



Pearson

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about BTEC Higher National Assessment and Feedback

STUDENT GUIDE



1 Assessment

What is the point of assessment?

Assessment is the process of measuring your learning. Through the process of assessment, both you and your tutors can evaluate whether you have achieved the learning that is intended and at what level of achievement.

Assessment helps you with your progress on the course programme, it helps your learning on the course programme and it helps you and your tutors to see what you have understood and which areas you may require additional support in.

In what ways will I be assessed?

Your knowledge, understanding and skills will all be assessed in a wide variety of ways throughout your course programme. You are usually assessed by assignments which can take many forms e.g. report, presentation, debate, e-portfolio, project, lab report, role play, performance, demonstration and examinations.

How am I graded in each unit?

Pearson BTEC qualifications, including the Higher Nationals (HNs), employ a mastery model of assessment. The mastery model of learning is based on the principle that students must achieve a level of 'mastery' of prerequisite knowledge or skill, in order to progress to higher levels.

In practice, the mastery model of assessment means that you must achieve all of the required learning at a level and below to be awarded the grade. Thus, for a student to achieve a Pass, they must achieve all the assessment criteria for a Pass. To achieve a Merit, students must achieve all the assessment criteria for a Pass and Merit. For Distinction, the student must achieve all Pass, Merit and Distinction assessment criteria.

What is the difference between formative and summative assessment?

Formative assessment is primarily developmental in nature and designed to give you feedback on your performance and progress throughout the unit delivery. Assessment designed formatively should develop and consolidate knowledge, understanding, skills and competencies. It is a key part of the learning process and can enhance learning and contribute to raising standards. You are continuously formatively assessed by your tutors and peers via in-class activities and learning checks, homework, group work and in your tutorials.

Formative feedback is invaluable, do not ignore it! Anything that's not clear, ask questions and let your peers, tutors and lecturers support you.

Summative assessment is where you are provided with the assignment grades contributing towards the overall unit grade. All formative assessment feeds directly into the summative assessment for each unit and lays the foundations from which you can develop the necessary knowledge and skills required for the summative assessment.

2 Assessment Policies

I have passed a unit but am not happy with a pass grade, can I resubmit to improve performance and gain a higher grade?

No, once an assignment has been graded and passed you do not have any further opportunity to be reassessed. This is in accordance with UK higher education (HE) practices on undergraduate programmes.

If I disagree with the grade awarded for my assignment how can I appeal the decision?

An appeal would have to be undertaken as per your centre internal appeals policy. Please refer to your tutor in this instance.

What happens if I can't meet the assessment submission deadline?

If you don't meet the submission deadline you will be subject to the late submission policy applied by your centre. This normally will result in your grade being capped at a Pass. Please refer to your tutor to seek clarification on the late submission policy.

If your late submission has been due to unforeseen circumstances you will be able to apply for mitigating/extenuating circumstances. This is an internal centre policy and you would need to refer to your tutor.

Whatever your circumstances it is important to contact your tutor, don't miss a submission deadline without speaking to them first.

I have failed one of my assignments. Do I have to pass all of my assignments in order to pass the unit overall?

Yes, you need to have met all the pass criteria to pass the unit. If you have failed one or more of the assignment components for a unit you will be given the opportunity to resubmit the assignments. However, you are only eligible for one reassessment opportunity per unit.

If I fail a unit do I get another opportunity to complete this unit and resubmit my work?

Yes you do, you have one re-assessment opportunity per unit. A resubmission is capped at a Pass. If you fail the re-assessment again you may be in a position of compensation or having to repeat the unit

again. Decision outcomes are granted by the assessment board and are at the discretion of the board.

How many chances do I get to pass a unit?

If you fail a unit at your first attempt, you may be given up to one more opportunity to pass it through reassessment of failed assignment components. Failing that you are also given the opportunity of repeating the unit in its entirety during the next academic year; this is normally subject to payment of the appropriate fee. Both reassessment and repeat of units are capped at a Pass.

If I accept a unit as compensation, does this affect my prospects in the long term?

Yes it could, depending on your progression route. If you accept a unit as compensation this will appear on your final Student Notification of Performance as unclassified. If you are wishing to progress to higher Level 6 study your progression opportunities could be affected, as UK University offers are normally based on students completing and passing all units on their course programme.

3 Assessment Feedback

What is feedback for?

Effective assessment feedback is part of continuous guided learning which promotes learning and enables improvement. Feedback will fully support your learning by enabling you to recognise what you have achieved, what needs to be achieved and how to continue to progress. It is through feedback from tutors and your peers that you may also develop and enhance your reflective practice to support your own learning.

How will I receive feedback?

Formative feedback is given to you throughout your learning journey. This is to say that it relates to formative assessment that may be undertaken, at any point, prior to the summative assessment. Formative feedback can be both formal and informal. You might have scheduled specific points where you present work for formative assessment. Such instances can be valuable opportunities for group discussion and peer assessment. In such cases, it is expected that you will receive written formative feedback. In other instances, the formative feedback may be during tutorials or classroom activities.

Summative feedback follows summative assessment and results in a grade. Summative assessment feedback supports you to understand why you achieved the grade awarded. As well as pointing out areas of achievement and areas where there may be a lack of higher achievement, summative feedback will also help you consider how to improve in the future. While the results of a summative assessment are final, feedback should be the following:

- a) constructive; pointing out areas of achievement and areas where there may be a lack of higher achievement,
- a) feed-forward; to assist you in thinking about how to improve your work for the future.

What type of feedback will I receive?

During teaching and learning examples of formative feedback from your tutors include:

- identifying areas for learner progression,
- setting “dry run” or “mock” tasks and scenarios to help you understand what level you have reached and prepare for assessment,
- feedback on how to improve knowledge, skills, understanding, behaviour, approach, grammar.

During the completion of summative assessment you will receive feedback on:

- how to approach the knowledge and skills requirements,
- appropriate behaviour and approach, confirmation of deadlines for the assignment brief,
- learning outcomes and assessment criteria that the tutor is targeting and clarification of what the assignment brief requires.

After your summative assessment feedback will be on:

- the learning outcomes you have achieved and what you have done well,
- the learning outcomes and assessment criteria you have not achieved and what was missing,
- information or guidance available to you that you could have used,
- general behaviour and conduct, approach, grammar,
- how to improve your work in the future.

What do I do with my feedback?

Constructive and useful feedback will enable you to understand the strengths and limitations of your performance, do not ignore it!

Listen to and/or read your assessor comments, this will point out what you did well and what you didn't do so well. It will signpost you to gaps in your knowledge and problems with how you have applied your knowledge. Reflect upon this, discuss with your personal tutor and/or peers and use it to enhance your skills and improve grades in your next unit assignment.

Think **STOP, START, CONTINUE**:

1. **STOP** – What you should stop doing (e.g. what didn't work well)
2. **START** – What you should start doing (e.g. to improve your assessment work and grades)
3. **CONTINUE** – What to continue to do (e.g. carry on with what you do well)

Why can't feedback be more personalised?

Assessor assessment feedback is about the student work. Tutors should ensure that feedback avoids the use of language that may seem personal as personalised feedback can be misconstrued and misinterpreted.

4 Getting the Qualification

Can I get a Higher National Certificate/Diploma with a Merit or Distinction?

Yes, the calculation of the overall qualification grade is based on your performance in all units at the level of certification. You are awarded a Pass, Merit or Distinction qualification grade using the points gained through all 120 credits, at Level 4 for the HNC or Level 5 for the HND, based on unit achievement. The overall qualification grade is calculated in the same way for the HNC and for the HND.

Points per credit

| | |
|--------------|---|
| Pass: | 4 |
| Merit: | 6 |
| Distinction: | 8 |

Point boundaries

| Grade | Point boundaries |
|-------------|------------------|
| Pass | 420–599 |
| Merit | 600–839 |
| Distinction | 840 + |

ALWAYS LEARNING