

UNIVERSITY OF BEDFORDSHIRE

ACADEMIC REGULATIONS 2014/15

**SECTION 5a Assessment Regulations for Undergraduate Taught
Studies**

5a.1 Introduction

5a.1.1 The University of Bedfordshire's Academic Regulations provide the regulatory framework for assessment processes. Academic Regulations are agreed by and can only be amended by the Academic Board. The implementation of these Regulations is set out in guidance in the Quality Handbook. The Handbook also covers arrangements for quality assurance of implementation, and has been designed to complement, and be read in conjunction with, these Academic Regulations.

5A.2 PURPOSES AND PRINCIPLES OF ASSESSMENT

5a.2.1 Purposes

5a.2.1.1 Within its regulations the University of Bedfordshire identifies the purposes of assessment as:

- To measure a student's achievements against the intended learning outcomes of the unit and course.
- To assist student learning by providing appropriate feedback on performance.
- To provide a reliable and consistent basis for boards of examiners to determine the progression of, and conferment of awards to, students.

5a.2.1.2 Assessment is an integral part of our approach to facilitating student learning. It is part of a progressive process by which students learn to develop their ability to critically evaluate, to analyse and to take responsibility for their own work. It contributes to their employability and to their ability to be life-long learners.

5a.2.1.3 Assessment practices and processes must be robust and conform to internal and national expectations, ensuring confidence in the reliability, validity and authenticity of grading.

5a.2.2 Principles

5a.2.2.1 The following principles underpin the University's approach to assessment.

Assessment strategies

- The assessment of unit outcomes is designed to contribute to, or to support, the achievement of course level outcomes.
- Assessment strategies are coherent and developmental across a course, supporting learner development and enabling students to achieve their potential.
- Assessment strategies strike a balance between summative and formative assessment.
- Students experience a range of assessment activities designed to support the progressive development of their knowledge, understanding, skills and employability.

Standards

- Assessment practices and processes are robust and conform to internal and external expectations, ensuring confidence in the reliability, validity and authenticity of grading.
- Assessment criteria are clearly specified, aligned to the level of the unit and its learning outcomes, and used as the basis for marking and grading.

Assessment activities

- Assessment activities relate to the intended learning outcomes of the unit and support the overarching assessment strategy for the course.
- Assessment activities enable students to demonstrate the learning outcomes in ways which are inclusive and equitable.
- Assessment activities support academic integrity and minimise opportunities for academic offences.

Engaging students

- Students are supported in developing an understanding of expectations through detailed assessment briefs and active engagement with the assessment process and criteria.
- Assessment supports student self-management and reflection, giving students the confidence and skills to use the variety of feedback available to them to monitor and improve their performance.
- Realistic and balanced assessment workloads spread the assessment loading and ensure adequate time for the associated learning.
- Timely and meaningful feedback supports the learning process.

Reviewing and evaluating

- The design and delivery of assessment is a collegiate activity which necessitates academic teams discussing and agreeing expectations and outcomes.
- Assessment practices are continuously reviewed and refined to ensure they are supporting students and their learning, and meeting institutional principles.

Grades

- 5a.3 Student work will be marked using the University grading scheme (refer to Table A).
- 5a.4 Exceptionally, some units are graded on a pass/fail basis, requiring approval by Academic Board.
- 5a.5 Grades for elements of assessment must be whole numbers. If there are a number of components within an assessment these must be aggregated and the calculation, rounded using the convention: 0.5 and above rounded up, otherwise rounded down, to the nearest whole number.
- 5a.6 Grades, or part/s of grades, are not awarded for attendance.
- 5a.7 Credit is awarded on successful completion of a unit.
- 5a.8 Successfully completed units cannot be reassessed.
- 5a.9 Units taken in addition to the prescribed course will not contribute to the award.
- 5a.10 Students can only be assessed at a higher level if they have progressed to that level.
- 5a.11 In making judgements about students' ability to progress, Boards of Examiners will take into account decisions concerning mitigating circumstances on the basis of advice and recommendations from the Student Engagement and Mitigation team. If the circumstances persist, students will be granted the right to undertake the assessment for the first time at a

later date. Such students must be given a new assessment task, normally at the next scheduled opportunity. Academic Board may determine that for some types of assessment, submission may be undertaken prior to the next scheduled opportunity.

5a.12 Where allegations of academic offences are made they will be investigated. Such offences include cheating, plagiarism, the fabrication of information and impersonation.

5a.13 A student, who has not attained a minimum of 30 credits by the end of a level i.e. after referral, will normally be required to leave their course as determined by the relevant Board of Examiners.

5a.14 The classification of a student's award is determined by the Board of Examiners. No units may later be substituted with the intention of changing the award title or improving the class of award.

5a.15 University Grading Scheme

Grade letter	Mark Band %	Grade Descriptor	Award Classification	
			Honours degree	Foundation degree
A+	80-100	Outstanding	P	Distinction
A	75-79	Excellent		
A-	70-74			
B+	67-69	Commendable	A	Merit
B	64-66			
B-	60-63			
C+	57-59	Good	S	Pass
C	54-56			
C-	50-53			
D+	47-49	Satisfactory	S	Pass
D	44-46			
D-	40-43			
E	35-39	Marginal Fail	F A I L	
F	25-34	Fail		
F-	1-24	Fail		
G	0	Non-submission		

Table A

5a.16 Where feasible, assessments must be submitted and graded anonymously.

5a.17 The determination of the grade for a student's assessment concludes with a decision by the Board of Examiners.

Elements of assessment and passing units

- 5a.18 Students must submit their assignments as specified in the assignment brief. Failure to submit by the published deadline will be classed as non-submission.
- 5a.19 Students who have a non-submission at level 4 resulting in grade 0/G for one or more of the elements of assessment will be permitted an attempt at a referral of an assignment or resit of an examination. For non-submission at level 5 or level 6, students will only be permitted a referral or resit attempt where the Board of Examiners confirms satisfactory engagement with the unit.
- 5a.20 Students must satisfy the Board of Examiners that they have met the intended learning outcomes of each element of assessment in the unit.
- 5a.20.1 The overall pass mark for a unit is 40%. Each element of assessment must achieve a minimum of 35%. The course specification may stipulate further requirements for one or more assessment components as specified by a PSRB or other external awarding body.
- 5a.20.2 Exceptionally a Board of Examiners may confirm a unit pass in the case of circumstances where, in an element of assessment with a weighting of 20% or under students who have achieved a mark of at least 25%.
- 5a.21 Students who submit all elements of assessment and do not successfully complete the unit have a further opportunity to pass the unit by undertaking a referral of all failed elements of assessment at the next opportunity. All referrals, including for non-submission, must be taken at the next scheduled opportunity. The grade for the referral element is capped at the minimum pass mark.
- 5a.22 Students who do not pass a unit on referral may retake the unit at the next opportunity. Students who retake must be assessed in all elements of assessment in a unit. The retake marks override any previous marks for the unit. The full range of grades will be available in assessing the retaken unit unless specified by the University's Academic Conduct Panel.
- 5a.23 Students who do not pass the unit on their retake will have one final opportunity for referral as under Regulation 5a.21. This is the final opportunity that will be offered to pass the unit.

Progression between stages

- 5a.24 To progress between stages on an undergraduate course a student must have:
- 5a.24.1 attempted and passed all units to the value of 120 credits; or
- 5a.24.2 passed units to the value of 90 credits; and for the remaining 30 credits, have attained an aggregate grade of at least 35% for each unit and attempted all elements of assessment; with a minimum mark of 25% for any element. This condonement will not carry credit.
- 5a.25 A student progressing to the next stage under the terms of 5a.24 will not be permitted an opportunity for reassessment.

Final Stage assessment and award

- 5a.26 A student will become eligible for conferment of an award on completion of the course and when the student has:
- 5a.26.1 acquired the requisite number of credits at the final stage of the course leading to the registered award; and
- 5a.26.2 where appropriate, met any subject specific or PSRB requirements for the award, as agreed by the University's Academic Board through the course approval process.
- 5a.27 Compensation or condonement is not permitted in any element or unit at the awarding level.
- 5a.28 A student who is exiting the University either for failure to progress or alternative reasons may be granted an exit award. An Examination Board will consider the highest award available to the student based on the credit the student has successfully gained in the course.
- 5a.29 Credit successfully completed at a higher level may be used to contribute to an award at a lower level where there is deficiency in credit.
- 5a.30 The Bachelor's degree with Honours is awarded in classes of First (1); Upper Second (2i); Lower Second (2ii) and Third (3).
- 5a.31 The Bachelor's degree (without Honours) is awarded without any classes or divisions.
- 5a.32 When used as exit awards, the Certificate of Higher Education, or the Diploma of Higher Education, may be awarded as an unnamed award. Certificates or Diplomas of Higher Education may be established as exit awards and also conferred as named awards where the requirements, including relevant learning outcomes, are defined through the course approval process.
- 5a.33 For each candidate for the Bachelor's degree with Honours, the class of Honours achieved will be based on the best of the two following weighted averages of unit marks:
- 5a.33.1 in the penultimate and final stages of the programme of study:
- marks from the units comprising the best 90 credits at the final stage, including at least 30 credits from the designated project, are double weighted; and
 - marks from the units comprising the best 90 credits at the penultimate stage are single weighted; and
 - the result of this weighted average calculation is rounded to the nearest whole number using the convention 0.5 and above rounded up, otherwise rounded down.
- 5a.33.2 in the final stage:
- the Honours classification is based on the average of the grades attained in 90 credits at the final stage, including at least 30 credits from the designated project.
- 5a.34 The calculated mark for classifications for all honours awards will be determined using both of the above methodologies; students will be awarded using the higher of these calculations.

- 5a.35 The table below (Table B) shows the weighted averages and the boundaries for classes of Honours:

Weighted average	Class
70 – 100%	First class honours
68 – 69%	2i/1 st borderline
60 – 67%	Upper Second class honours
58 – 59%	2ii/2i borderline
50 – 57%	Lower Second class honours
48 – 49%	3/2ii borderline
40 – 47%	3 rd class honours

Table B

- 5a.36 If the weighted average for a student falls within one of the borderlines noted above, the profile of grades in the final stage will be reviewed. For students with 60 credits or more awarded in the higher classification category the Board of Examiners' will confirm the higher classification.
- 5a.37 The Integrated Master's Degree may be awarded with Distinction to students who have achieved consistently high grades in levels 6 and 7 of the course according to a methodology previously agreed through the course approval process and ratified by Academic Board.
- 5a.38 The Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE), Foundation Degree (FD), Higher National Diploma (HND) and Higher National Certificate (HNC) are awarded with Distinction to students who have attained grades of 70% or higher in a minimum of 60 credits at level 5 for DipHE/FD/HND and level 4 or 5 for HNC.
- 5a.39 The Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE), Foundation Degree (FD), Higher National Diploma (HND) and Higher National Certificate (HNC) are awarded with Merit to students who have attained grades of 60% or higher in a minimum of 60 credits at level 5 for DipHE/FD/HND and level 4 or 5 for HNC.

Boards of Examiners

- 5a.40 Decisions about the assessment of students are made on behalf of the Academic Board by Boards of Examiners.
- 5a.41 Boards of Examiners are established at two levels: Portfolio Boards of Examiners; and the Scheme Board of Examiners.
- 5a.42 Portfolio Boards of Examiners have delegated authority to agree progression decisions for students and recommend award decisions to the Scheme Board of Examiners.
- 5a.43 The Scheme Board of Examiners is responsible for the conferment of awards and credit for exit decisions.

Academic Offences

- 5a.44 If a student on a taught course leading to a University of Bedfordshire award is accused of an academic offence, the procedures described in the University's Academic Discipline Policy and Procedure (see <http://www.beds.ac.uk/aboutus/quality/regulations>) will be followed.

Appeals against decisions of Boards of Examiners

- 5a.45 In line with the Policy regarding Academic Appeals and the Procedures to be followed when submitting an Appeal; a student may appeal against the decision of an examination board. The policy is found at <http://www.beds.ac.uk/aboutus/quality/regulations>.
- 5a.46 Academic appeals are not valid where they relate to academic judgement.