher National award, the maximum grade that the student can achieve for that unit will be a Pass if the RPL has been undertaken through experiential learning. Where RPL is undertaken by assessing certified learning, then centres must

demonstrate clearly where RPL is able to meet Merit or Distinction criteria across all learning outcomes.

- The RPL processes should not be used for any more than 50% of the total credit value of a Higher National award.

10.4 Process

All enquiries/requests for RPL will be initially considered by the College who will provide guidance on the process and on the amount of credit that might reasonably be sought. It remains the responsibility of the student to demonstrate the relevance of any prior learning and to produce the supporting evidence. Students may also seek advice and help from programme teams to aid them in deciding whether or not to make an application for RPL and in producing the application itself.

Students' applications for RPL will be considered by a Recognition of Prior Learning Panel (RPLP). The membership and terms of reference of this panel will be determined by HE Quality, who will also determine the processes and documentation to be used and may also approve mandatory guidelines for the RPLP.

The RPLP will ensure that all RPL documentation should record clearly where learning outcomes have been met by either certified or experiential learning.

The RPLP should verify the RPL application and make a recommendation for the transfer/award of credit. The RPLP should consist of at least three people, one of whom would be the HE Academic Development and Regulations Manager (or nominee) who would be the Chair of the panel and one of whom should be the programme leader.

The decisions of the RPLP should be ratified by the Assessment Board and minuted; records of the evidence for RPL decision should be kept by the RPLP and may be viewed by Pearson-appointed External Examiners.

The Programme Leader must ensure that they advise the Standards Verifier/External Examiner, before any monitoring activity starts, if RPL has been applied to any units or learners.

10.5 Appeals against RPL Decisions

First Stage Appeal

The student must appeal in writing to the HE Quality Team at Blackburn College stating the precise ground(s) for the appeal against the RPL decision within 14 days of the original notification. Appeals received outside this timescale will be ruled invalid. Any relevant documentary evidence should be provided.

First stage appeals will be heard by an Academic Appeals Panel convened by a member of the HE Quality Team for this purpose, which must contain at least two academics unconnected with the student or the student's programme of study, and a member of professional services staff. A student representative will be appointed where possible.

Students' applications for consideration by the panel will be checked on receipt to ensure that they fall within the remit of the panel, are complete and are supported by prima facie evidence where relevant. If an application is judged at this stage not to be within the panel remit, to be incomplete or not supported by prima facie evidence, where relevant, the application will be rejected without being considered by the panel. Such rejection will be deemed to be the decision of the panel meeting that would otherwise have considered the application and will be recorded in the minutes of that meeting.

A member of the HE Quality Team will convene panels to hear appeals and is responsible for arranging times for hearings with students. Students have a right to be accompanied by a representative or friend at any hearings in the Appeals process.

Second Stage Appeal

If a student is still unsatisfied with the outcome of the first stage appeal and do not agree with the assessment decision the student may make a complaint via the Pearson Qualifications website. Details of this and timeframe will be provided to the student in the notification of the first stage appeal. If the student can show that they have met all the learning outcomes and assessment criteria using RPL they will be able to claim for the unit or qualification.

If Pearson identify that all unit requirements have not been met, they will:

- ask for more evidence to be provided, or
- ask the student to complete the standard assessment requirements if they want to achieve the qualification.