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**STRODE COLLEGE**

**HIGHER EDUCATION**

**ASSESSMENT POLICY**

**POLICY STATEMENT**

1. **Scope:**

This Policy Statement sets out the primary purpose of Higher Education (HE) assessment at Strode College.

The Policy is:

* applicable to those Level 4+ programmes regulated by the Office for Students (OfS) that under current circumstances continue to receive funding to assist delivery - other courses delivered at the College, which come under the OfS remit, are catered for by other policies in force within the institution
* aligned to the most recent of the University of Plymouth’s Assessment, Mark and Moderation Policy and revised in accordance with the current version of Pearson’s Higher Nationals Enhanced Quality Assurance and Assessment Handbook (*RQF Regulated Quality Framework*)

The HE programmes in scope in 2020-21 are:

 BA (Hons) History, Heritage & Archaeology (UoP)

BSc (Hons) Psychology of Human Behaviour (UoP)

FdA English with Creative Writing (UoP)

FdA History, Heritage & Archaeology (UoP)

FdA Management (Business) (UoP)

 FdA Management (Public Sector) (UoP)

 FdSc Psychology (UoP)

HND Computing (Computer Science) (RQF)

 HND General Engineering (RQF)

Effective assessment enables students to develop and demonstrate their full potential.

More specifically, Strode College and its partner HE institutions expect assessment to:

* Measure a student’s achievements objectively against the learning outcomes of modules
* Allow students to demonstrate coverage of the intended aims and learning outcomes of the course
* Provide a clear procedure for submission of work by students
* Provide guidance on the expected standards of coursework preparation
* Assist student learning by providing appropriate feedback on performance
* Provide a reliable and consistent basis for the recommendation of an appropriate award
* Assist staff in evaluating the effectiveness of their teaching
* Be informed by reflection on professional practice, as well as subject-specific educational scholarship
* Promote equality of opportunity

*\* The nature of malpractice and potential are outlined in the Strode HE Academic Offences Policy*

1. **General Principles of Assessment:**

**Assessment will be reliable**

Reliability refers to the need for assessment to be accurate and repeatable. This requires clear, consistent processes for the setting, marking, grading and moderation of assignments. Using a variety of assessment methods enhances learning and should improve the quality of assessment.

**Assessment will be valid**

Validity ensures that assessment tasks and associated criteria will effectively measure student attainment of the intended learning outcomes. The assessment programme must be designed so that skills and knowledge can be developed in line with the assessment criteria. All staff engaged in assessment will be competent to undertake their roles and responsibilities.

**Information about assessment will be explicit, transparent and accessible**

Clear, accurate, consistent and timely information on assessment tasks and procedures will be made available to students, staff and other external assessors or examiners. The assessor(s) will return marked assessed work (summative) to students within 20 working days, unless otherwise agreed. All marks issued are only indicative until verified by the Award Assessment Board (AAB) and validated by the awarding body.

**Assessment will be inclusive and equitable**

Through inclusive assessment design and reasonable individual adjustments as appropriate, assessment will provide every student with an equal opportunity to demonstrate their achievement.

**Assessment will address all of the programme/stage and module aims and learning outcomes**

Assessment tasks will primarily reflect the nature of the discipline or subject but will also ensure that students have the opportunity to develop a range of generic skills and capabilities.

**The volume, timing and the nature of assessment should enable students to demonstrate the extent to which they have achieved the intended learning outcomes**

The scheduling of assignments and the amount of assessed work required will provide a reliable and valid profile of achievement without overloading students and should be such that students can benefit from feedback have adequate time to reflect on learning before being assessed. The weighting of assessment types must also be appropriate to the level of the award, the programme of study and the delivery mode.

1. **Planning and Delivery of Assessment**

Day-to-day responsibility for assessment lies with the Programme Manager for each course and collectively with the programme teams. A holistic view of assessment should be taken to arrive at an appropriate spread of activities across the programme. Students must also have the opportunity to develop and be assessed in higher level skills. Planning and delivery must ensure that assessment is fair and equitable as defined by national standards and that the conduct of assessment is consistent over time.

To achieve this Programme Managers are required to:

* support the whole programme team in understanding higher level assessment standards
* make full use of materials which define and exemplify assessment requirements such as specifications, published assignments, other support materials and guidance
* plan assessment to fit with programme delivery with appropriate sequencing
* demonstrate full coverage of all assessment criteria
* ensure that each assessment:
* is fit for purpose, valid and will deliver reliable assessment outcomes
* supports student learning as well as measuring achievement
* corresponds to the nature and weighting set out in published documentation
* allows students to demonstrate how they have achieved the intended learning outcomes
* eliminates opportunities for academic misconduct
* provide preparation and support for students, including clear, explicit and accessible information about the assessment methods and expectations at the beginning of each module/unit
* ensure that all student work submitted for assessment is valid and authentic
* validate and record assessment decisions carefully and completely
* plan resources effectively, such as specialist staff, activities and visits
* distribute assignment deadlines across the course ensuring students are not stretched at key points
* make suitable use of feedback from students and external sources and act upon this information
* prepare a student handbook in line with expectations
* publicise in advance specific dates for all formative and summative assessment
* regularly review all assignments to ensure they remain relevant to the level of the qualification

**Degrees and Foundation Degrees (University of Plymouth)**

For University of Plymouth programmes, it is a requirement for all assessment elements (e.g. course work tests or practical) to be outlined in the designated module records (NB: Part A of the Module Record can only be altered through engaging in a formal approval process with the University). There will normally be two assessment tasks for each module, often varying in nature; these will address specified learning objectives that may also be assessed at other points in the programme.

**BTEC HNC/HND Courses (Pearson)**

In the case of BTEC programmes (HNC/HND), units cover specific topics and an approach to the assessment that treats these units individually is both valid and appropriate. Units may be broken down into two or more assignments; however, learning objectives should not be split across assignments, nor should additional assignments be required in order to meet the merit and distinction criteria within a unit. To encourage deeper understanding of content and its application, delivery may be integrated so that evidence can be mapped into two or more units, as long as accurate records of student achievement are maintained.

1. **Internal Approval**

Strode College operates a rigorous process of internal approval for all assignments on HE programmes to ensure that tasks set meet intended learning outcomes appropriately and are of a consistent standard. This procedure takes place before assignments are made available to students and is designed to check:

* the module/unit title, code and assessment weighting
* appropriateness for the module and level
* coverage of learning outcomes
* accuracy of instructions for students
* correct grammar and spelling
* assessment criteria adopted
* the overall assessment pattern in respect of type, amount and scheduling

Using a common internal approval form for all HE courses, module/unit leaders present a detailed summary of proposed assignments to the Programme Manager. Once the assignment outline has been verified in the above context, the approval form with suitable comments from the Programme Manager is passed to either the Head of Higher Education (University of Plymouth programmes) or the Head of Quality (HNC/HNDs) to be signed off. Any assignments prepared by Programme Managers are submitted to the appropriate senior member of staff directly for review and comment with final approval being confirmed by the other lead signatory. All approval forms must have sufficient and appropriate comment in order for the process to be rigorous and transparent.

Internal verification of assignments is finalised at the ‘Assessment Task Approval Panel’, which takes place at the beginning of Higher Education year and considers all assignments to be set throughout that particular year. The purpose of the Assessment Task Approval Panel is to provide formal authorisation of assessment tasks to be presented to students with each academic discipline having its own panel intended to review assignments for all individual programmes and year groups. Decisions of all panels are minuted by the Senior HE Administrator, who also retains records of assessment validation. Assignments are made available to external examiners as needed.

Deadlines for the submission of all assignment briefs and the dates of Assessment Task Approval Panels are to be communicated suitably in advance to allow revision, modification and the creation of new assessment tasks.

1. **Formative and Summative Assessment**

Assessment will fall into one or more of the following categories:

* Formative assessment: providing learners with feedback on progress and informing development
* Summative assessment: measuring a learner’s performance in relation to intended learning outcomes

To assist their development students benefit from both formative and summative assessment tasks. These should be inserted into all units/modules to ensure that the purposes of assessment are adequately addressed. The timing of such opportunities must be carefully considered to provide coherence to the programme.

Feedback will be an integral part of the assessment process and students are entitled to feedback on all assessment activities, whether formative or summative, to assist their learning. Students should be made aware of the nature and extent of feedback for each assessment task in advance and should expect to receive this within 20 working days of the date of submission. All feedback provided to students on assessed work should be clear, constructive and timely in order to promote effective improvement strategies.

**Formative assessment:**

Formative assessment is a continuous process, the nature and purpose of which is to support learning. It involves the tutor and the student in a two-way conversation about their progress and takes place priorto summative assessment. It does not confirm achievement of grades/marks, but focuses on helping the student to reflect on their learning and improve their performance.

Feedback on formative assessment should offer clear guidance for improvement and should be given promptly, so that it has meaning and context. Students should also have sufficient time to complete any advised actions.

One opportunity for formative feedback against the appropriate assessment criteria should be built into the assessment plan with respect to each assignment in all modules/units. Records should be maintained of all formative assessment provided and feedback given as part of ongoing quality assurance procedures.

Apart from occasions when a more formal presentation involving written, numerical and graphical material is appropriate, a significant proportion of formative assessment feedback will occur in personal tutorials and other informal situations. It should also involve elements of peer or self-assessment, as this can help individuals to be self-critical and evaluative and may provide additional evidence of learning within the formative process.

**Summative assessment**

Summative assessment is the culmination of the learning and assessment process; it provides the definitive recording of a student’s achievement in relation to the appropriate criteria for the assignment task concerned.

Students should be fully familiar with the assessment criteria to be used in summative assessment in order to understand the quality of work that is required. They should also be informed of the differences between grading criteria, so that higher skills can be achieved. Much of this knowledge can come from the formative assessment undertaken previously, as required across all programmes; however precise planning of teaching and assessment programmes is necessary to ensure that adequate feedback on formative assessment can be provided in time for students to assimilate this advice and apply it to their summative task.

The most effective approach to assessment is to utilise a variety of assessment methods appropriate to the knowledge or skill being assessed. Different forms of summative assessment encourage good student understanding of the subject matter and so assist the purpose of demonstrating student capabilities. Diversity in assessment tasks promotes understanding, whilst allowing all learning outcomes to be adequately assessed. Differing activities can also support a wide range of learning styles and ensure that inclusivity is planned for appropriately. Summative assessment may include coursework activities, essay and report writing, module tests and practical tasks, as outlined in module and unit records.

1. **Deadlines and Submission of Work**

**It is important that all students adhere to the published deadlines. This is crucial in ensuring that assessment is fair, consistent and effective and this applies equally to both formative and summative assessment.**

Submission arrangements for formative assessment will be determined within courses and may vary dependent on the nature of the task and the particular method of feedback. However, the submission of summative work, which counts towards course outcomes, is more closely regulated.

Submission deadlines should be outlined on the assignment brief and also be visible via Moodle. Deadlines should be set during normal term-time working hours, Monday-Thursday at a specified time between 9.30am and 4.30pm. They should not be set during weekends or holiday periods other than in exceptional circumstances (e.g. field visits) with any such arrangements being approved by the Head of HE.

Students must take responsibility for submitting the correct piece of work by the published deadline. The submission of a draft copy in error cannot be used in mitigation for an assessment offence allegation. Summative assignments should normally be submitted in two distinct electronic formats: uploaded to the relevant Moodle drop-box and via the bespoke email address specific to each course (by submitting a student agrees to the email declaration that the work is their own and that no plagiarism has occurred – *see below*)

Arrangements may vary on occasions due to the context of a particular assignment or the assessment demands of the course, but in such instances the arrangement will have been cleared by the Head of HE and full details of expectations will have been outlined in the Student Handbook for the programme. For all assignments, Programme Managers must ensure that an end date/time cut-off is set on Moodle to prevent late submission.

Work should always be presented in an appropriate fashion, particularly when it is to be formally assessed; with in every case careful attention being given to any word or specific structure that applies to the assignment in question the word counts or structure applicable to assignments and the referencing of source materials (*see separate HE Word Count policy – applicable to UoP programmes only*).

All submitted work should be original and authenticated (*see below*) and should include the Strode College student number for ease of identification. It is strongly recommended that students ensure all of their work is backed up effectively and they keep a final copy for their records.

**Extenuating Circumstances**

The College recognises that situations can arise beyond a student’s control resulting in them not being able to meet the published summative submission deadline. In specific situations and where reasons given are seen as legitimate, short extensions can be authorised; such issues must, however, be addressed in an official manner and in line with the College’s ‘Extenuating Circumstances’ policy. All requests for extenuating circumstances must be made in writing using the appropriate form no later than 10 college days after the published summative submission deadline with corroborating evidence being required for most applications.

Whilst initially the College’s ‘Extenuating Circumstances’ procedures are the same for all programmes, some differences do ultimately exist, depending on the context of the course:

*Pearson courses only*:

If an assignment submission is made after the published deadline date and a student does not have validated Extenuating Circumstances for an extension, the work will be assessed ‘without penalty’ but the mark will be capped at Pass. The late submission Pass mark will be reported at the Interim or Summer Subject Assessment and Award Assessment Board (AAB) for ratification.

*University of Plymouth courses only*:

If an extension is not possible, or if due to the extenuating circumstances, the student is not able to submit work within the extended deadline, a claim for non-submission of work may be valid. In this case, a zero mark will be included in the student’s profile and their extenuating circumstances will be forwarded to the AAB, which will make a decision on what action to take. The Board may decide to allow re-assessment at the next opportunity – possibly over the summer referral period or as a repeat of the whole module in the following academic year. Re-assessment will include all components of an element, with any previous component marks being overwritten, and will generally be as the same attempt.

**Authentication**

Only evidence that is authentic can be accepted for assessment - i.e. work that is clearly the student’s own and that can be appropriately judged to see whether it meets the assessment criteria.

When setting assignments, care must also be taken to ensure that the nature of the task can ensure authenticity - e.g. agreeing a different focus for research with each student - as this will reduce opportunities for copying or collaboration. It is also important that all evidence is capable of being reassessed in full by another person - for practical skills, supporting evidence can legitimately be captured through videos, recordings, photographs etc.

A declaration of authenticity is made by the student at the point of submitting work for assessment on Moodle and via the bespoke programme email, which confirms that it is their own product. Evidence will generally be passed through plagiarism software to uphold the integrity of the programme – if the work is identified as having been in part taken from unreferenced sources or if it is found at another point in the assessment process that some or all of the product is not authentic, appropriate action must be taken, which will include informing the validating bodies and invoking the Strode College HE Academic Offences Policy as required.

1. **Marking Code of Practice**

As reliability is essential for effective assessment, it follows that the outcomes for each individual student should be both fair and justifiable. If these core principles are to be upheld, it must be presumed that were the marking process to be repeated, a student should expect to receive a similar result. This is, however, difficult to ensure when dealing with large numbers of markers and a very diverse student body and therefore the Code of Practice for marking below is designed to minimise the possibility of unfair outcomes for students and to make sure that each student’s work is considered appropriately. This structure maintains academic standards in the College, whilst protecting and supporting staff responsible for making judgements about the quality of student work.

**Principles**

The minimum standard applicable to all programmes is that all work contributing to a final award should be submitted to independent internal scrutiny ensuring consistency in marking practices across a subject area or programme. “Marking” is a process indivisible from assessment that often involves academic or professional judgement of an assignment submission against well-established criteria that are understood by the student.

**Processes**

Programmes will adopt a combination of the following processes to ensure marking standards are reliable:

* **Marking schemes:** Programme teams are expected to use clear assessment criteria and marking schemes as these are key factors in assuring that the process is carried out fairly and consistently. It is the responsibility of the Programme Manager to ensure that all marking scheme are accurate, transparent, and accessible to markers and students in a timely fashion. Marking schemes should be also available to external examiners and standard verifiers as part of their consideration of academic standards on the modules for which they have responsibility.
* **First marking:** All assignments will be first marked within the programme team and this should be done, wherever possible, anonymously. To facilitate anonymous marking, students are required not to place their names on assessed work, but rather to submit assignments with only student numbers for identification. In small cohorts, this process is less effective than would be the case with greater numbers of students, but tutors have nonetheless emphasised the advantage of this system since its inception. Anonymous marking avoids the risk of unintentional bias and endeavours to make sure that all students are treated equally.
* **Second marking:** Second marking involves sampling and remarking the work with assignments normally being second marked unseen (i.e. the second marker will have no knowledge of the first marker’s results). The outcome of this process will either be confirmation of the first marker’s judgement without a further meeting being called or a discussion to resolve the differences between the results recorded by the two markers. This conversation may in some instances lead to a wider review of the marks for the entire cohort. All second marking should be evidenced on the record sheets for the assignment and made available to external examiners and at the subject assessment panel. Where two markers cannot agree a final mark, a panel, including wherever possible, the Curriculum Manager or their nominee and the external examiner, will determine the final mark and will inform the AAB. Formal second marking is undertaken of the dissertation on BA (Hons) History, Heritage and Archaeology course due to the specific nature of the task.
* **Internal moderation**

Moderation is a process separate from the marking of assignments that involves a review of assessment within a module/unit by an appropriate member of academic staff. It ensures that an assessment outcome (e.g. mark and/or grade) is fair, valid and reliable, that assessment criteria have been applied consistently, and that any differences in academic judgement between individual markers can be acknowledged and addressed. It also guarantees consistency in marking within cohorts and across time.

Wherever possible, moderation should be:

* arranged for all components of summative assessment, irrespective of level or credit weighting (except dissertations/final year projects, which must be second marked – *see above*)
* appropriate to the subject area, the type of work being produced and its credit weighting and should evidence the full mark range
* carried out on a sample that is representative of all markers involved in marking the component
* concluded with agreement that the marks awarded are justifiable and in line with comments made
* able to confirm all marks, raise or lower all marks or make an adjustment to a particular class
* evidenced and recorded, including any amendments made, and available to external examiners
* completed before marks are released to students

Selection for internal moderation should ensure there is a representative sample of:

* assignments from all elements of the unit/module (i.e. coursework element and exam element)
* approximately 10 pieces of work or 5% (whichever is the greater) of a unit/module’s assignments, including borderlines and all fails, to satisfy the moderator that there is consistency and fairness
* more than 25% of submitted work for new units/modules or those taught by staff new to HE

In the rare cases where agreement cannot be reached, the matter should also be brought to the attention of the Head of Higher Education, who may decide on further action such as additional marking/moderation, including possibly appointing an independent academic to carry out a review.

* **External moderation of marks:** Following internal moderation, an agreed sample of assessments that contribute towards an award must be moderated by an external examiner / standards verifier. The sample selected for external moderation should normally include all summative work for an agreed selection of students from a given cohort, based on the marks agreed by internal assessment processes. In order to ensure consistency and fairness to students, any amendment to the marks of the sample as a result of external moderation must be applied to the rest of the cohort.
1. **Subject Assessment Panels and Award Assessment Boards**

Subject Assessment Panels (SAP) and Award Assessment Boards (AAB), referred to as ‘Panels and Boards’, are designed to monitor academic standards. They are held on a designated date at the end of the year for each HE course as a requirement of both University of Plymouth and Pearson. On the advice of external examiners, an Interim SAP/AAB has also been introduced at the end of the first semester for Pearson programmes. Whilst the SAP reviews comparative performance on each module or unit, the subsequent AAB decides on the outcomes applicable to each individual student. These are conducted in two separate meetings on the same day for University of Plymouth courses, whilst they are combined into a single discussion for HNC/HNDs.

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

* the grades/marks achieved by students on individual modules/units
* extenuating circumstances
* cases of plagiarism or other alleged academic offences
* progression of students on to the next stage of the programme as applicable
* the overall awards to be made to individual students
* referrals and deferrals

Following decisions made at the AAB, results for all HE courses will be posted to the student’s registered home address within 10 working days. It is therefore the student’s responsibility to ensure the College is formally notified of any change of contact details. Students who wish to appeal against decisions of Award Assessment Board should refer to the Strode College HE Appeals Procedures.

**Degrees and Foundation Degrees (University of Plymouth)**

Membership of Subject Assessment Panel:

* Programme Manager (Chair)
* UoP Partnership Manager
* Head of Faculty - Higher Education
* Head of Faculty - Quality
* Module Leaders
* External Examiner
* Senior Higher Education Administrator (minutes)

Membership of Award Assessment Board:

* UoP Partnership Manager (Chair)
* Deputy Principal: Curriculum & Quality
* Head of Faculty - Higher Education
* Head of Faculty - Quality
* Programme Managers
* Award External Examiner
* Senior Higher Education Administrator (minutes)

Compensation: In approving any course for delivery, the University designates certain modules to be ‘compensatable’. At AAB, if a student does not achieve a ‘pass’ in up to 60 credits i.e. the volume of credit permitted for referral, the highest scoring 20-credit, ‘compensatable’ module may be compensated, providing the module mark obtained is within 10% of the pass mark. A student who does not pass other modules (up to 40 credits) will be offered a referral in those element(s) of the module in which they received a mark below 40%. The referral will be at the ‘next’ attempt, or ‘same’ attempt if a student has valid Extenuating Circumstances. A final year student or a student with valid Extenuating Circumstances, has the option to take a referral instead of being compensated. A part-time student may only be awarded a compensated pass, if 120 credits of a level have actually been attempted.

The referral submission date is set by University of Plymouth and is usually in mid-August.  Results from all referred modules will be ratified at the Referred Award Assessment Board in early September and before the start of the next HE Academic Year. At the Referred Board, a student who fails more than 20 credits cannot progress to the next stage until the module has been achieved; therefore they may be invited to repeat all failed modules with attendance during the following year, for which a fee is payable. In some cases, a student may be asked to attend a Fitness to Study review before an offer to repeat module(s) is confirmed and a maximum of three attempts are allowed for any single module – *see UoP regulations* <https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/student-life/your-studies/essential-information/regulations>

Overall, the jurisdiction of the Award Assessment Board allows for the following actions, where a student does not achieve a ‘pass’ in one or more taught modules:

* award compensation to a maximum of 20 credits
* allow the student to be referred in the module(s) up to a maximum of 60 credits, in whole or in part of each element of assessment, at the next available opportunity
* allow the student to repeat the module(s), with or without attendance, by a date to be determined by the Board (for which an additional fee may be payable);
* require the student to withdraw from the programme and award any intermediate qualification, for which the student has achieved the credit requirements;
* require a student, whose extenuating circumstances will prevent the completion of the award during normal period of registration or have prevented them from making academic progress in the previous session, to interrupt studies or withdraw from the programme;
* require a student, whose extenuating circumstances will prevent them from meeting the learning outcomes of their programme to transfer to an alternative programme or to withdraw from the programme and be granted the appropriate exit or aegrotat award

**BTEC HNC/HND Courses (Pearson)**

Membership of Subject Assessment Panel and Award Assessment Board:

* Head of Faculty - Higher Education (Chair)
* Programme Manager
* Unit Leaders
* External Examiner (invited by Programme Manager but not required to attend by Pearson)
* Senior Higher Education Administrator (regulations / minutes)

As every assignment counts towards overall qualification achievement, the AAB may consider it appropriate to offer any student on an HNC/HND course the chance to resubmit evidence. The aim of such authorisation would be to allow the student to meet the assessment criteria targeted by the particular unit assignment and would normally be made available for any student not achieving a ‘pass’ for a unit specification to request.

Only one opportunity for reassessment (resubmission) of any specific unit is permitted. Arrangements should be made for resubmitting the assessment in such a way that does not adversely affect other assessments and does not give the student an unfair advantage. The AAB may decide a resubmission of the assignment should be conducted under supervised conditions, even if this was not necessary for the original assessment – e.g. in order to prevent possible plagiarism. Grades from resubmissions are capped at ‘pass’; students therefore have no entitlement to be reassessed in any component, for which a pass or higher has already been awarded.

Resubmissions can only be authorised by the AAB, if all of the following submission conditions are met:

* The student has met all the initial deadlines for the assignment, has met any agreed deadline extension, or has submitted work late that has been accepted
* The assessor judges that the student has fully attempted to achieve all targeted learning outcomes in their original submission
* The assessor judges that the student will be able to provide improved evidence without further guidance
* The assessor has authenticated the evidence submitted for assessment

If the above conditions have not been met, the AAB must notauthorise a resubmission. In these instances, the student may, however, be allowed to repeat the unit in full, if this is felt to be an appropriate course of action. If a student is authorised to repeat a unit, a fee will be payable and the unit grade will be capped at ‘pass’. The precise due date for resubmissions will be determined by the AAB. Resubmission results are confirmed at the Referred Board in late August/early September before the start of the next HE Academic Year.

In exceptional circumstances the Award Assessment Board may permit a student to repeat up to 2 x L4, 15 credit units (30 credits) whilst studying L5 at the same time; however, if more than 2 x 15 credit units are to be repeated, the student will not be able to progress to the next level until the repeat units have been successfully completed. In either case, before being invited to enrol, consideration will be given as to the student’s capacity to cope with the additional workload in that academic year. The student will be made aware of the financial implications and risk of not achieving either the L4 or L5 award, should they fail any repeat L4 units. Only one opportunity to repeat a unit can ever be allowed.

**Compensation Provision**

HNC: Students must attempt all units (120 credits). The AAB can only apply ‘compensation’ to a 15 credit unit and award an HNC, if the student has attempted, but not achieved a ‘pass’ in a particular L4 15 credit unit, yet has completed and passed all the remaining units. Core, Specialist and Mandatory units can be compensated provided they only account for 15 credits. Students must achieve at least a ‘pass’ in 105 credits at Level 4.

HND: Students must attempt all units (120 credits). The AAB can only apply ‘compensation’ to a 15 credit unit and award an HND, if the student has attempted, but not achieved a ‘pass’ in a particular L4 15 credit unit; and similarly, if they have attempted but not achieved a ‘pass’ in a particular L5 15 credit unit. However, they must complete and pass the remaining units for an HNC or HND, as per the unit rules of combination of the required qualification. Core, Specialist and Mandatory units can be compensated provided only account for 15 credits Students much achieve at least a ‘pass’ in 105 credits at Level 4 and also 105 credits at Level 5.

**Qualification grades above Pass grade**

A Merit or Distinction grade for the HNC Diploma is based on the student’s best performance in units at L4 to the value of 75 credits. Similarly, for the HND Diploma, Merit and Distinction grades are based on the student’s best performance in units at L5 to the value of 75 credits. The units from which the best 75 credits are selected come from the whole HNC or HND qualification, including the mandatory units. Credit from mandatory units will automatically be included in the calculation, once the maximum amount of credit for optional specialist units for the rule of combination is used up.

1. **Formulation**:

This Policy Statement was reviewed by the Head of Higher Education with reference to following publications:

* QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education
* University of Plymouth Assessment Setting, Marking and Moderation Policy
* Pearson Higher Nationals Enhanced Quality Assurance and Assessment Handbook

Review takes place annuallyor as required by the College, validating institutions, regulatory advice or legislation.

Head of Faculty HE, Sept 2022