

# HE09

# Assessment of Students Policy

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Job Title of Responsible Author	Group Academic Registrar
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### Revision History

Version Number	Date	Type of Amendment	Change Detail
1.0	Jan 2019	New Policy	New
1.0.1	Feb 2019	Minor Amendment	Update to replace Progression and Standards Committee with Academic Authority and Standards Senior Committee.
1.0.2	Apr 2020	Minor Amendment	Update to add in disaster recovery measures.
1.1	Sep 2020	Major Review	Changes to include HMC and SQA courses.
1.2	Sep 2021	Major Review	Addition of limits to deadline changes once delivery begins. Exams process moved to Annex Reference to Canvas changed to VLE Changes made to include all partner universities.
1.2.1	Sep 2021	Minor Amendment	Clarification on ATP and typographical errors corrected at publication.
1.3	Sep 2022	Major Review	Document renumbered. 3.0 added regarding conflicts of interest 5.9 Additional point in line with OfS SPaG amendments.
1.3.1	Sep 2022	Minor Amendment	Incorporation of HECQS 1.4 – changed HE10 Mitigating Circumstances to HE10 Additional Consideration. Amended 5.10 and added 5.11 to ensure compliance with Condition of Registration B4. Assessed work to be retained for five years after the student has completed their course.
1.3.2	Sep 2023	Minor Amendment	Minor amendment to reflect terminology change and clarify that live assessments can be recorded (5.3).
1.4	Aug 2025	Major Review	Updated to remove SQA. Clarified that deadlines are in normal working hours. Updated to add provisions for higher and degree apprenticeships. Process for amending deadlines once delivery commences amended. Late penalty system updated.

## 1.0 Introduction

1.1 This policy makes clear the TEC Partnership's expectations regarding conduct in relation to setting of assessment and completion and marking of assessment tasks. "Assessment is a fundamental aspect of the student learning experience. Engagement in assessment activities and interaction with staff and peers enables learning, both as part of the task and through review of their performance. It is a vehicle for obtaining feedback. Ultimately, it determines whether each student has achieved their course's learning outcomes and allows the awarding body to ensure that appropriate standards are being applied rigorously. Deliberate, systematic quality assurance ensures that assessment processes, standards and any other criteria are applied consistently and equitably, with reliability, validity and fairness."(QAA Quality Code Advice and Guidance Assessment, 2018).

1.2 The policy is mindful of the regulations specified by partner Universities, or other awarding bodies, who are in most instances the final arbitrator of quality and standards for their awards.

1.3 The policy brings together a range of processes relating to assessment including:

- the information Higher Education staff at TEC Partnership will give to students about the assessments at the beginning and during a module;
- what students must do to meet the assessment requirements whilst studying at TEC Partnership and the consequences should these not be completed;
- how reasonable adjustments to examination and assessment arrangements may be made to enable students with disabilities to demonstrate their abilities in accordance with the Equality and Diversity Policy/or the Equality Act 2010;
- how TEC Partnership will ensure that academic standards are maintained through assessment practice ensuring that assessment is carried out by competent and impartial markers using methods that enable rigor, probity and fairness.

1.4 'HE09 Assessment of Students' should be read in conjunction with 'HE11 Academic Integrity', 'HE10 Additional Consideration and Short Extensions', 'HE06 Exam Boards and External Examiners', 'HE05 Validation and Amendments of Programmes' and 'HE01 Academic Regulations'.

### 1.5 Terminology / Glossary

**Module:** A self-contained, formally structured unit of study, with a coherent and explicit set of learning outcomes and assessment criteria. For Pearson and SQA qualifications, these are often referred to as units.

**Module Learning Outcome:** A learning outcome is the specification of what a student should learn as the result of a period of specified and supported study. Learning outcomes are concerned with the achievements of the learner rather than the intentions of the teacher (expressed in the aims of a module).

**Validation Document:** The approved validation document sets out all elements of the programme of study, including all details of learning outcomes or assessments. For Apprenticeships this may be known as the curriculum document.

**Module Handbook:** The module handbook publishes all details about a module at the point that teaching starts for that module.

**Programme Handbook:** The programme handbook summarises key regulations which will be followed during study and how students will be supported in their study. It includes the validation document for the students.

**Apprenticeship Handbook:** The apprenticeship handbook summarises key regulations which will be followed by higher or degree apprentices during their study at TEC Partnership. Where there is a relevant TEC Partnership validation document, this will be included. For all other higher apprenticeships, a summary of the planned curriculum will be provided.

**Formative assessment:** Assessment with a developmental purpose, designed to help learners learn more effectively by giving them feedback on their performance and how it can be improved and/or maintained. Reflective practice by students sometimes contributes to formative assessment.

**Summative assessment:** Used to indicate the extent of a learner's success in meeting the assessment criteria to gauge the intended learning outcomes of a module or course. Typically, within summative assessment, the marks awarded count towards the final mark of the course/module/award.

## 2.0 Before Delivery Commences

2.1 Course design is completed following 'HE05 Validation and Amendments of Programmes'. The design of programmes ensures that assessment tasks are designed in line with the threshold concepts associated with areas of study and with the Benchmark Statements and the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ). Higher and Degree Apprenticeships are developed with reference to the relevant Skills England occupational standard and End Point Assessment plan.

2.2 Module tutors must design assessment tasks to reflect those stated within the validation document and a system of moderation must be conducted (including for integrated degree apprenticeships). Higher Apprenticeships only may adapt this process to suit the needs of the programme, but the same principles must be followed.

- Module tutors must complete the Assessment Task Proforma (ATP) (HE09A), or awarding body equivalent, and a module handbook using the latest template (HE09B).
- For TEC Partnership and Pearson programmes, this should be checked by the programme leader (or a colleague with RTS standing which allows moderation) for the following:
  - Correct validation document and latest module handbook template has been used.
  - Assessment terminology is appropriate to the FHEQ level.
  - Assessment task and description are clearly aligned to those validated for the module and programme.
  - Previous student feedback (MEQs) has been completed at the end of the handbook.
- In all cases, the ATP and module handbook, following awarding body internal moderation, must be made available to the External Examiner through the recognised method for the relevant awarding body (Teams for TEC Partnership). Prior approval by the External Examiner is not required for assessments (other than exams); however, feedback may be provided by the External Examiner immediately or later within the annual report.
- In all cases for exams, the ATP must include the exam paper and associated marking scheme, which must be approved by the External Examiner before being released to the students.

2.3 Module tutors must provide students with clear and precise information about the means through which they will be assessed in each module. At the start of each module, students will be provided with a module handbook that will describe the precise requirements of the assessment. This will include:

- The nature and dates of the summative assessment to be carried out by the student e.g. case study, report, presentation etc. in order to achieve the module;
- The nature and dates of the formative assessments to be completed by the student;
- The assessment title or brief, or a clear date that this will be released if appropriate;
- Which learning outcomes are expected to be met for each summative assessment task;
- The assessment tariff (word count) for each assessment;
- The assessment weighting e.g. what percentage of the grade awarded for the assessment will contribute to the overall mark of the module;
- The assessment grading criteria;
- How to submit work/cover sheet if appropriate;
- The methods used to provide assessment feedback.

2.4 Students should note that the information provided about assessment is defined, approved and governed by the awarding institution through which their programme of study is validated. For example, assessment type, tariff and weighting are classified by the respective awarding institution's assessment regulations.

2.5 For delivery on all awards, all deadlines should be signed off at the beginning of each academic year. Once delivery commences on a module it is not possible for deadlines to be moved without the prior approval of the Group Academic Registrar or a senior member of the HE Quality team. This must be sought through the completion of HE09H by the Programme Leader, which is submitted to HEQA. The form must then be presented to the next HECQS meeting for review.

### 3.0 Conflict of Interest in Delivery and Assessment

3.1 For all higher education awards at TEC Partnership, regardless of awarding body, there should be an avoidance of conflicts of interest between the programme / module tutors and students. In particular, where tutors are related to students (by birth or through marriage/civil partnership), those tutors must not be responsible for delivery to that student or be involved in the marking process. It is the responsibility of curriculum/faculty management to manage tutor allocation accordingly before delivery commences on a module.

3.2 For all higher education awards at TEC Partnership, regardless of awarding body, where there is an unavoidable conflict of interest between work colleagues (for example, an Education tutor takes a PGCE course), there must be an independent second marker in the assessment process for those students.

### 4.0 Assessment Processes During Delivery

4.1 Assessment occurs during all delivery and is a normal part of the teaching and learning process. It occurs spontaneously during delivery, through question and answer and in planned activities by lecturers in group activities or online submissions. These assessment activities only contribute to grades where this is made clear in the module handbook. Activities and informal assessment are used to help the students develop understanding for their formative and summative assessment tasks.

4.2 Formal formative assessment occurs in every module and for every assessment. This formative opportunity is designed with fairness in mind, giving every student an opportunity for equitable feedback on an activity, normally associated with their summative assessment work. The module

handbook must state the nature of the formative assessment and when and how this will occur. Failure to prepare adequately for the published formative feedback date will mean that students miss this opportunity for this source of feedback.

4.3 Formal formative feedback must be developmental and allow the student to improve their work in order to increase their grade or understanding of the subject. It is unlikely to give guarantee of a grade. The feedback must be documented in a way to ensure there is adequate evidence.

4.4 Students must adhere to all deadlines set out in module handbooks (or equivalent) which are published on the module VLE Page. Deadline will always be set during normal working hours.

4.5 Students must submit their work via the specified VLE environment in the handbook. This applies for all forms of assessment. For assessment activities which cannot be submitted via VLE, a cover sheet must be uploaded so that feedback can be given.

4.6 If a student finds difficulty in submitting to VLE due to technical issues they must email a copy of their work to [submit@tecpartnership.ac.uk](mailto:submit@tecpartnership.ac.uk) before the deadline, copying in their module leader. The student must then continue to attempt to submit the work via the VLE. The VLE submission will be checked against their final submission to ensure no advantage has been gained.

## 5.0 Marking of Assessments

5.1 Assessments should be marked and have been internally moderated within 4 weeks of submission (excluding public holidays). Feedback must be given to the group within 4 weeks or an explanation provided to the group via email. All students who submitted work by the same deadline for that assessment must be given access to feedback simultaneously. This will normally be via the VLE. Feedback remains subject to change following external moderation.

5.2 Where practical, all summative assessments should be marked with respect to anonymity.

5.3 Live assessments and performances must be recorded where it is not possible for the second marker to be present, or where the external examiner has requested recordings to assure the marking process.

5.4 Students can expect in every instance timely feedback on assessed work to ensure that they are able to use feedback to inform other assessments. For example, receiving feedback on academic and study skills performance can help a student make informed changes in subsequent work.

5.5 In extraordinary circumstances, students may be given generic oral feedback (as a means to temporarily supplementing written feedback) about their performance before the work has been subject to second marking, but written feedback should only occur after the second marking process/moderation is complete. Oral feedback should not contain an indication of the grade received.

5.6 The grades given as part of feedback are provisional until the board of Examiners has ratified the decisions. The final grades are usually communicated to students via their Notification of Progress or Transcript. These are usually provided in March, June and September following the exam boards.

5.7 Written feedback to students must include an indication of whether the assessed learning outcomes have been achieved or not achieved. The learning outcomes must be detailed fully on the

assessment feedback. It is not sufficient to merely refer the students to the learning outcomes in their module handbook.

5.8 Where learning outcomes have not been achieved, written tutor feedback must provide a clear explanation and offer ways to meet the learning outcomes through resit.

5.9 Written feedback must refer to the strengths and weaknesses of the submission and include actions for the future. Actions for future development should consider:

- General academic features such as study skills/referencing;
- Presentation, style, structure;
- Criticality;
- Focus on the question/ establishment of a key and relevant question;
- Artistic merit or answer to a brief;
- Whether it meets professional standards set by a professional body.

TEC Partnership maintains academic rigour in student assessment by assessing and marking accordingly for spelling, punctuation and grammar.

5.10 A grade must be given in line with the descriptor that best matches the Undergraduate General Marking Criteria provided by TEC Partnership. Subject areas may provide their own marking criteria or rubrics provided these are approved by HEQA before first use. Higher and Degree Apprenticeships may also use the relevant End Point Assessment Plan published by Skills England.

5.11 Records of candidate assessment will be kept for a minimum of 5 years after the completion qualification. Where there has been an internal appeal, academic misconduct investigation or other investigation requiring the retention of assessment data, this will be stored securely for six years.

5.12 Programme teams are to store electronic copies of assessments in SharePoint. For live assessments or artefacts that are not electronic, records of the assessment need to be produced to go with the feedback in these module boxes.

## 6.0 Assessment of Students with Disability

6.1 Reasonable adjustments to examination and assessment arrangements may be made to enable students with disabilities to demonstrate their abilities. This should not change the mode of the assessment but adjustments may be made to the method of completion. It is important that academic standards are maintained and therefore when reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities are made, the procedure described in Annex 3 must be used to ensure parity for all students.

6.2 The person responsible for the assessment must consider appropriately the needs of any student with a particular health or other problem. Students with alternative needs are assessed through the Disability Services Office, and changes to the arrangements of assessments for these students must only be made on their advice. This applies equally to summative and formative assessments.

6.3 Where a change of format of assessment is requested such as coursework in place of an exam or splitting an exam into 2 sessions, this request must be agreed with the Head of Area (or equivalent). The Head of Area (or equivalent) must then seek approval from Higher Education Curriculum, Quality and Standards (HECQS).

## 7.0 Over Length Assignments and Word Counts

7.1 The rules are published in each year's programme handbook. For TEC Partnership Awards and Pearson Programmes the following details apply:

Students will be penalised if the word count of a summative assessment is more than 10% over the word count or uppermost limit specified. The following guidance must be followed:

- If a student is 10% or less over the word count then no penalty is applied;
- if a student is 11 to 20% over the published word count, a 10-percentage point reduction in mark awarded will be applied to the mark for the assessment element which is over length (For HN programmes this is reduction to grade boundary below the one achieved);
- If a student is 21% or more over the word limit a mark of zero will be awarded;
- Students will be given the adjusted mark but the feedback should make clear the original mark along with a clear indication of the penalty and why it has been applied.

7.2 Word counts exclude (unless otherwise stated) footnotes, reference lists, bibliographies, diagrams, appendices, graphs, charts, tables and other similar features. Students are required to declare the word count on the first page of their assignment.

7.3 An erroneous word count declaration will be dealt with as suspected use of unfair means.

## 8.0 Failure to submit and late submissions

8.1 The rules are published in each year's programme handbook.

8.2 On Higher National Programmes in instances when no extension has been granted, or there is not sufficiently good cause for work being submitted late (such as when additional consideration have been granted), then the following penalties will apply:

- Up to and including 24 hours after the deadline, the grade awarded will be reduced by one grade, but not below the pass mark. For example:
  - An unpenalised grade of a Distinction would become a Merit.
  - An unpenalised grade of a Merit would become a Pass.
  - An unpenalised grade of a Pass would remain a Pass.
- For work that is more than 24 hours and up to and including 7 calendar days after the deadline, the mark will be capped at the pass mark.
- In instances where assessed work is submitted 7 calendar days late or more beyond a published submission date the work will be unmarked/ungraded.

The above system will also apply to any programmes that use Pass/Distinction or Pass/Merit/Distinction to align with a Skills England occupational standard.

8.3 For degrees awarded under TEC Partnership Powers, the following late submission penalties will be applied to coursework submitted after the published deadline:

- Up to and including 24 hours after the deadline, a penalty of 10 percentage points is applied, but not falling below the pass mark. For example:
  - An unpenalised grade of 65 would become 55.
  - An unpenalised grade of 55 would become 45.

- An unpenalised grade of 45 would become 40.
- For work that is more than 24 hours and up to and including 7 calendar days after the deadline; the mark will be capped at the pass mark.
- In instances where the assessment work is submitted more than 7 calendar days after the published deadline the work will be unmarked/ungraded.

8.4 Where the student is submitting assessed work as a reassessment/resubmission and an extension has not been approved, any work submitted after the published deadline will not be marked/graded and the student will be deemed to have failed the assessment concerned.

8.5 Penalties must not include public holidays or official 'college closure' days. When setting deadlines public holidays and 'college closure' days should be borne in mind to minimise student manipulation of penalties.

8.6 When the work is marked students will be given the actual mark and then a clear indication of why a penalty has been applied, followed by the modified result.

## 9.0 Second Marking and Moderation

9.1 Moderation is the process whereby a student's numerical score (or categorisation of result) is checked and validated by a second assessor and that there is confirmation that comments given and feedback are developmental and accurate. Moderation is completed on HE09C Moderation Sheet or validation body sheets. The number of scripts is decided using the following principles:

- All fails, borderlines and firsts must be moderated;
- 10 scripts/ assessments or 10% of the whole group (whichever is the largest) must be moderated;
- At the time of moderation, the second assessor should have access to the full list of results for the student group i.e. it is not sufficient for a first marker to merely give the second assessor a sample of work without the second assessor seeing the list of marks awarded for all students in the group;
- The documentation of moderation (HE09C) should demonstrate that there has been discussion between the first and second marker particularly where disagreement between both markers has manifested.

9.2 **Second Marking** is the process by which some assessments are fully marked independently by another academic member of staff. All staff marking dissertations or equivalent projects involving 40 credits or more at undergraduate level must follow the principle of concealed second marking. Concealed second marking is a process whereby a second person or persons, without sight of the first markers comments or feedback, marks the work and allocates a mark and provides comment. It is acknowledged that for some project equivalents it is not appropriate to operate this principle and in such a circumstance the Head of Area/Head of Faculty and programme team must agree an alternative approach.

9.3 All presentations or live performances must be second marked. It is considered good practice that first and second markers observing performances or presentations sit separately within the performance/ assessment venue and mark independently from one another on feedback sheets, subsequently evidencing on a Moderation Sheet (HE09C) how the final and agreed grade is reached. All SQA moderation is conducted using the double marking principle.

9.4 Whole group moderation can occur under two conditions. The first is if this is required by the RTS status of the tutor, or when issues of concern have been identified about the competency of a first marker. It is the responsibility of the Head of Area/Faculty (or equivalent) to make clear which module(s) will warrant 'whole group' moderation.

9.5 External Moderation refers to the process through which an independent other such as the External Examiner or academic tutor from a partner Higher Education Institution will sample all or a percentage of the assessments from a student group. Programme teams should operate the system as defined by the relevant awarding body in such instances.

## 10.0 Exams

10.1 At each college, before exams are set and conducted, there must be a system and process document created showing how exams are managed in a fair manner. Annex 1 shows the process for Grimsby and Scarborough, and Annex 2 for Beverley and Bridlington.

## Annex 1 Higher Education Exams at Grimsby and Scarborough

- 1.1 The purpose of this section is to ensure all examinations are planned, organised and undertaken with regulations and conforming to assessment standards.
- 1.2 This section should be read in conjunction with 'HE09F Student's Guide to Higher Education Examinations' and 'HE09G Invigilators Guide to Higher Education Examinations'.
- 1.3 **Deadlines:** MIS will distribute all examination process deadlines for the academic year to Programme Leaders (PL) and Heads of Area/Heads of Faculty (HoA) by the end of October.
- 1.4 **Planning examinations:**
  - 1.4.1 HEMIS should send curriculum sign off sheets to PLs to confirm course structure and assessment deadlines;
  - 1.4.2 PLs must confirm semester/trimester or preferred date for all examinations;
  - 1.4.3 The Disability Officer must provide individual access arrangement as soon as students' needs are assessed;
  - 1.4.4 HEMIS should plan and timetable examinations throughout the year in alignment with the assessment periods;
  - 1.4.5 HEMIS should provisionally book rooms and Invigilators, taking into account individual students' access arrangements;
  - 1.4.6 HEMIS should send 'Exam Detail Forms' to PLs and Module Tutors (MT) for confirmation within a set deadline;
  - 1.4.7 HEMIS should confirm when MTs can release final examination dates to students;
  - 1.4.8 HEMIS should finalise room booking and invigilators;
  - 1.4.9 HEMIS must ensure the number of invigilators to candidate ratio is appropriate for the integrity of examinations.
- 1.5 **Confirming examination details to students:**
  - 1.5.1 HEMIS should update the VLE with examination dates;
  - 1.5.2 HEMIS must email all students (to student account) at least two weeks prior to their examination confirming details of their examination including dates, times and individual access arrangements;
  - 1.5.3 Students must check student emails and follow instructions for reporting any access arrangement queries and absence. Short notice requests to change access arrangements cannot be guaranteed and no access arrangements will be changed on the day of the exam.
- 1.6 **Prior to exams**
  - 1.6.1 PLs must moderate examination scripts via HE09A Assessment Task Proforma;
  - 1.6.2 MTs should send moderated examination scripts to MIS HE by set deadline;
  - 1.6.3 HEMIS should send scripts to HoAs to check and authorise for printing at Central Services. Only authorised exam staff can collect the printed exams and they should be marked as confidential;
  - 1.6.4 The HE Examinations Officer must ensure Invigilators receive appropriate training, instructions, materials, and regulations prior to the examination taking

place;

1.6.5 The Module Tutor is advised to be present before the start of the examination.

## 1.7 During exams

1.7.1 Tutors, or an identified member of staff who is familiar with the academic content of the module, must be available for the duration of the examination in case of query. Students must present their student identification cards to the Invigilator on entry to the examination room. Students will not be allowed to sit the examination without their identification being confirmed;

1.7.2 Students must follow instruction from the Invigilator and adhere to examination conditions as detailed in 'HE09F Students Guide to Higher Education Examinations';

1.7.3 To ensure the integrity of the examination, Invigilators are required to:

- Undertake the examination in accordance with the awarding body's 'HE09G Invigilator's Guide to Higher Education Examination';
- Adhere to set timescales for the examination;
- Oversee students to ensure no malpractice is taking place;
- Keep accurate record of activity and incidences.

## 1.8 After exams

1.8.1 Invigilators must ensure that all examination scripts are checked, collected and returned securely to the HE Exam Officer immediately after the examination;

1.8.2 HEMIS should check, log and hold examination papers securely awaiting collection from the MT;

1.8.3 All incidences of malpractice will be sent through the HEQA office following procedures set out in HE11 Academic Integrity.

## Annex 2 - Higher Education Exams at East Riding College (Beverley & Bridlington)

- 2.1 The purpose of this section is to ensure all examinations are planned, organised and undertaken with regulations and conforming to assessment standards.
- 2.2 This section should be read in conjunction with 'HE09F Student's Guide to Higher Education Examinations'.
- 2.3 Deadlines and exam planning:
  - 2.3.1 For any programme with external deadlines, the exams manager will request student details with curriculum and process registrations/exam entries on return, prior to the deadline;
  - 2.3.2 Exam date requests to be submitted with a minimum one month's notice. These requests to include student and unit specifics;
  - 2.3.3 Exams team to confirm dates and room to be used for each specific exam. Rooms to be booked via ProSolution by the exams team. Relevant curriculum teams to share confirmed details with student;
  - 2.3.4 Exams team to arrange invigilation and accommodation of any approved access arrangements.
- 2.4 Prior to exams:
  - 2.4.1 Prior to the exam date, where applicable for the programme, curriculums will provide the exams team with a copy of the exam paper to be used, which has already been submitted and approved with the awarding body;
  - 2.4.2 Tutors will ensure student attendance on the specific exam date;
  - 2.4.3 For computer-based sessions, the exams team will ensure the accurate set up and readiness of all equipment, with IT support available if required.
- 2.5 During exams:
  - 2.5.1 Tutors, or an identified member of staff who is familiar with the academic content of the module, must be available for the duration of the examination in case of query. Students must present their student identification cards to the Invigilator on entry to the examination room. Students will not be allowed to sit the examination without their identification being confirmed;
  - 2.5.2 Students must follow instruction from the Invigilator and adhere to examination regulations and conditions, which will be outlined by the Invigilator;
  - 2.5.3 To ensure the integrity of the examination, Invigilators are required to:
    - 2.5.3.1 Adhere to set timescales for the examination;
    - 2.5.3.2 Oversee students to ensure no malpractice is taking place;
    - 2.5.3.3 Keep accurate record of activity, attendance and incidences.
- 2.6 After (paper-based) exams:
  - 2.6.1 Invigilators must ensure that all examination scripts are checked, collected and returned securely to the exams office immediately after the exam.
  - 2.6.2 The exams team will then notify the relevant curriculum tutor, to ensure collection of the completed exam scripts.
  - 2.6.3 All incidences of malpractice will be reported as required.
  - 2.6.4 All paperwork will be filed and held securely within the exams office.

## Annex 3 Guidelines for marking the work of students whose disability affects their ability to produce written English

### Background

The Equality Act 2010 states that Universities have a responsibility to ensure that students with disabilities are not treated less favourably than non-disabled peers and that reasonable adjustments are made so that students with disabilities can demonstrate their abilities. This applies to all aspects of learning, teaching and assessment within the TEC Partnership. The TEC Partnership has produced Guidelines and Procedures for Alternative Examination Arrangements for Students with disabilities or Students with Health Problems which give more information about the nature of alternative examination arrangements and the impact of different impairments on students in examinations. These marking guidelines should be read in conjunction with the above document.

The Guidelines and Procedures for Alternative Examination Arrangements for Students with disabilities or Students with Health Problems recognises that Students with a number of disabilities may have difficulties in presentation of information. Students with visual impairment may present information poorly if they are unable to re-read their own work. Students with hearing impairment may also have difficulties with the grammatical structure of English.

Students' work should be marked in accordance with the learning outcomes for the module. Learning outcomes and assessment criteria should be stated clearly in module handbooks. Students should be aware of which learning outcomes are being assessed in any piece of assessed work or examination.

Punctuation, grammar and presentation should only be assessed where they can be justified in the learning outcomes of the module. Where these elements are assessed they should not be assessed under examination conditions with the exception of foreign languages.

### Extensions to Coursework Deadlines

Students with SpLDs can apply for short extensions using the published forms (HE10 Additional Consideration and Short Extensions). Evidence can be provided by the Disability Officers or Student Support Officers. Extensions may be a way of compensating for these difficulties on particular occasions but should not be used for every piece of assessed work as this results in the student being persistently behind.

Students with visual impairments may take longer to read information and to produce written work. Students with other disabilities may experience particular difficulties in relation to their disability e.g. pain, or an epileptic seizure which may mean they are unable to complete work on time.

### Students with Specific Learning Difficulties

#### Marking exam scripts of students with specific learning difficulties

Students with SpLDs are sometimes allocated additional time in examinations. This means students have more time to read the question and to plan their work but this will not improve sentence structure, grammar or punctuation.

Correct spelling of technical terms may be a justified learning outcome for some modules e.g. where it is vital to spell technical terms correctly as in nursing or pharmacology. Where highly relevant, this

may be assessed under exam conditions but students must be aware of this criteria. Where correct spelling is a marking criterion a percentage of marks not exceeding 5 percent should be allocated.

If a student's exam script is illegible suggest to them that they contact Disability Services to look at options such as the use of a computer in future exams.

Focus on the clarity of the argument, rather than on details of expression.

Attempts should be made to separate marking of transcription errors and marking of content.

However, while sympathetic treatment of assessed work submitted by students with SpLDs involves disregarding repetitive errors of spelling and grammar, the communication itself must be effective.

If academic standards are to be safeguarded, sympathetic treatment cannot extend to written expression so poor that coherence and intelligibility are in question.

## Marking of written assessments by students with specific learning difficulties

Be aware that some students with SpLDs will have experienced negative reactions to their written work throughout their educational careers. Therefore, consider using two different pens, neither red: one for the material, one for spelling and other language aspects. Red ink has highly negative associations for some students; a two-colour approach makes the different categories of feedback clear.

Correct selected spellings only (e.g. technical vocabulary) and let the student know this.

Correct spelling of technical terms may be a justified learning outcome for some modules e.g. where it is vital to spell technical terms correctly as in nursing or pharmacology. Where correct spelling is a marking criterion a percentage of marks not exceeding 5 percent should be allocated to this.

Write comments legibly, as many dyslexic students struggle to read handwriting.

Word processed feedback is preferable.

It is important that it be made clear to dyslexic students whether they have lost marks because of a lack of subject knowledge or because of failure to communicate their ideas about the subject sufficiently clearly.

Although assessed work, other than unseen examination scripts, is likely to be word-processed and spell-checked, you should be aware of the limitations of a spellchecker and of other assistive software resources. Many problems remain in students with an SpLD's work even with the benefit of assistive software resources and spell-checking including:

- homophone substitutions (e.g. there/their, effect/affect, course/coarse)
- phonetic equivalents (e.g. fernet for phonetic, homerfone for homophone)
- incorrect word substitutions, (distance for disturbance)
- American spelling (e.g. colorful, fueling).

When marking on ideas alone, make this clear on the script.

When offering written feedback avoid using innuendoes or nested/double negatives; SpLD students often find it hard to 'read between the lines'.

If a student spells phonetically, misses out word endings or has very poor handwriting, try to detect the sense of the text. Fast reading can also make it easier to find the holistic thought patterns which the student may have been trying to convey.

Be clear about specific problem areas so that the student can see a way forward and seek further help. In addition, avoid penalising wherever possible:

- Long paragraphs that look like a single sentence but are actually made up of an undifferentiated string of simple sentences linked by conjunctions;
- Short sentences that lack links with those that precede and follow;
- Sentences where it is possible to see that prepositions have been omitted or mistaken, e.g. 'of' in place of 'on';
- Sentences that change direction mid-stream: this may be because the student has realised that the sentence requires the use of a word that they cannot spell and so needed to rephrase the sentence to avoid a spelling error;
- The use of a repeated sentence structure;
- Apparent preference for simple words rather than the more complex academic terms. This may reflect the student's difficulties with rapid word retrieval or with spelling and often creates a false impression of an immature understanding of the topic;
- Repetition of ideas, often using slightly different phrasing. This may be because the student is not certain the point has been clearly made and has had a second (or third) attempt.

## Marking presentations of students with SpLDs

It may be appropriate to allow additional time for presentations for students with SpLDs. When marking presentations concentrate on what the student said rather than errors on visual aids. If students are required to read aloud as part of the assessment, ensure adequate preparation time is allowed as reading aloud on the spot can be very difficult for many students.

## Visually Impaired Students

### Marking exam scripts of visually impaired students

Students with visual impairments may receive additional time in examinations to allow them to read the question and to proofread their work. Students with visual impairments may present their work poorly and marks should not be deducted for this. They may also miss errors when re-reading their work as a result of their visual impairment and consideration should be given to this when marking.

Correct spelling of technical terms may be a justified learning outcome for some modules e.g. where it is vital to spell technical terms correctly as in nursing or pharmacology. Where highly relevant, this may be assessed under exam conditions, but students must be aware of this criteria. Where correct spelling is a marking criterion a percentage of marks not exceeding 5 percent should be allocated to this.

If a student's exam script is illegible suggest that they contact Disability Services to look at options such as using a computer or an amanuensis in exams.

Students who use Braille may make grammatical errors when producing written English as the structure of Braille is different from the structure of written English. Marks should not be deducted for poor grammar in written exams.

### Marking assessed work of visually impaired students

When producing coursework students with visual impairments should have access to technology that will enable them to overcome their difficulties. However, reading and writing can be a time-consuming process when using this technology so requests for extensions should be viewed sympathetically. Extensions may be a way of compensating for these difficulties on particular occasions but should not be used for every piece of assessed work as this results in the student being persistently behind.

Students who use Braille may make grammatical errors when producing written English as the structure of Braille is different from the structure of written English. Feedback should be given electronically so that the student can convert it into Braille. Persistent grammatical errors should be highlighted once and explained.

### Marking presentations of visually impaired students

Needs of students with visual impairments vary considerably when giving presentations. Please contact Disability Services for advice.

### Deaf, Deafened and Hard of Hearing Students

#### Marking exam scripts and assessed work of hearing-impaired students

Students who have developed hearing impairments as adults will not have difficulties producing written English relating to their hearing impairment. Students who were born deaf or who developed a significant hearing impairment at a very young age may have difficulties with the structure of written English as the grammar and syntax of British Sign Language is very different to that of English, and they may have no auditory memory to support their acquisition of English. The latter group of students are entitled to use students with disabilities cover sheets. The latter group of students is usually allocated additional time in examinations. This means students have more time to read the question but this will not improve sentence structure, grammar or punctuation.

Focus on the clarity of the argument, rather than on details of expression. Use different coloured pens (neither red), one to comment on structure, spelling, grammar and linguistic expression and one to comment on content.

Do make constructive comments about both the factual content and the use of language. Explain what is required or what is wrong.

If possible, discuss the piece of work with the student. Talk through the errors in the course work and explain why the corrections are necessary. An interpreter may be needed to facilitate this.

Check the student's level of understanding of the technicalities of language and presentation.

### Marking presentations of hearing-impaired students

Needs of students with hearing impairments vary considerably when giving presentations. Please contact Disability Services for advice.

## Acknowledgement

Parts of this document were adapted from guidelines produced by Access Summit Assessment Centre, the Royal National Institute for the Deaf, the University of Central Lancashire and the University of Hull.

## Annex 4 Guidelines and Procedures for Alternative Examination Arrangements for Students with disabilities or Students with Health Problems

### Purpose

The aim of reasonable adjustments to examination and assessment arrangements is to enable students with disabilities to demonstrate their abilities by making reasonable adjustments to standard forms of assessment. This does not change the purpose of the assessment but may alter the form. It is important that academic standards are maintained and therefore reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities must be made using the following procedure to ensure parity for all students.

### Declaring a disability or health problem

If a student declares a disability, the Disability Team will contact them to make them aware of the provision of reasonable adjustments to examinations. The Disability Team will also contact these students to ask them to visit the service to discuss reasonable adjustments to examinations. Students who are pregnant should discuss their needs with Occupational Health who will make appropriate arrangements.

The last date for submission of requests for reasonable adjustments to examinations will be 4 weeks before the examination period. After this time requests will only be considered in exceptional circumstances, and there is no guarantee that requests can be accommodated, although every attempt will be made to do so.

If students contact their school to request reasonable adjustments to examinations, departments must refer the student to the Disability Team. This is to ensure that reasonable adjustments are made on an equitable basis across TEC Partnership.

### Evidence and Recommendations

Students who request reasonable adjustments to examinations will be required to provide evidence to support their request e.g. a completed medical form, or an appropriate assessor's report for students with specific learning difficulties. The Disability Team can advise individual students about appropriate evidence and can arrange assessments with a Specialist Assessor for students who may have specific learning difficulties.

It should be noted that obtaining the appropriate evidence can take time. If a student declares a disability shortly before an examination period there may not be time to obtain this evidence and it will not be possible to make reasonable adjustments. Where a student is awaiting evidence, they may be allocated to the alternative exam room with no other adjustments put in place. This means that if evidence does arrive before the examination other adjustments such as additional time can be put in place.

### Students with Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD)

Students who suspect they may have SpLD have an initial screening test with the Disability Team using the Dyslexia Adult Screening Test (DAST). This is a nationally normed diagnostic test. There can be a significant delay between students having an initial screening for SpLD with the Disability Team and them having a full psychological assessment. This means that students can sit one set of examinations

without additional time. The majority of students who are referred for Specialist Assessment are subsequently diagnosed as having SpLD.

Students who proceed to the full specialist assessment, and are subsequently diagnosed with a SpLD, will be offered 25% extra time for exams. It is important that students follow the Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) application process through to the end, ensuring that they receive all reasonable adjustments in the future including appropriate equipment, support and exam arrangements.

## Disability Services Responsibilities

Once the Disability Team has received information about a student's disability they will ensure that the student is supported in making an application to the DSA team via Student Finance England (SFE), the funding body. During this process, SFE will issue a letter to the student instructing that they have a full needs assessment. The needs assessment is carried out by an independent assessment company and will make recommendations for appropriate support and adjustments. The Disability Team will discuss with the student reasonable adjustments for exams but evidence must be present and an application for DSAs in place.

Examples of reasonable adjustments are –

1. Additional writing time
2. Rest breaks/stop the clock
3. Use of an amanuensis (scribe)
4. Use of a reader
5. Use of a PC
6. Alternative exam room
7. Separate room within the department
8. Use of coloured overlays in exams
9. Papers in alternative formats (e.g. large print/ Braille)
10. Use of specialist equipment e.g. chair/ writing slope
11. Use of specialist software

Where a change of format of assessment is requested, such as coursework in place of an exam or splitting an exam into two sessions, this request will have to be agreed with the school. The school must then seek approval from HE Curriculum, Quality and Standards Committee (HECQS). Where it is not possible for the Disability Team and the school to reach an agreement about reasonable adjustments either party should contact the chair of HECQS who will make a decision as to what is reasonable in that situation. The Disability Team will enter exam recommendations onto the student record.

## Location of Exams

Students who do not sit their exams in the main exam room will be recommended one of the following locations:

- Alternative Exam Room - this room is for students with mobility needs or who require additional time, rest breaks or who need to be in a smaller examination room;
- PC Room - this room is for students who need to type rather than write their examinations;
- Separate room in the school - this recommendation will be made where students need specialist equipment, use an amanuensis or need to be in a room by themselves.

## The Examinations Office's Responsibilities

The Examinations Office will make appropriate examination arrangements for the majority of students with disabilities who sit their exams in the alternative exam room or the PC room, and require any specialist equipment and invigilation. The Examinations Office will email students and the relevant departments with reasonable adjustments for exams to inform them what arrangements have been made for students.

If specialist equipment is required the Examinations Office should contact the Disability Team to discuss this.

## Area/Faculty Responsibilities

Any costs incurred are the responsibility of the Area/Faculty, although the school should contact the Disability Team to discuss whether any costs may be met by the Disabled Student's Allowance.

## Complaints

Where a student feels aggrieved by the recommendations of the Disability Team, they should first contact the team to discuss further. Following this, if the complaint is not resolved to the student's satisfaction, then the student must use the Complaints form on the TEC Partnership website.

## Anonymous Marking

Students may have difficulties presenting information as a result of a number of different impairments. For example, students with SpLD, such as dyslexia, may have difficulties with handwriting, spelling, punctuation or grammar. Students with visual impairments may present information poorly if they are unable to re-read their own work. Students with hearing impairments who are pre-linguistically deaf may also have difficulties with the grammatical structure of English.

Where a student's disability may lead to discrimination within the marking process, a student will be given the opportunity to declare this disability on the submission front cover Turnitin sheet. These cover sheets can be obtained from school offices or downloaded from the website. This allows the student to retain their anonymity and alert the examiner to the nature of the student's impairment. For marking guidelines please see document entitled Marking the Work of Students with disabilities (annex 3).

## Departmental module and programme boards

Reasonable adjustments to exams and assessment are put in place to enable students with disabilities to have the same opportunity as all students. Whilst such arrangements may level the 'playing field', it is recognised that a student's difficulties may not be fully accommodated by such arrangements.

It should also be taken into account that, as the nature of some disabilities is variable, students may have significant difficulties during a particular stage of their course. Therefore, further consideration of a student's difficulties by the school module and programme boards should occur and advice should be sought from the Disability Team. Where a personal supervisor or tutor is aware that a student has been disadvantaged as a result of their disability, it is their responsibility to inform the module or programme board.

# HE09 Assessment of Students Policy

