



HE Academic Regulations

2024-2025

DEPARTMENT

QUALITY

ISSUE DATE

SEPTEMBER 2024

Bringing talent to life...



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Scope

These regulations will apply to all of our HTQ, Level 4 HNC, Level 5 HND and where appropriate, Level 6 TOP-UP qualifications that are delivered by the College and to the students enrolled and registered on courses of study leading to these awards (where not specified, all Pearson courses are classified as full-time study, with an option to study part-time).

Programmes offered in conjunction with a validating degree awarding institution will be regulated by the *Academic Regulations* of that respective institution.

Approval of Academic Regulations

The College's Senior Management Team (SMT) is the body within the College with overall responsibility for the management of the academic standards and the quality of HE programmes. The College's Academic Regulations, and any proposed amendments thereto, are approved by the College's SMT, as well as the HE Academic Board.

The College reserves the right to amend the Academic Regulations at any time, as it considers appropriate.

Strategic Approach

Taking a strategic approach to managing quality and standards

Academic standards relate to the achievements represented by higher education qualifications and how the standards are secured. These are set and maintained within UK higher education through the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ). Threshold academic standards are the minimum acceptable level of achievement that a student has to demonstrate to be eligible for an academic award.



Academic standards and the quality of the student learning experience are the responsibility of Walsall College. Degree-awarding bodies are aware that they have ultimate responsibility for the qualifications offered in their name.

The strategic approach is employed wherever and however the provision is delivered and is embedded in the culture and practices of Walsall College.

Walsall College's strategic approach to securing academic standards, quality assurance and enhancement is published, communicated clearly and accessible to staff, students and external stakeholders. It is supported by a comprehensive and transparent governance framework. This approach is monitored and evaluated on an annual basis. The College recognises the

importance of external expertise in relation to the strategic approach to managing quality and standards.

The frameworks for higher education qualifications are supported and contextualised by subject benchmark statements. These national frameworks are maintained by Office for Students which is also responsible for quality assuring their use. Subject benchmark statements are utilised to set out the nature and characteristics of higher- level qualifications and the outcomes graduates are expected to achieve in specific subject areas.

The Office for Students (OfS) is the independent regulator of higher education in England. Their purpose is to ensure that every student, irrespective of their background, has a fulfilling experience of higher education that enriches their lives and careers. Their work covers all students whether undergraduate or postgraduate, national or international, young or mature, full-time or part-time, studying on a campus or by distance learning.

Higher education qualifications are awarded by degree- awarding institutions or awarding bodies. Walsall College is not a regulated degree-awarding institution, therefore where academic standards are set and maintained by a certified degree-awarding institution partnership. Walsall College will ensure that the delivery and maintenance of the academic standards of that particular institution is preserved, and will be accountable to the degree-awarding institution in terms of their own Quality Assurance (QA) processes. The College will also use its own Academic Regulations to support this process and cross-referencing against these standards will apply.

The specific role of the College as a delivery organisation in relation to academic standards is set out in the formal agreement with our partner degree awarding institutions.

In the main, Walsall College offers Higher National Certificates and Higher National Diplomas accredited by awarding body Pearson (BTEC). These qualifications adhere to separate qualification frameworks in the form of the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF), regulated by Ofqual. The RQF supports qualifications at higher levels which associate with the corresponding levels of the FHEQ.

Engaging students as partners



Student Engagement considers how we engage with students through our quality systems.

Walsall College ensures student engagement and representation activities are clearly defined, communicated, resourced and supported. Transparent arrangements are in place for the collective student voice to be heard and responded to.

Walsall College is passionate about delivering the very best services to its students and to its community. We know that the way to do this is to involve students in as many different ways as possible to shape developments in the learning environment, to act on feedback we receive, and to communicate timely outcomes to students. The College strives

to ensure students understand that their voice has been listened to and are aware of how their views have impacted the assurance and enhancement of the student experience.

Student engagement opportunities and processes are at all times inclusive of students' characteristics and responsive to the diversity of everyone. Walsall College and student representative bodies ensure they recognise and celebrate the contribution of students to the enhancement of teaching and learning and the wider student experience. Students are enabled and encouraged to actively engage in the governance and enhancement of the wider student experience beyond the formal curriculum.

Walsall College Student Voice Strategy

Objectives:

Our objectives outlined within the Student Voice Strategy recognise that active engagement in democratic processes does make a difference. Active citizenship is a way for Walsall College Graduates and students to increase in confidence and benefit long-term from the skills learned through participation.

Our college becomes increasingly dynamic and effective as it develops and innovates in response to student feedback. The Student Voice process not only helps our college develop, but supports students in becoming Walsall College Graduates - skilled, professional and enterprising.

Through active engagement, students are able to recognise and contribute to the Positive Communities and British Values of:

- Democracy.
- The rule of law.
- Individual liberty.
- Mutual respect and tolerance.

Student engagement with Quality Assurance and Enhancement of Learning Opportunities is well embedded.

All students are made aware of the range of processes to provide feedback and influence provision. Higher education students take part in regular College surveys which refer to the external National Student Survey (NSS) to benchmark performance.

Surveys allow higher education students to feed back on their experience of induction, the quality of learning, teaching and assessment, and College support services and facilities. Higher education students also feedback on unit assignments through the online Gradebook End of Unit Evaluation. Further formal feedback is gained from students via student focus groups, conferences and meetings. HE students are represented at senior committees such as the HE Academic Board, Learning and Quality Committee (L&Q), and the Student Voice Committee. Actions are tracked through the Student Voice Action Plan, with the aim to improve our provision. Improvements are fed back regularly to the student body.

Students are required to comply with the College's Ready, Respect, Safe (RRS) Agreement. The College takes deliberate steps to assist every student to understand their responsibility to engage with the learning opportunities provided and to shape their learning experience. The College's Ready, Respect

and Safe Agreement applies to all students at all times, including when on work placements, educational visits or trips or other external College activities.

The College's Ready, Respect, Safe Agreement also applies to college students undertaking programmes through educational or training providers or community centres that the College has contracted to provide services on its behalf. Students shall be informed about the Ready, Respect, Safe Agreement as part of their induction. Any breach of the agreement will be considered in accordance with the College's Student Support process. Students are also required to comply with all College Health and Safety policies and procedures, at all times.

Freedom of Speech

Walsall College has a Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech, which describes the philosophy, principals and procedures relating to our responsibility to foster freedom of expression, and the circumstances in which that freedom might be restricted, in order to prevent violence, abuse or discrimination. The policy also details our responsibilities regarding visiting speakers.



Walsall College is committed to upholding academic freedom of enquiry in its education and believes that a culture of free and open discussion is essential. This open culture of discussion can only be achieved if all concerned behave with tolerance and respect the College's values, as outlined in our Ready, Respect, Safe Agreement. This ensures good relations and the safety of students, staff and the college community.

Attendance and Participation

Attendance refers to the College's expectations with regard to the way in which students engage with the learning, teaching and assessment requirements for their course of study. Students are expected to regularly attend all forms of learning activities associated with their course of study and to participate in their course of study as required by the College.

The College publishes term dates. The College delivers learning, teaching and assessment activities during such dates. Students are expected to be available to participate in teaching, learning, and assessment activities during all term dates.

The College expects students to ensure that a particular course of study or unit is acceptable, prior to enrolment, and they are able to meet the attendance, learning and assessment requirements for that course and/or unit. The College is not able to change the programme specifications and requirements, or scheduling of courses or units to meet an individual student's specific needs.

Students are required to complete all assessment for the units they are registered for, as prescribed by the relevant unit specifications. Where the reason for absence or failure to complete assessment is due to illness, or other circumstances that are unplanned and outside of the student's control, students are expected to submit a request for Extenuating Circumstances/Extension Form (page 17 of the Assessment and Quality Assurance Policy and Procedure) and to provide appropriate documentary evidence.

Teaching, learning and assessment approaches are implemented to enable students to develop as independent, autonomous students, with provision of opportunities for independent learning that places emphasis on developing students with high-levels of critical thinking skills.

Where possible, programmes benefit from external links with those working in the vocational sector. These links are provided in a variety of ways, for example:

- Tutors will regularly review the vocational relevance of assignments;
- Tutors will provide 'live' case study material that is company or organisation based;
- Tutors will arrange visits to companies and other vocational settings, when appropriate;
- Tutors will secure professional input from companies and vocational practitioners; especially where vocational expertise is clearly identified in the delivery section of the units;
- Work placement that is specifically related to the qualification;
- Tutor placements are arranged to enhance their vocational expertise.

Resourcing delivery of a high-quality learning experience

Strategic and operational plans, along with resources, align with the student journey and are designed and implemented to support a positive student experience and enable student achievement.

Walsall College ensures that they have dedicated, accessible and inclusive resources to support and enhance the delivery all programmes along with the well-being of students and staff. These include staffing, digital and physical resources.

Resources are reviewed and updated in alignment with strategic developments and changes in provision, as well as staff and student recruitment. This also ensures relevance to the workplace and the wider academic discipline. Staff within the College are supported with ongoing professional development to support and enhance the delivery of a high-quality and innovative student learning and research experience.

The creation, development and maintenance of accessible and inclusive learning environments (physical and virtual) offer all students the opportunity to be engaged in their learning experience and facilitate a sense of belonging. The College ensure they consider environmental sustainability in designing and maintaining these learning resources and facilities.

Evaluating Quality and Standards

Using data to inform and evaluate quality

A consistent, coherent and evidence-informed strategic approach to the collection, storage and management of data is employed across the College. Walsall College makes clear the type and level of data utilised (such as departmental, programme, module level) and the policies and processes that underpin its use in the maintenance of academic standards and the assurance and enhancement of quality.

All staff and students should be aware of the type of data gathered and how it is stored and used in the management of quality and standards. If any student is unsure of this, it is advised they speak to their tutor.

When designing, operating, monitoring and evaluating staff and student's data arrangements, staff and students adhere to ethical and data protection requirements relating to gathering and submitting data for national data sets, regulatory purposes, and internal monitoring and evaluation.

Staff who are required to collect, manipulate and analyse data for reporting, quality assurance and enhancement purposes receive training that enables them to undertake these activities effectively, ethically and securely. Policies cover any third-party use of data, including applications utilising Generative Artificial Intelligence.

Data is collected and analysed in ways that enable the college to understand and respond to the needs of their student populations, promoting equality, diversity and inclusion, and environmental sustainability.

Monitoring, evaluating and enhancing provision

The College's Quality Improvement Strategy embraces quality assurance processes for both Further and Higher Education Provision. Within the HE Enhancement Cycle there are clear processes to assure the quality of learning, teaching and assessment, and success in outcomes, through Developmental Observations, Quality Reviews, Quality Summits, Periodic Reviews, internal verification, stakeholder voice activities, and self- assessment and Quality Improvement Planning. For each process there is a higher education specific approach and filter. Higher education specific course performance, student progress and student satisfaction are scrutinised and monitored to the same robust degree as Further Education provision.

Programme monitoring and review draws upon a range of qualitative and quantitative information. This includes data on student progression and achievement, information made publicly available or reported to external bodies including professional, regulatory and statutory bodies, reports from external examiners, subject benchmark statements, and other comparative data. Where possible, data is disaggregated by protected characteristic in order to identify any differential impact on particular groups of students. The college agree strategic principles for monitoring and evaluation to ensure processes are applied systematically, operated consistently and appropriate to their operational context.

The methods for monitoring and evaluation activity are documented to clarify their aims, objectives, intended actions and targets. They are explicit about how they will be conducted, the nature of evidence (data) to be considered and the form of reporting, along with key indicators of success.

The three-year cycle of Periodic Review includes all higher education programmes delivered at Walsall College.

The quality of the learning opportunities which students experience and the standard of the awards that they take away are central to the Periodic Review process. The College uses the findings and action plans from Periodic Reviews to inform curriculum planning and review.

Staff and students are engaged in monitoring and evaluation activities and receive appropriate training and support to undertake them. The actions and outcomes from monitoring and evaluation activities are communicated in an accessible manner to staff, students, the governing body and, where required, external stakeholders.

Improvements and enhancements that have been implemented as a result of monitoring and evaluation are, in turn monitored and evaluated to ensure their impact is positive and remains fit for purpose. Monitoring and evaluation activity facilitates the college's insights and promotion of equality, diversity and inclusion, and education for sustainable development.

Programmes and modules are monitored and reviewed regularly by internal and external peers, employers and students. In line with the college's strategic approach to quality and standards. Outcomes from processes required from funding, accrediting, professional and approval bodies feed into monitoring and review.



Engaging in external review and accreditation

External review, whether optional or required by national quality frameworks or accrediting bodies, is built into the college's strategic approach and aligns to internal quality and standards monitoring and evaluation activity. The college use outcomes from external review and accreditation as a catalyst for ongoing improvement and strategic enhancement of the student learning experience.

Walsall College acknowledge and support the expertise and resource required to participate in external review and accreditation. When engaging in external review, the college understand the UK national regulatory and legislative contexts in which they operate and the different approaches, forms and focus they may take. The college understands the requirements and process for external reviews that may be required by regulators in partner delivery locations.

External Examining

The External Examiner appointed by Pearson BTEC will visit the delivery team, meeting staff and students and sampling a range of assessment and verification decisions against national standards. An External Examiner's report is produced as a result of this visit which is shared with the appropriate staff and students, and is also presented at the College's Annual Assessment Board.

Annual Assessment Boards

The College holds an annual Assessment Board for all of its BTEC Higher National programmes. The main purpose of the Assessment Board is to make recommendations on:

- the grades achieved by students on the individual units;
- extenuating circumstances;

- cases of cheating and plagiarism;
- progression of students onto the next stage of the programme (where appropriate);
- the awards to be made to students;
- referrals and deferrals.

The membership of the Assessment Board is:

- Assistant Principal - Quality (Chair);
- Director of Faculty in which the course is based, or his/her nominated representative;
- Curriculum Delivery Manager (CDM)/Apprentice Sector Manager (ASM);
- Tutors/Vocational Coaches for the programme(s) being considered.

Decisions on grades, referrals, deferrals, progressions and recommendations for awards are the responsibility of the Assessment Board.

Grades will remain provisional until they have been confirmed by the Assessment Board. Assessment Board outcomes and External Panel Member recommendations are recorded formally by the College's Quality Team and shared with the appropriate curriculum staff. Any actions and progress are monitored through to completion.

Final decisions on the award of grades are communicated to the College's Examinations Team, who then process certification through the Awarding Body (Pearson) in order to claim student certification.

Implementing the Approach to Quality Enhancement and Standards

Designing, developing, approving and modifying programmes

The Directors of Faculty have responsibility to ensure all aspects of quality assurance processes are effective and fully embedded in the design, development and approval of all programmes. Curriculum Delivery Managers (CDMs) are responsible for academic and resource planning to ensure relevancy and currency. All programmes and modules are designed to meet academic standards that are consistent with relevant national qualifications and credit frameworks. Where applicable, the college also meets professional body and accreditation requirements, and apprenticeship standards.

Where the College delivers in partnership with a Degree Awarding Institution, programme design and development are determined by the institution's own management/leadership teams, who take ultimate responsibility for academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities.

Where the College delivers Pearson BTEC Higher National qualifications, programme teams use the nationally devised and accredited specification for each BTEC qualification, as their first point of reference for all planning and assessment. These nationally devised and accredited structures and curriculum content reflect the local dimension of how the programmes are then delivered. The programme teams refer to Pearson's assessment and delivery guidance when developing and designing programme specifications. All BTEC units are assessed through internal assessment, which allows teams to deliver the programme in a way that suits their students and relates to local need. Curriculum teams consider student feedback, as well as external expertise, when determining unit

context and designing assignment briefs. Students are involved meaningfully in the design, development, approval and modification of programmes and modules.

Prior to delivery, programme leaders agree a definitive annual assessment plan, produced from the design, development, approval and modification processes. Once designed, all summative assignment briefs are internally verified and checked for coverage of programme specifications, prior to issue to students. Programme delivery includes formative assessment tracking for students and summative unit grading. Internal verification and standardisation activities effectively ensure consistent and accurate assessment decisions are made. Similar but proportionate arrangements are in place for modules and smaller units of study.

Pearson allocates a subject-specific expert, External Examiner, to a programme sector to conduct sampling of assessed student work and provide judgements and feedback. The External Examiner works with and supports the delivery team in identifying good practice and areas for further development, giving guidance on how to improve delivery. Programme leaders work closely with their External Examiner to ensure that the College's implementation, delivery and assessment are consistent with national standards.

All BTEC Higher National qualifications delivered by the College are based on a teaching year comprising of an Autumn, Spring and Summer term of approximately 12 weeks each. All Pearson courses are classified as full-time study (12 hours minimum contact), with an option to study part-time (apart from where specified as part-time only).

All proposals for the development of higher education courses at Walsall College are subject to a process of approval by the College's internal validation panels, and external approval by the Awarding Body (Pearson) or validating university. The internal process has two stages: Course Approval (Stage 1) and Internal Validation by Curriculum Planning Group (Stage 2).

The first stage, Course Approval, is concerned with the proposal's academic fit with Walsall College's strategic ambitions. Therefore, ensuring that the appropriate resources available to run the programme are planned for (e.g., staff expertise and capacity, equipment and specialist spaces), and that the external markets for the programme (both in terms of student recruitment and the employability of graduates) have been evaluated and weighed in the balance. Proposals for development must be approved by the College's Course Approval panel prior to submission for internal validation at Curriculum Planning Group (Stage 2), in the Higher Education Academic Board.

External validation or Course Approval is sought according to the requirements of the Awarding Body (Pearson) or validating university. The College reserves the right to amend or withdraw any course of study at any time as it deems necessary. Normally, amendments to courses of study are enacted for the next cohort of students to join the course. Where an amendment to a course has an effect on students currently registered for it, those students will be formally notified of the amendment and provided with an opportunity to object to it (should they wish to do so).

Once approved, course withdrawals are not enacted until there are no students remaining registered on the course in question.

The award to be received and how outcomes of study are recorded and certificated are made clear to all students and staff involved in the teaching, learning and evaluation of the programme and module.

Policies and processes that support the design, development, approval and modification of programmes and modules are published on the college's website and are easily accessible to key stakeholders. The design, development, approval and modification processes align with the college's policies and practices on equity, equality, diversity and inclusion, and environmental sustainability.

Recruiting, selecting and admitting students

Walsall College's Strategic Ambitions and Mission Statement position the College as an agent for social inclusion and social change and one that welcomes students from all backgrounds, including those not traditionally well represented in higher education.

The College will endeavour to facilitate the entry of a broad spectrum of participants into higher education, who, by virtue of either their possession of a recognised qualification, as specified by the entry requirements provided by the college for each course (or other record of achievement), or their maturity and experience are deemed likely to fulfil their specific learning objectives. Where students are not deemed ready to access higher education, the College will seek to provide (through our Careers, Education, Information, Advice and Guidance team) courses which will support students in achieving readiness for higher education.



The College will ensure that procedures in place for the recruitment and admission of students are readily accessible, fair, clear and implemented consistently, including processes for the recognition of prior learning. Similar and proportionate arrangements are in place for modules and other units of study.

Applications

The College will ensure the speedy conversion of appropriate applications into offers to support suitable prospective students, and their advisors for recruitment and widening access purposes, by having transparent academic and non-academic entry requirements, which lead to the enrolment of new entrants at appropriate levels in the College.

Applicants will be provided with the timely information, and advice and guidance needed for them to make informed choices about the courses best suited to their individual needs and circumstances. Advice will also be given that covers financial support and costs, together with the obligations placed upon them at the point at which an offer of a place is made, and for the start of the course.



Walsall College ensure they meet their legal and regulatory obligations in relation to the information presented about themselves and their provision or any changes they make to programmes and modules. The college will inform prospective students as soon as possible of any significant changes to a course which may occur from the time of the offer being made and enrolment, and will inform successful applicants of the arrangements for enrolment, registration and induction. The College will ensure that effective and appropriate arrangements are in place for providing feedback to applicants who have not been offered a place.

The College will ensure that procedures are in place for responding to applicants' complaints about the operation of the admissions process, and appeals about the outcome of a selection decision, and will ensure that all staff involved with admissions are familiar with the procedures.

Whilst recognising relevant statutory and professional requirements, this regulation and associated procedures are framed within the College's published Student Support Policy and Procedure, and operate to ensure equality of opportunity for all applicants to the College, irrespective of protected characteristics.

The College's Access and Participation Plan 2022/23-2026/27 applies to prospective and current Higher Education. This plan outlines the College's Mission and Strategic Plan and objectives, which demonstrates a clear commitment to widening and increasing participation in Higher Education, regardless of any potential barriers associated with previous experience, background or any other factors. As with all previous College OFFA agreements, the approved Access and Participation Plan is published on the College's website.

All applicants to the College will be required to complete the appropriate application form for the course. The College will not admit or allow the continuation of study for any person found to have made a fraudulent application. Students who have previously been excluded from any course in the College for reasons of discipline, academic misconduct or fitness to practice will not be permitted to study at the College again.

Entry Requirements

The general entry requirements for admission to the College are approved by the College's Senior Management Team or its delegated authority. The admissions requirements for individual courses are set out in the prospectus and website information for that course, and approved by the College's Senior Management Team; the College may adjust these, without notice, as it deems appropriate.

A candidate, before admission to a course of study leading to one of the higher education qualifications as set out in Part A above, shall be required to satisfy any conditions set out in the offer of a place.

The College requires each student to be issued with a student ID card that includes a photograph that shows their full head and face. Students are required to carry their student ID card at all times when on the premises, or when participating in College or Students' Union activities. The College reserves the right to suspend any student who is unable, on demand, to produce their current student ID card.

Students are responsible for arranging a replacement ID card when theirs is lost or stolen. The College reserves the right to charge an administrative fee for replacement ID cards.

Modes of Study

A student enrolled with the College and registered for a course of study undertakes the course in accordance with the specified mode of study. Students shall be able to study full-time, part-time, during the day and/or the evening, by distance learning or any other approved mode of delivery, as stated in the relevant course specification. Change of mode of study is not normally permissible, except where the approved course of study allows it and the College's Senior Management Team or its delegated authority agrees it. This is formal request between the student; and the College.

Enrolment and Registration



Students must enrol with the College at the beginning of their studies and re-enrol at the beginning of each subsequent stage or academic year of their course, in accordance with instructions issued by the College. A student cannot be registered with the Awarding Body unless they are enrolled with the College. Normally, individuals who are not enrolled or registered at the College may not use College facilities.

The College reserves the right to charge a late enrolment and/or registration fee to any student who fails to enrol/register by the published deadline(s). The name by which a student is enrolled is the name under which any letter, transcript, certificate or award is issued in respect of that student. Any request to record a change of

name must be made by email to lrstudentdata@walsallcollege.ac.uk or in writing, and must be supported by appropriate documentary evidence.

The College requires students to produce documentary evidence of identity upon initial enrolment; this may be required in advance. Any student who enrolls or registers with the College under a name, identity, or with any other information that is subsequently found to be false will have their registration and enrolment terminated and will cease to be a student. Students are required to notify the College, on enrolment, of their permanent and term-time address, and must inform the College by email or in writing, of any subsequent changes of address.

Payment of Fees and Other Charges

All students shall pay fees and charges appropriate to their course of study and fee status, subject to any fee waivers or payment plans agreed by the College Fees Policy. No student shall continue on a course of study to which they have been admitted unless they have paid the fees and charges stated by the College for that course of study within the time prescribed by the College.

The College reserves the right to increase fees at any time, without prior notice, for implementation during the next academic year. Students are required to pay promptly, upon demand, all charges, fees or debts incurred in the course of their registration and enrolment at the College.

Failure to settle outstanding debt during the course of the programme will result in instigation of the Student Support Policy and Procedure at the appropriate level. In the event of default of tuition fees payment, student registration and enrolment may be terminated and they will cease to be a student of the College.

The College will normally give a student formal, written notification of the intention to de-register, and a specific deadline by which they can pay the relevant fee or charge, before de-registration will occur. If no payment has been received by this time and the student is still in debt to the College, then their registration and enrolment will be terminated, and they will cease to be a student of the College. As per the Terms and Conditions of enrolment, the student remains liable for any associated fees, irrespective to the duration of course participation and/or completion. The College reserves the right to refer any outstanding debts on to an external collection agent, whereby additional costs may be incurred.

Interruption of Enrolment and Changes to Registration

Interruption of study: A student may take an interruption in their programme of study. The period of interruption shall normally be up to one year. An interruption of study shall be approved following consultation between the student and the curriculum team, to ascertain the appropriate point at which to interrupt study and recommence the programme. Where a programme is to be discontinued, or significantly amended, it may not be possible to grant an interruption of study.

At the time a student interrupts their programme of study, the student's enrolment on the programme shall temporarily lapse. At the time a student recommences study after an interruption, the student shall re-enrol on the programme before they are permitted to continue on the programme. The College's Fees Policy sets out requirements for the payment of fees following interrupted registration.

Withdrawal of registration or de-registration by the College from a course of study leads to immediate termination of a student's registration and enrolment, and they will cease to be a student of the College. Any third-party fees including exam registration or professional membership fees are non-refundable.

In accordance with statutory obligations, the College will report to the relevant government and other external agencies when an individual ceases to be a student of the College. This includes, but is not limited to, Student Finance England, Local Education Authorities and any other sponsor. A student who is persistently absent, fails to participate or continually fails to submit assessments by the relevant date, without extenuation or extension, may be de-registered from the relevant unit and/or the course of study. This may affect a student's ability to complete the full award requirements of their course.

Supporting students to achieve their potential

Walsall College works effectively with staff, students and other stakeholders, to systematically review and enhance the provision of learning opportunities and teaching practices. This purposely enables every student to develop as an independent individual. From initial advice and guidance through to induction activities and the delivery of study skills, students can access their chosen subject(s) with an expectation of working at an increasingly higher level of autonomy, producing in-depth evidence, which enhances their capacity for analytical, critical and creative thinking.

As a truly inclusive College, we will develop talent from all sectors of society, fully develop the talent of all our staff and students and build collaboration and a sense of community. The College is able to take steps to engage all students, individually and collectively, as partners in the quality assurance and enhancement of their educational experience. We are able to monitor and evaluate support arrangements and resources, which enables students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential. Every student is enabled to monitor their progress and further their academic development through the provision of regular opportunities to reflect on feedback and engage in dialogue with staff.

Each student has an Individual Learning Plan (Walsall College Graduate) which formally captures progress and records and monitors targets. The College student tracking system Moodle keeps formal records of summative assessment/attainment per unit/module. All students are supported at key transition points throughout their journey, with their specific needs and requirements met and their pathways into learning recognised.

Accessible, relevant, accurate and timely information is offered to students and the staff supporting them throughout the learning journey about the college, programme of study, wider opportunities for development and availability of support services. Students and staff are aware of the ongoing academic, professional and pastoral services and activities available, and students are encouraged to access these opportunities and support throughout their learning journey.

Staff are appropriately qualified, trained and supported to deliver high-quality learning and support for all students, particularly those with specific needs and requirements.

Walsall College students and staff recognise that activities offered outside the formal curriculum are beneficial for promoting students' sense of belonging, as well as providing opportunities to broaden their skills and achievements, complementing their formal studies.



Teaching, learning and assessment

The Office for Students (OfS) has responsibility for the strategic oversight of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education Providers in England, and is currently designated for student support by the Secretary of State.

Walsall College is committed to continuously improving the high-quality vocational education and training it provides for a diverse range of students. The College has produced a Higher Education Teaching and Learning Strategy specifically for the delivery of Higher Education within the College and this is informed by The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ). Regardless of full-time or part-time mode of study, education on the course can embrace a wide variety of modes of both learning and teaching, which can be used in different combinations.

These include flexible and distributed learning, work-based or placement learning, and technology-enhanced learning. There is always a degree of learning expected to take place outside of the College contact hours and specific guidance regarding this is outlined during each unit/module of study. Where learning and teaching is delivered through partnership with another organisation, the responsibilities of each of the parties are defined in a written agreement. Students are given clear information about the intended modular and/or programme learning outcomes and the purpose of assessment and are enabled to use feedback/feedforward to support further learning.

Staff involved in facilitating learning and supervising research are appropriately qualified and supported to enhance their teaching and supervisory practice. Research degrees are delivered in supportive environments that are conducive to learning and research. The college ensures students are enabled and encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning and to take an active role in shaping and enhancing the learning process. The college also offer ongoing advice and guidance about academic integrity to ensure that students and staff understand what is expected of them.

The central themes of effective learning and teaching are:

- inclusive learning through promoting equity, diversity and equal opportunity.
- the College and its staff (all those who facilitate learning), students and other stakeholders working in partnership.
- learning facilitated by enthusiastic and qualified staff through teaching and other types of support for learning, whether formal or informal.

Underpinning the themes and approaches to effective learning and teaching is a clear and dedicated commitment to maintain physical, virtual and social learning environments that are safe, accessible and reliable for every student, promoting dignity, courtesy and respect in their use. Where applicable, and sustainable, students are offered different options for undertaking assessments to promote accessibility and inclusion.

Learning at Walsall College is vocational, active, motivational and progressive. It is closely linked to assessment; allowing development of skills, knowledge and attributes that will enable H.E students to achieve. A large proportion of our H.E units are practical in nature giving students the opportunities to explore 'real-life' examples to apply their skills and knowledge to case studies or projects.

As well as vocational experience, we also link well with those currently working in the sector, providing an active role in assignment writing that is relevant to employment. The UK higher education sector has endorsed the UK Professional Standards Framework for teaching and supporting learning in higher education (UKPSF), which is managed by Advance HE. The College is a member of Advance HE and each academic year, a proportion of College H.E staff submit applications to secure Advance H.E Fellowship at various levels.

From the start, delivery teams will devise the most effective way of delivering and assessing a unit or assignment, to ensure that every student is provided with an equal and effective opportunity to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

College strategies for learning may include:

- project work carried out as an individual or as part of a group;

- work-based learning;
- lectures and seminars;
- facilitated activities;
- visits to companies with a facilitator to structure the experience;
- visiting speakers from the vocational sector.
- external enrichment activities,

The Higher Education Teaching and Learning Strategy continues to reflect the College's mission, strategic ambitions and values and is closely linked to objectives outlined by the Office for Students. This serves to promote a shared understanding of good practice amongst staff, students and other stakeholders.

We aim to provide quality learning, teaching and assessment which is core to Walsall College's commitment to provide individuals with a personalised learning experience that will enhance confidence, aspirations and optimise their learning outcomes and progression.

In pursuit of this aim, the College will improve the quality of learning for all students by:

- Applying a 'right student, right course' philosophy, which is designed to ensure recruitment integrity onto a programme of study that fits the individual concerned.
- Providing focused development to empower staff to deliver first class education and training.
- Managing elements of provision that impact on the ability of the student to participate, succeed and progress. These key variables include; a curriculum offer at appropriate levels, enhancement to improve the quality of learning opportunities, careers information, advice and guidance, entry requirements and initial assessment and e-Learning.

The College commitment to enable students to be skilled, professional and enterprising is fundamental to the Strategy. The College seeks to provide students with the best possible learning and teaching experiences in an environment that enables them to have access to resources, which will support them:

- interact and collaborate with staff and other students;
- develop self-awareness, independent skills and become more autonomous;
- reach their potential in their chosen areas of study.

As students begin Higher Education at Walsall College, delivery and assessment methods help them to move from dependency to independency and self-directedness. Every student is provided with clear and current information that specifies the learning opportunities and support available to them. Students will typically take increased control of their personal learning programme, and demonstrate a readiness to learn associated with their personal development and independent performance. The college work hard to enable students to recognise the progression they have made and steps they need to take to achieve their potential.

Walsall College establish coherent approaches to technologies that impact teaching, learning and assessment (such as Generative Artificial Intelligence). These approaches are clearly communicated to staff and students, including how they are utilised and clear definition regarding the misuse of such technologies. The college offer advice and guidance about academic integrity to ensure that students

and staff understand what is expected of them throughout the learning journey. The advice is kept current.

Recognition of Prior Learning

Any student registered on a course of study leading to an award by the College who has pursued appropriate studies in the College or another institution, or who possesses appropriate qualifications or experience, has the right to be considered for the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), as defined in the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy and Procedure. This means that they may be exempt from some of the course of study. The assessment of RPL claims is a distinct process from the admissions process, even where the claims are considered at the same time as the admissions process.

Decisions regarding the recognition of prior learning must be made from a basis of equivalence. The learning derived from experience and/or prior certificated study must be judged equivalent to that of the learning that might otherwise have been achieved by following parts of the accredited course of study, or unit. Decisions must therefore be informed by reference to explicit assessment criteria contained within course and module specifications. Decisions will also be subject to any other processes specified by the Awarding Body.

The award of RPL is subject to the following:

- the procedures set for RPL follow College guidance;
- the course team has assessed the claim in terms of validity, authenticity, reliability, currency, sufficiency and level and can demonstrate that the student's previously assessed or experiential learning meets all the learning outcomes stated in the unit specification for the unit(s) for which they are to be awarded credit;
- a written record of the process for each student is kept by the Course Team;
- appeals against RPL decisions will be addressed according to the student appeal procedure set out in these regulations.

Assessment of Students

These regulations are standard assessment regulations for programmes of study leading to the award of Pearson BTEC Higher National qualifications. Course teams delivering these programmes adhere to the guidance and requirements within the Pearson BTEC Higher Nationals Centre Guide to Quality Assurance and Assessment 2023-2024. Where indicated, students should refer to the appropriate Student Course Handbook for further details of the assessment requirements for their programme of study.

The College's priority for assessment is to deliver valid, reliable, fair, and manageable assessment. Assessment programmes are designed so that skills and knowledge can be developed in line with the assessment criteria. A range of assessment methods are utilised, such as:

- presentations, written reports, accounts, surveys;
- log books, production diaries;
- role play;
- observations of practical tasks or performance;
- articles for journals, press releases;

- production of visual or audio materials, artefacts, products and specimens;
- peer and self-assessment;
- group projects.

Course teams make maximum use of work-related practical experience and reflecting typical practice in the sector concerned. In many cases, the use of industry partners and clients help to design the actual assignment briefs and projects.

A holistic view of the programme is taken to ensure there is an appropriate spread of assessment activities within, and across the units. The units making up the programme collectively allow students opportunities to develop, and be assessed in, higher level skills, such as analysis, literature searching, teamwork, management responsibilities, effective communication etc.

The final assessment clearly states which outcome(s), assessment criteria and grade descriptors have been achieved. Where applicable any necessary remedial action is also listed. No overall grade of pass, merit or distinction can be given for evidence that covers only part of a unit.

Authenticity and Authentication

The College will only accept evidence for assessment that is authentic, i.e., that is the student's own and that can be judged fully to see whether it meets the assessment criteria. All material submitted for assessment, including assessment that does not count towards the unit grade, shall be the student's own work (except where group work specifically forms part of the assignment). Quotations from the published or unpublished work of other persons must always be attributed, both at the appropriate point in the text and in the bibliography at the end.

Evidence for assessment, where appropriate, must be submitted via the College's on-line assessment tool (Moodle) where the submission date is formally recorded.

Students are required to authenticate their assessment evidence as their own work. Where assessment evidence is not electronic (e.g., art portfolios) students are required to submit to a declaration of practical assignment submission, authenticating evidence as their own work on Moodle.

Assessors assess only student evidence that is authentic.

If they find through the assessment process that there is evidence of assessment malpractice, they take appropriate action, including invoking the College's Academic Misconduct Policy as required. All students and staff are aware of:

- what is considered assessment malpractice;
- the related processes for investigating malpractice;
- the possible outcomes that may be reached and the consequences.

Malpractice shall be minimised by ensuring students and staff are aware of what constitutes malpractice, including, but not limited to, plagiarism, collusion, fabrication of results, falsifying grades, fraudulent certification claims; referencing skills; and the College's zero-tolerance approach.

Assessment and AI (Artificial Intelligence)

AI and Academic Misconduct: Any use of AI which means students have not independently demonstrated their own attainment is likely to be considered malpractice. Students should acknowledge any use of AI (including citations/screenshots).

Students must acknowledge its use and show clearly how they have used it. If an AI tool provides details of the sources it has used in generating content, these sources must be verified by the student and referenced in their work in the normal way. Where an AI tool does not provide such details, students should ensure that they independently verify the AI-generated content – and then reference the sources they have used.

All students should familiarise themselves with the College's Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedure.

Formative Assessment

Formative assessment involves both the Assessor and the student in a conversation about their progress and takes place prior to summative assessment. The main function of formative assessment is to provide feedback to enable the student to make improvements to consolidate a Pass mark, or attain a higher grade. Feedback is given promptly to ensure it has meaning, context for the student and that time is given following the feedback for actions to be completed. Students are provided with formative feedback during the process of assessment and are empowered to act to improve their performance. Feedback on formative assessment is constructive and provides clear guidance and actions for improvement. Following formative assessment and feedback, students are able to:

- re-visit work to add to the original evidence produced to consolidate a Pass grade, or to enhance their work to achieve higher grade.
- submit evidence for summative assessment and final unit grade.

Summative Assessment

Summative assessment is a final assessment decision on an assignment task in relation to the assessment criteria of each unit. It is the definitive assessment and recording of the student's achievement.

Grading Higher National Units

The grading of BTEC Higher National qualifications is at the unit and the qualification level. 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.

The merit and distinction grade descriptors are for grading the total evidence produced for each unit and describe the student's performance over and above that for a pass grade. They can be achieved in a flexible way, for example: in a sequential or holistic mode, to reflect the nature of the sector.

Meeting Deadlines

Deadlines for assessment are clearly communicated to students from the start, and throughout their programme, and students are made aware of the consequences of failing to meet deadlines. Walsall College staff then have 20 working days to provide feedback for Higher Education programme assessments.

Students are required to adhere to any published dates and deadlines for assessment. Any student who, due to a medical, or another reason outside of their control is unable to complete assessment evidence by or on a set date, should submit a request for extenuating circumstances or an extension.

It is important for students to understand the difference between extensions and extenuating circumstances, and ensure they are requested currently when necessarily. Extensions may be requested if you are unable to submit a piece of coursework by the published deadline due to issues such as; illness, injury, bereavement or the exacerbation of a disability. Extenuating circumstances may be declared to the college if you have experienced any circumstance during your study of programme, which may have affected your ability to perform well in assessments (including essays, class tests and final examinations). With regards to Higher Education students, extenuating circumstances will be recorded and presented at the College HE Assessment Boards.

To request an extension/extenuating circumstance, you will need to complete an Extenuating Circumstances/ Extension Request Form, which can be found within the Extension and Extenuating Circumstances Procedures as part of the Assessment and QA Policy and Procedure.

Where a request for extenuating circumstances or extension **has not been submitted and approved**, the grade awarded will not be any higher than a pass. If an extension is granted, the new deadline must be recorded and adhered to.

The procedures for the submission and consideration of personal mitigating circumstances are set out in the **Extension and Extenuating Circumstances Procedures**. Students are made aware of these procedures at the start of their programme, and are able to access and complete the request forms via the College's Moodle system. This procedure will also outline examples of extenuating circumstances likely to be accepted and rejected.

Internal Verification of Assessment Decisions

Internal Verifiers will sample assessed work from every assignment to check the accuracy of assessment decisions. Internal Verification is undertaken before work is returned to the students.

Communication of Results

All grades for completed units are recorded within Moodle (the college online grading system) enabling students to access their grades at all times, to track their progression and performance through the qualification. Final grades for the award of qualification are communicated to students by their course tutors.

Certificates are either collected in person by the students, or posted out to the students by the Examinations team.

Walsall College Graduate (WCG)

An emphasis will be placed on active learning, drawing on materials gained from the working environment or industry wherever possible. This will help H.E students to develop the transferable skills necessary in a changing and dynamic working environment, as well as achieving our Walsall College Graduate (WCG) outcomes. This is a commitment which promotes and reflects, (additional to subject-specific content), a wide range of themes that cross subject boundaries. These themes and topics, which often have a broad relevance to the purposes of higher education and its wider context in society. Themes are embedded within the curriculum and form an integral part of a programme of study. They are often promoted across the College as a shared experience to generate a community approach to learning. These themes may include:



- academic and digital literacies appropriate to the academic level of the student;
- education for sustainability;
- citizenship;
- enterprise and entrepreneurship;
- ethical behaviour.

The effectiveness of the College's H.E provision and therefore the teaching, learning and assessment methodologies therein, are subject to regular review across a number of internal and external quality assurance measures. The College systematically analyses appropriate information to ensure the continued effectiveness of the strategic approach to, and the enhancement of, learning opportunities and teaching practices.

Operating concerns, complaints and appeals processes

A student may appeal against an assessment decision. The College's procedures for the submission and consideration of appeals are set out in the Assessment Appeals Procedure, which forms part of the College Assessment and Quality Assurance Policy.

All students and staff are made aware of the process that exists to enable students to make an appeal with the College, or directly with Pearson, relating to the external or internally awarded assessment outcomes. The investigation of appeals and complaints provides an important source of feedback for the College, which contributes to the enhancement of the quality of learning opportunities and of processes for maintaining academic standards. Staff and students are made aware of the relevant policies and procedures at induction. Policies and processes for concerns, complaints and appeals are accessible, robust and inclusive, and enable early resolution wherever possible. Concerns, complaints and appeals policies and procedures, including information about them, are clear and transparent to students, those advising them and those implementing the processes. Formal and informal stages of the processes are clearly articulated.

The College's Complaints Policy and Procedure is managed by the Quality Team. The Assessment Appeals Procedure is distinctive and separate from the Complaints Policy, and is managed by curriculum teams. Both policies clearly define stages and indicative timescales. Where internal procedures have been exhausted, the College ensures that the student or complainant is provided with a clear written statement, confirming that its internal procedures have reached completion, outlining the outcome, and advising the student or complainant of any relevant external bodies to contact, should they remain dissatisfied.

Both policies apply to current students, including those on placement or engaged in work-based learning, or on an approved leave of absence; and recent students, giving those who have recently left their programme the opportunity to raise issues of appeal or complaint, within 12 months, after the end of their studies. The College has a system in place to monitor learning points from cases, irrespective of the outcome of the individual case.

Where the College is delivering higher education qualifications, in collaboration with other higher education institutions, the partner institution will provide College staff and students with clear information about their procedures for complaints and appeals. This includes clear signposting to where an appeal or complaint must be directed, and the extent to which the partner institution would be involved in considering such an appeal or complaint. Students studying on higher education programmes at Walsall College, which are delivered in collaboration with a partner higher education institution, have the right to appeal to that awarding institution, where procedures at the College have been exhausted.

If the complaint relates to a Higher Education (HE) course, the internal College Appeals process has been exhausted (evidenced by a Completion of Procedures (CoP) letter from the College), students can contact the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA). Students can check if their complaint is eligible by visiting their 'Can you complain to us?' page.

You can complain using their online system: 'How to access the online OIA system' or download a Complaint Form. The OIA should send an acknowledgement that they have received the complaint within ten days.

The college meet (where applicable) the national and international requirements of external bodies with responsibility for hearing or overseeing concerns and complaints. Actions resulting from concerns, complaints and appeals are proportionate and enable cases to be resolved as early as possible. Processes for concerns, complaints and appeals are monitored and reviewed to ensure they promote enhancement throughout the college and operate as intended, to the benefit of students and staff. Outcomes from concerns, complaints and appeals are used to develop and enhance teaching and learning and the wider student experience.

Information about Higher Education Provision

Public confidence in higher education relies on public understanding of the achievement represented by higher education qualifications. Walsall College is committed to producing appropriate information about our higher education learning opportunities, which is focused on our intended audiences and stakeholders. Part C is not concerned with the mechanisms used to produce information, nor the

media chosen to communicate it, but with the quality of the information in terms of whether it is fit-for-purpose, accessible and trustworthy.

The College is committed to providing information that is fit-for-purpose, accessible and trustworthy. The College assesses this through a cross reference tool created by the CMA – Competition & Markets Authority - UK higher education providers – which advises on consumer protection law. The College provides prospective students and other interested parties with information on programmes of study before any decision is made about starting a course. This is provided on the College's website, in the prospectus, and other promotional material of the College.

The Head of Sales and Marketing is responsible for the College's CMA Action Plan and Publication of Information Policy and Procedure, and therefore is responsible for ensuring that the above information is up-to-date and compliant, via the College website.

The College provides all new students with joining instructions prior to their arrival at the College and, on arrival, the HE Course Handbook and Programme Specifications, containing information on college services and sources of help and advice. This guidance is also available during open days. The College advises all students with a disability, and individual or additional requirements that they should be assessed and supported by the Inclusive Support Team. Students may be entitled to additional arrangements in assessments and support to facilitate study within the resources available. The College provides all staff and students with access to the Academic Regulations and all documents referred to within them.

Information relating to the College's higher education provision is maintained using the College's on-line SharePoint in the designated area 'Higher Education'.

Curriculum teams maintain a set of current programme specifications and unit specifications alongside all other programme management documentation, verification and tracking systems.

Course teams provide all students registered on a programme with a HE Course Handbook and Programme Specifications at the commencement of the programme. This contains, as a minimum, information on:

- aims and intended learning outcomes of the programme;
- programme structure, including details of core units, optional units, pre-requisite units, and pathways;
- learning, teaching and assessment methods;
- assessment requirements;
- assessment procedures;
- staff details/sources of help;
- communication with students;

Course teams provide all students with unit information at the commencement of the unit, including:

- The assessment strategy, which should indicate how the learning outcomes will be assessed using assessment methods appropriate to their achievement;
- Submission dates/deadlines;
- Any other assessment requirements

- The dates by which assessment feedback
- The type of assessment feedback to be provided will be provided to students

The location of the online reading list, and other learning materials and resources.

Course teams remind students that it is each student's own responsibility: (a) to read and understand the information given to them on assessment requirements; (b) to make staff aware of any circumstances affecting their ability to comply with these requirements.

All students are made aware of policies and procedures relating to assessment malpractice, appeals and complaints through a comprehensive student induction programme and clear information within the student handbook.



"Walsall College is uniquely and proudly vocational, delivering technical, professional and community education. Our greatest passion is unleashing the potential of individuals, communities and businesses; our greatest legacy is the talent of our students: ***skilled, professional and enterprising.***"



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