



**Havering College of Further and
Higher Education**

**Assessment Regulations for
HNC/D RQF Programmes**

Awarded by Pearson

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BTEC RQF Higher Nationals (from September 2016)

Assessment Regulations

These Assessment Regulations have been developed to ensure that all Higher Education assessment practice is compliant with Chapter 6 – Assessment of students - of the QAA Quality Code for Higher Education in the UK. The Assessment Regulations that follow apply to all current HE Pearson awards

1. General principles of assessment

1.1 Fulfilment of programme objectives

The purpose of assessment is to enable students to demonstrate that they have fulfilled the objectives of the programme of study and achieved the standard required for the award they seek.

The form of assessment is twofold:

Formative

The main purpose of formative assessment is to provide the student with feedback on his or her progress, so that strengths and weaknesses can be identified by the student and appropriate action taken. Formative assessment is mainly personal and focused on the individual's development.

It is good practice to plan for at least one formal opportunity to provide written formative assessment feedback on each assessment, at a point where students will have had the opportunity to provide evidence towards the assessment criteria targeted. This should be written into the assessment plan and be formally recorded. All records should be available for auditing purposes as Pearson may choose to interrogate records of formative assessment as part of their ongoing quality assurance.

Summative

The main purposes of summative assessment are to enable students to demonstrate their achievement of the programme's objectives and to ensure a fair judgement on the student's level of attainment. Summative assessment is applied simultaneously across a peer group of students and is course-focused.

Tutors should annotate on the learner work where evidence supports their grading decisions against the unit grading criteria. It is not expected that students are offered opportunities to revisit assignments at this stage of the assessment process unless approved by the Programme Leader.

Students will need to be familiar with the assessment criteria to be able to understand the quality of what is required. They should be informed of the differences between grading criteria so that higher skills can be achieved.

The Assessment Regulations that follow apply to both forms of assessment.

1.2 Confirmation of a consistent, national standard

Assessment reflects the achievement of individual students in fulfilling a programme's objectives. At the same time, assessment also relates that achievement to a consistent national standard of awards. Assessment is carried out by competent and impartial examiners, using methods which enable them to assess individual students fairly. To achieve this, the college and Pearson, requires external examiners (standards verifiers) to be involved in, and associated with final assessments which may count towards an award. The role of the external examiner is to ensure that fairness and justice are maintained at an individual and cohort level; and that the national standard of the college's/Pearson awards are confirmed and maintained.

1.3 Publication of assessment information

Each Programme Team is required to produce an Assessment Scheme detailing how each unit, at each level of the programme is to be assessed throughout the academic year. The Assessment Scheme will include both formative and summative assessment. This information will normally be published in the Student Handbook and will also be accessible via Moodle, the college's VLE system.

1.4 Eligibility for assessment

Students of the college registered for an award who have satisfied the college requirements with regard to the payment of tuition fees are eligible for assessment. Students who have not satisfied those requirements may be assessed, but will normally have their results withheld until such time as the outstanding fees have been paid.

1.5 Assessment of units

All units will be assessed. Assessment will take place during or immediately on completion of the teaching of each unit. Assessment will usually involve submitted assignments (written, practical, portfolio or oral) or tests. HE programmes at HCFHE are taught and assessed using learning outcomes and QAA Benchmarks (where available) to enable students to demonstrate learning and achievement for units, levels and programmes. All learning outcomes have to be successfully addressed in the assessment process.

Each successfully completed unit will be graded as a pass, merit or distinction.

- A pass is awarded for the achievement of all outcomes against the specified assessment criteria;
- Merit and distinction grades are awarded for higher level achievement.

Students must achieve at least a pass grade for all elements of assessment in all units.

Summary of grades

| | |
|---|---|
| In order to achieve a pass in a unit | All learning outcomes and assessment criteria have been met. |
| In order to achieve a merit in a unit | All learning outcomes and assessment criteria have been met. All merit grade descriptors are achieved. |
| In order to achieve a distinction in a unit | All learning outcomes and assessment criteria have been met. All merit and all distinction grade descriptors are achieved. |

Generic grade descriptors and indicative characteristics

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Assessment criteria | Statements that identify the important features to be present in the assessment evidence and are indicative of a satisfactory (i.e. pass) level of achievement. |
| Grade descriptors | Statements that identify the features within the assessment evidence which enable a tutor to measure achievement above the satisfactory level (i.e. merit and distinction). |
| Indicative characteristics | Guides to the expected student performance within a particular assignment supporting the generic grade descriptors. The indicative characteristics should reflect the nature of a unit and the context of the sector programme. |

| Merit descriptors | Exemplar indicative characteristics |
|---|--|
| In order to achieve a merit the student must: | (Centres can identify and use other relevant characteristics). The student's evidence shows, for example: |
| Identify and apply strategies to find appropriate solutions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective judgments have been made; • Complex problems with more than one variable have been explored; • An effective approach to study and research has been applied. |
| Select/design and apply appropriate methods and techniques | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant techniques and theories have been applied; • A range of methods and techniques have been applied; • A range of source information has been used; • The selection of methods and techniques/sources has been justified; • The design of methods and techniques/sources has been justified; • Complex information/data has been synthesised and processed; • Appropriate learning methods/techniques have been applied. |
| Present and communicate appropriate findings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The appropriate structure and approach have been used; • Coherent, logical development of |

| | |
|--|--|
| | <p>principles/concepts for the intended audience;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A range of methods of presentation have been used and technical language has been accurately used; • Communication has taken place in familiar and unfamiliar contexts; • The communication is appropriate for familiar and unfamiliar audiences and appropriate media have been used. |
|--|--|

| Distinction descriptors | Exemplar indicative characteristics |
|--|---|
| In order to achieve a distinction the student must: | <p>(Centres can identify and use other relevant characteristics).</p> <p>The student's evidence shows, for example:</p> |
| Use critical reflection to evaluate own work and justify valid conclusions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conclusions have been arrived at through synthesis of ideas and have been justified; • The validity of results has been evaluated using defined criteria; • Self-criticism of approach has taken place; • Realistic improvements have been proposed against defined characteristics for success. |
| Take responsibility for managing and organising activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autonomy/independence has been demonstrated; • Substantial activities, projects or investigations have been planned, managed and organised; • Activities have been managed; • The unforeseen has been |

| | |
|---|--|
| | <p>accommodated;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The importance of interdependence has been recognised and achieved. |
| Demonstrate convergent/lateral/ creative thinking | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideas have been generated and decisions taken; • Self-evaluation has taken place; • Convergent and lateral thinking has been applied; • Problems have been solved; • Innovation and creative throughout; • Receptiveness to new ideas is evident; • Effective thinking has taken place in unfamiliar contexts. |

1.6 Academic offences

An important aspect of academic endeavours is recognition of the effort and work of the individual student. As such, the college views attempts to falsely claim the achievements of others as one's own as serious academic offences and has [policies and procedures](#) to deal with such actions in a fair and just manner.

1.7 Attendance requirements and regulations

The college attendance requirement for all HE programmes is 90%.

1.8 Internal verification of assessment decisions

Internal verifiers conduct quality checks on assessment processes and practice to ensure that they meet national standards and that all students have been judged fairly and consistently. An internal verifier can be anyone involved in the delivery and assessment of the programme that is able to give an expert "second opinion". Where there is a team of tutors, it is good practice for all tutors to be involved in internally verifying each other. Please note, you cannot internally verify your own assignments or assessments decisions.

Internal verifiers must sample assessed work for each assignment to check accuracy of assessment decisions. Internal verifications should be carried out by a staff member who is familiar with the BTEC assessment at the appropriate level and has subject knowledge of the programme area.

During the course of the programme, internal verification sampling should cover the following:

- Every tutor;
- Every unit;
- Every assignment brief before it is issued to students;*
- Work from every assignment;
- Every assessment site (for multi-site centres);
- Pass, merit and distinction achievement (a student who has not yet achieved or a referred student is also a valid selection);

Internal verification should be completed before work is returned to the students.

Feedback from the internal verifier to the tutor should comment on the quality of their feedback to the student and the effective completion of documentation. The internal verifier should also give developmental feedback to the tutor telling them what could be improved. Internal verification of assessed work should be clearly recorded. If the internal verifier requires action, the tutor should complete this and return it to the internal verifier for their review and sign off.

*All assignment briefs, even those provided by published sources, must be internally verified every year, prior to issue to students.

This is to verify the brief is fit for purpose, by ensuring:

- The tasks and evidence will allow the student to address the targeted criteria;
- The brief is written in clear and assessable language;
- Students' roles and tasks are vocationally relevant and appropriate to the level of the qualification;
- Timescales and deadlines are appropriate;
- Equal opportunities are incorporated.

1.9 BTEC Standards Verifier (External Examiners)

External Examiners perform an essential role in the management and enhancement of academic quality and standards. External Examiners assist the college in the maintenance of its academic standards and in ensuring that these standards are comparable with those in the Higher Education sector across the country. The External Examiners will be appointed by Pearson.

External Examiners/ Standards Verifier:

- Checks management of the programmes is effective and meets Pearson's requirements and those of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education;
- Undertakes sampling in line with current requirements;
- Checks consistency of the interpretation of national standards by each tutor;
- Identifies whether assessment decisions meet national standards;
- Confirms that student evidence meets the grading criteria awarded;
- Confirms student work has been accepted as authentic by the tutor;
- Checks that timely and effective internal verification has been carried out on assignments, assessment decisions and feedback to students;
- Gives verbal feedback to the programme team or other centre nominated person on decisions made;
- Completes online report clearly identifying whether national standards are being met;
- Where required, identifies any remedial action required for re-sampling and conducts re-sample.

1.10 Probity in Assessment

Tutors and internal verifiers must declare any conflicts of interests to HE Quality and Standards.

1.11 Review of Assessment Regulations

Assessment regulations are reviewed annually to ensure that they comply with awarding body regulations.

1.12 Publication of an Assessment Schedule

At the start of each academic year, usually in September, each programme of study will provide a scheme detailing how and when assessments are to be carried out each academic year. This will normally be achieved via the Student Handbook and will also be accessible via Moodle, the college's VLE system.

It is the responsibility of Programme Teams to ensure that students are:

- (a) aware of the assessment regulations;
- (b) aware of any programme specific assessment regulations that affect their programme of study, e.g. attendance requirements etc.
- (c) provided with details of the assessment arrangements applicable to their own programme of study.

2. Submission, mitigation, marking and grading of assessments

2.1 Submission of assessments

- The student is responsible for submitting their assessments in accordance with the specified and published submission deadlines and formats.

2.2 Mitigation

- The college operates a clear and transparent system of dealing with requests for mitigation from students. These procedures are set out [here](#).

2.3 Assessment submissions

- All written assessments must be submitted via Turnitin unless instructed otherwise by the programme team.
- As part of the induction to the programme all students are provided with training and information to support the use of Turnitin as a submission tool. It is the responsibility of each student to complete the training and carefully familiarise themselves with all the information about the use of Turnitin.
- All copies of assessments must be submitted with a completed Pearson assessment front cover sheet which has been signed to confirm that the work being submitted is the own work of the student presenting it.
- Late submission of assessments – In accordance with Havering College's own policy, **work that has been submitted late will be capped at a Pass**. However, the submitted work may be assessed and the student advised what the result would have been 'without penalty' for feedback purposes only.

2.4 Marking of assessments

- Student work will be marked and examples may be passed to the internal verifier
- Where there is agreement between the tutor and internal verifier the sample of work is forwarded to the External Examiner for the programme.
- Where there is a disagreement between the first and second markers a third internal marker will be brought in to adjudicate the final mark of the assessments. The third marker will resolve the internal dispute. A sample of assessments will be presented to the External Examiner who will moderate the marking process to ensure that there is consistency across the marks for the units and levels of the programme.

2.5 Grading of assessments

- All assessments must provide evidence that demonstrate that the learning outcomes of the individual units have been met in full. Failure to meet the learning outcomes of a unit will result in the work initially being restricted to a fail grade.

2.6 Grading Pearson BTEC Higher National Units (RQF)

Assessment decisions for Pearson BTEC Higher Nationals are based on the specific criteria given in each unit and set at each level of attainment in that unit and at the qualification level. The criteria for each unit have been defined according to a framework to ensure that standards are consistent in the qualification and across the suite as a whole. The way in which individual units are written provides a balance of assessment of understanding, practical skills and behavioural attributes appropriate to the purpose of the qualifications.

Assessors must show how they have reached their decisions using the criteria in the assessment records. When a student has completed all of the assessment for a unit then the assessment team will give a grade for the unit. This is given simply according to the highest level for which the student is judged to have met all the criteria.

Therefore:

- To achieve a Pass, a student must have satisfied all the Pass criteria for the Learning Outcomes, showing coverage of the unit content and therefore attainment at Level 4 or 5 of the national framework.
- To achieve a Merit, a student must have satisfied all the Merit criteria (and the Pass criteria) through high performance in each Learning Outcome.
- To achieve a Distinction, a student must have satisfied all the Distinction criteria (and the Pass and Merit criteria), and these define outstanding performance across the unit as a whole.

The award of a Pass is a defined level of performance and cannot be given solely on the basis of a student completing assignments. Students who do not satisfy the Pass criteria should be reported as Unclassified.

3. Calculation of the final qualification grade, resubmission and repeat units

3.1 Conditions for the award of the HNC

To achieve a Pearson BTEC Higher National Certificate qualification a student must have:

- completed units equivalent to 120 credits at Level 4
- achieved at least a pass in 105 credits at Level 4.

3.2 Compensation provisions for the HNC (RQF only)

Students can still be awarded an HNC if they have not achieved a Pass in one of the 15 credit units completed, but have completed and passed the remaining units.

3.3 Conditions for the award of the HND

To achieve a Pearson BTEC Higher National Diploma qualification a student must have:

- completed units equivalent to 120 credits at Level 5
- achieved at least a pass in 105 credits at Level 5
- completed units equivalent to 120 credits at Level 4
- achieved at least a pass in 105 credits at Level 4.

3.4 Compensation provisions for HND (RQF only)

Students can still be awarded an HND if they have attempted but not achieved a Pass in one of the 15 credit units completed at Level 4 and similarly if they have attempted but not achieved one of the 15 credit units at Level 5. 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.

Students can still be awarded an HND if they have attempted but not achieved a Pass in one of the 15 credit units completed at Level 4 and similarly if they have attempted but not achieved one of the 15 credit units at Level 5. 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.

Compensation is offered after a resubmission opportunity has failed, however, a student can repeat the unit. If the student fails the unit again after repeating the unit, they can be offered compensation. For compensation to be considered, the student must have done all the work required and been assessed but not have passed. The decision to offer compensation is taken at the assessment board but the student must confirm acceptance. If a student accepts compensation this should be evidenced in writing and confirmation kept in student records and updated on the Assessment Board minutes and action log.

Compensation is shown as an unclassified unit on the Notification of Performance (transcript). Centres claim the unit with a grade of Unclassified (U grade). The unit will count towards the minimum number of unit credits required to achieve the qualification (120 credits for an HNC and 240 credits for an HND).

Any unit may be compensated.

3.5 Calculation of the overall qualification grade

The calculation of the overall qualification grade is based on the student's performance in all units. Students 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.

All units, in valid combination, must have been attempted for each qualification. The conditions of award and the compensation provisions will apply as outlined above. All 120 credits count in calculating the grade (at each level, as applicable).

The overall qualification grade for the HND will be calculated based on student performance in Level 5 units only.

Units that have been attempted but not achieved, and subsequently granted compensation, will appear as 'Unclassified' (i.e. a 'U' grade, on the student's Notification of Performance, that is issued with the student certificate).

Points per credit

| | Points per credit |
|-------------|-------------------|
| Pass | 4 |
| Merit | 6 |
| Distinction | 8 |

Point boundaries

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

3.6 Resubmissions

A student who, for the first assessment opportunity, has failed to achieve a Pass for that unit specification shall be expected to undertake a reassessment.

- Only one opportunity for reassessment of the unit will be permitted.
- Reassessment for course work, project or portfolio-based assessments shall normally involve the reworking of the original task.
- For examinations, reassessment shall involve completion of a new task.
- A student who undertakes a reassessment will have their grade capped at a Pass for that unit.

- A student will not be entitled to be reassessed in any component of assessment for which a **Pass** grade or higher has already been awarded.

3.7 Repeat Units

The following applies to a student who, for the first assessment opportunity and resubmission opportunity, still failed to achieve a Pass for that unit specification:

- At the provider's discretion and Assessment Board, decisions can be permitted to repeat a unit.
- The student must study the unit again with full attendance and (if required) payment of the unit fee.
- The overall unit grade for a successfully completed repeat unit is capped at a Pass for that unit.
- Units can only be repeated once.
- The External Examiner is likely to want to include assessments that have been resubmitted as part of the sample they will review.

4. Assessment Boards

Each programme of study leading to an award must have an Assessment Board to consider the outcomes of assessments. Assessment Boards have a responsibility for considering the performance of students in the subject or set of related units.

4.1 Dates of Assessment Boards

There will normally be one Assessment Board each academic year. This will usually fall in June/July after the completion of your programme. There may also be a separate board to deal with referrals. Dates will be published in the student handbook.

4.2 Composition of Assessment Boards

Assessment Boards for HE programmes at Havering College will normally be constituted as follows:

- Head/Deputy Head of HE Quality and Standards who is independent of the programme under consideration will Chair the Board;
- The Secretary from HE Quality and Standards will take the minutes and distribute all paperwork that needs to be completed. Paperwork must be returned to HE Quality and Standards 7 days prior to the assessment board taking place;
- The Programme Manager for the programme;
- The External Examiner for the programme, as appointed by Pearson, has the right to attend but the college cannot insist upon attendance;
- All members of the programme team.

Agendas, minutes of previous meetings and schedules for the Assessment Board will be provided by HE Quality and Standards. The agenda is normally determined by HE Quality and Standards so that all Assessment Boards operate in the same way.

4.3 Responsibilities of Assessment Boards

The responsibilities of the Assessment Boards are to:

- (a) ensure that their assessment decisions are fair, transparent and consistent, in accordance with the programme specifications;
- (b) use their academic judgement to ensure that appropriate standards of assessment are maintained and that these are comparable with other U.K. programmes;

- (c) consider the quality of the students' performance in relation to the published assessment criteria;
- (d) determine any requirements for deferred assessment(s);
- (e) consider and attend to the outcomes of the College's Mitigation Panel;
- (f) consider the overall performance profile of individual students and to decide on the appropriate outcomes in terms of award of credit, level completion, failure, deferral, referral, progression and award;
- (g) make recommendations on:
 - (i) the award of credit to students, within the criteria set out above;
 - (ii) the progression of students upon level completion;
 - (iii) programme awards, as appropriate.
- (h) determine any requirements for all students failing a unit(s);
- (i) consider any recommendations from the college's Academic Panels into academic offences and apply any penalty/penalties where appropriate;
- (j) formally acknowledge the findings of any related Academic Offences procedure;
- (k) reconsider its judgement following the outcome of any college appeal panel.

4.4 Procedures of the Assessment Board

The Board will ensure that all assessment material is treated sensitively and securely; and that measures are taken to maintain the confidentiality of its deliberations. Only information which has been agreed by the Board will be shared externally. All formal information will be shared in writing with the individuals to whom it pertains.

The Board has a duty to assess all students being put forward. The Board has powers to take whatever action is necessary to carry out its functions in a fair and consistent way. An Assessment Board has the power to agree means of obtaining further evidence if it is not satisfied that it has sufficient evidence upon which to make a decision.

In exceptional circumstances, where the achievement of this is problematic, the Board can suspend itself, while taking advice, but should reconvene as soon as it is possible to complete its task.

All discussions and subsequent decisions will be fully recorded and only made available to members of the Board, or in the case of appeals, made available to the

HE Quality & Standards. Students will be informed in writing of the decisions of the Board.

4.5 Publication of Results

This occurs in two stages.

Stage 1 – informing students of results before an Assessment Board

This involves informing students of provisional marks in advance of Assessment Boards. Provisional marks are defined as those marks which have been assessed and internally verified. Students should always be informed that marks are provisional until they have been ratified by an Assessment Board. Students should also be informed that marks can be increased, decreased or remain the same during ratification by the Board.

Stage 2 – publication of results following an Assessment Board

The deliberations of Assessment Boards are strictly confidential to members and to other academic and administrative staff with legitimate access to them; and on no account may the confirmed results be conveyed to students before the formal publication of results. In the normal course of events publication will be via the programme team's Moodle site.

4.6 Assessment Board Minutes

The proceedings of Assessment Boards must be formally minuted.

The minutes shall record the:

- a) complete list of students and moderated marks or grades for each unit of study, provided usually via a schedule detailing results for each level of the programme of study;
- b) names of students for whom AP(C) L was applied to individual units;
- c) names of students for whom mitigation was considered and the outcome(s);
- d) details of any deferral or referral requirements, consideration of compensation and when the next opportunity for assessment will occur;
- e) definitive list(s) of students qualifying for an award; together with the nature of the award and the level or grade awarded;
- f) action taken as a result of the outcome of any academic panel;
- g) details of any issue of principle/precedence arising from the discussions of the Board;

- h) details of any issues requiring further consideration by the Quality and Standards section.

4.7 Appeals against decisions of Assessment Boards

Procedures for appeals arising from Assessment Board decisions are described in [Academic Appeals Procedure](#)

5. Progression, Referral and Suspension of Studies

5.1 Level completion

Credits are awarded for units in which a grade of at least a pass grade has been achieved. Credits are accumulated, at each Level of the programme from 'core' and 'option' units. The credit weighting of each unit, together with their designation as 'core' or 'option' is defined in the Programme Specification of each programme.

5.2 Progression

To complete a level of a Pearson awarded programme, students must accumulate a minimum of 120 credits from units, named at that level, within the Programme Specification. Students successfully completing the StARs' training programme cannot use the 10 credits, from this course, to replace the credits for any failed or referred programme specific units, to achieve level completion.

For HNC, students must complete a minimum of 120 credits at level 4: and for HND, 120 credits at level 5.

There may be variation between programmes regarding rules of combination.

5.3 Referral

Students who do not achieve a pass grade for the assessment task of any unit will be deemed to have referred the unit.

Normally, students will have the opportunity to retrieve their failure by resubmitting the required assignment(s).

Students will, normally, be given one opportunity for a referred unit. Students receive two opportunities, in total, to successfully complete assessment for all units.

The referral may be in all or some of the components of assessment of an individual unit.

The pass mark for the referral attempt is the minimum pass mark for the level of study, i.e. a pass grade

In normal circumstances, any student who has exhausted the referral opportunities offered by the Regulations or is not in a position to be offered compensation has no right to continue as a student on that programme of study. The Assessment Board will normally decide that the student has failed the programme and must now leave.

Only in exceptional circumstances, and at the discretion of the Assessment Board, will a student be allowed the opportunity to submit work for a third time. In these circumstances the Assessment Board may decide:

- a) to permit a further re-submission of the assessed task(s) or;
- b) to permit the student to repeat the unit or;
- c) to consider compensation for the unit

Students who do not complete the programme will receive a transcript detailing credit achieved, i.e. those credits which have been presented to and confirmed by an Assessment Board will be provided to the student.

Any student who does not meet the assessment requirements after a period of deferral will be deemed to have failed the programme.

A student who has failed may be permitted to re-register for an alternative award, subject to the admission requirements for that award being met and subject to a satisfactory reference being available from the Programme Team that the student is leaving.

5.4 Suspension of studies

Students can choose to suspend their studies if it is not practical for them to continue on their programme in the current academic year for mitigating reasons.

When the college deems individual students to have fallen too far behind to maintain their progress in any academic year (if 50% or more of unit assignments remain unsubmitted or 50% or more of programme credits remain outstanding with less than 50% of the academic year remaining), students may be advised to temporarily suspend their studies until such time as the circumstances affecting performance have passed, provided that the maximum period of registration for the programme is not exceeded.

Suspension of Studies must be carried out in line with Assessment regulations.