



Student Guide to Assessment and Making Appeal

March 2026

History of Changes

Version	Description of Change	Authored by	Date
1	Change of Title. Change of appeals from assessor/lecturer to IV. Quality Team notified at all stages	H Anderson	12.6.14
1.1	Further change to appeals process and significant rewording of the document	D. Killean	27.7.15
1.2	Inclusion of British Computer Society appeals process	D Killean	27.7.17
1.3	Amendments – wording and job titles. Change from 3 weeks to 10 working days on feedback	L Gilchrist	28.8.19
1.4	BHSQ request: additional wording to clarify role of SQA Accreditation	J Robertson	19.3.2020
1.5	Retention of appeal evidence changed from 5 to 6 years to meet with IMI requirements. Minor wording changes	J Gracie	07.05.2021
1.6	Amendments following SQA name change to Qualifications Scotland and removal of CLM role	J George	10.02.26

Student Guide to Assessment and making Appeals

Borders College is responsible for ensuring that assessments are valid, reliable, practicable, fair and equitable.

What do we mean by assessment?

Assessment is the way in which the College checks that you have gained the knowledge, understanding and skills that are required to attain your qualification. In almost all cases assessments are conducted by your class lecturer. Your lecturers will assess you informally in your classes by observing you at work or by ensuring that you have the required level of knowledge and understanding during lessons. They will then assess you formally when they judge you are ready (summative assessment) and decide as to whether you have met the qualification's standards. The result of this assessment is recorded and sent to the certificating body; in most cases to Qualifications Scotland (formerly SQA).

Methods of Assessment

The method used by lecturers to assess your work will be appropriate for the skill, understanding or knowledge that the qualification requires you to demonstrate.

Where you are required to demonstrate a particular skill; for example, the safe use of a piece of equipment, the lecturer is likely to have demonstrated its safe use to you, supervised and watched you use the piece of equipment, and when they feel you are ready, they will observe you using the piece of equipment. They may supplement this with questions either asked directly at the time or as part of a portfolio. The observation and questions are marked, and you are informed of the outcome through assessment feedback.

You might be required to demonstrate a particular problem solving or cognitive skill. The lecturer will provide you with the opportunity to learn the knowledge or skill to be assessed and provided you with opportunities to practice the skill or use the knowledge prior to formal assessment. The assessment methods used in these circumstances are varied. It may involve undertaking a project, an exam, a presentation, or an open book exercise, for example. In each case the lecturer will explain how you will be assessed.

Internal Assessment

Internal assessments are the most used form of assessment and are devised by either the College or the awarding body:

- An example of the former is where a lecturer uses an assessment, which has been devised in consultation with colleagues to assess candidates' performance
- An example of the latter is where a lecturer uses an assessment from an Assessment Support Pack (ASP), which has been devised by Qualifications Scotland for a National Qualification or for example a portfolio devised by City & Guilds (or other awarding body) for an SVQ.

In internal assessment, the College is responsible for assessing a candidate's work in line with the awarding body guidance and subject to their quality assurance processes. Results are recorded in the College's management information system and sent to the awarding body for checking and certification.

The College checks assessed work through a process known as Internal Verification. This is where another lecturer designated by the College as an Internal Verifier checks a sample of the marked work against the awarding body criteria. In this way the College is assuring that you have done all that is required to achieve your award.

The awarding bodies also have a system of checking internally assessed work called External Verification. The College receives notification that the awarding body is going to sample the assessed work from the awarding body. The College provides the required sample for checking by the awarding body's subject specialist.

Both Internal and External Verifiers have the authority to suspend work from being certificated if they conclude that students work has not been assessed adequately or is not sufficient to achieve the award. In these cases, there may be a requirement for students to redo/resit part or all of the work for an outcome or a unit.

External Assessment

External Assessments are devised and marked by the awarding body. The College is responsible for administering the assessments. In most cases these are written assessment undertaken in exam conditions.

These assessments can also be online. The College will inform you of the date of these assessments well in advance. In the case of Qualifications Scotland National Qualifications, the dates for these exams are published annually on the Qualifications Scotland website. The date for certification is also set by the awarding body and in the case of National Qualifications occurs annually in early August.

Frequently Asked Questions

Will I receive feedback?

Answer

All students receive written feedback on summative assessments within 10 working days of the submission deadline.

How many attempts will I get at an assessment?

Answer

When a student is given a date to submit an assessment, the student is expected to submit the assessment on or before that date. Students who miss assessment deadlines either written or online without a valid reason will have this submission counted as a 1st attempt. When the assessment is submitted this will be counted as a 2nd attempt.

Thereafter the student may be charged for a 3rd attempt (this will be at the discretion of the Departmental Team Manager (DTM) or Business Manager).

What is a graded unit?

Answer

A graded unit is part of a Higher National Award. This unit will be marked internally and is then externally verified. The work submitted will be graded by the Portfolio team.

If I am not happy with an assessment decision, what should I do?

Answer

Refer to the following Appeals Procedure.

Internal and External Assessment Appeals

Internal Appeals

All students have the right to appeal an internal assessment decision. The following range of circumstances can be the subject of appeal:

- Appeal against any marks or grades awarded
- Appeal against a finding of malpractice/plagiarism
- Appeal against special arrangements being refused
- Appeal against exceptional circumstances being refused

The grounds for appeal are:

- Inaccurate marking leading to the incorrect assessment decision or grade awarded
- The College not following the malpractice policy in making a judgement of malpractice or plagiarism
- The College not following its own processes for special arrangements or exceptional circumstances requests

Internal Appeals should be completed prior to final results being sent to the relevant Awarding Body.

The student must first discuss with their lecturer any circumstances relating to their assessment that has led to their dissatisfaction before commencing with the appeals procedure set out below. The class lecturer will be able to explain or resolve the issue in most cases.

Appeals made without an initial discussion with the lecturer will be referred back to the lecturer by the DTM or Business Manager.

STAGE 1

The student must appeal in writing within 7 days of the issue arising to the DTM or Business Manager setting out their grounds for appeal. The DTM or Business Manager conducts an investigation of the evidence and considers any actions (such as re-marking or accuracy checks of assessed work) required to help come to a conclusion. These actions must be taken prior to the DTM or Business Manager reaching a conclusion.

The DTM or Business Manager will write to the student within 14 days of receiving the appeal setting out the findings of the investigation, any subsequent actions and the conclusions.

STAGE 2

Students remaining dissatisfied with the outcome of the appeal can further appeal to the Assistant Principal.

The grounds for appeal at this stage are that the academic appeals process has not been followed accurately in coming to a judgement about the initial appeal.

The student must write to the Assistant Principal setting out their grounds for appeal. The Assistant Principal will consider whether the initial judgement was made following the procedure set out above and whether all available evidence was considered.

The Assistant Principal will write to the student within 14 days of receiving the appeal setting out the findings of the investigation, any subsequent actions and the conclusions.

This is the final decision of the Internal Academic Appeals process.

Once the internal process has been exhausted, students can refer to the External Awarding body guidelines on appeals. In the case of regulated awards (National Award/SVQs) the students have a further option to appeal to the regulator (Qualifications Scotland Accreditation or Ofqual) if the awarding body finds against the individual. (Qualifications Scotland Accreditation is unable to overturn assessment decisions or academic judgements.)

External Awarding Body Appeals

Qualifications Scotland (formerly SQA)

Qualifications Scotland National Qualifications Results Service

There are two Results Services:

Exceptional Circumstances Consideration Service

An exceptional circumstance request can be made via: <https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/79042>

There is a time limit of 10 days after the exam to make an exceptional circumstance request.

Post-results Service

This service operates **after** students receive their exam results. If the College is concerned by a student's result and believes the final mark does not reflect expectations then they can request a priority marking review, clerical check or a marking review of the exam paper and other externally assessed components, such as a portfolio.

If the clerical check or marking review leads to a change of grade (either up or down), this will be amended, and a new certificate will be issued to the student.

External Appeals (excluding National Qualification)

There are a number of circumstances under which the College can appeal to an awarding body on students' behalf or where a student can appeal directly to the awarding body. These are listed below. Reference must be made to the awarding bodies own procedures when preparing an appeal. Where a student wishes to appeal a decision directly to the awarding body then the College will support and advise the student in completing the appeals process.

The Principal or a designated deputy can appeal to the awarding body on behalf of students where:

- The College disagrees with an external verification decision
- The College disagrees with an assessment arrangement for students with disabilities and/or additional support needs
- The College disagrees with an exceptional circumstances' decision
- The College disagrees with an awarding body decision of malpractice or maladministration of assessments

A Student can appeal to an awarding body where they disagree with a College decision on:

- Malpractice on the part of the student
- An assessment decision by the College. In the case of VQs this can be also appealed to the regulator once the awarding body appeals decision has been exhausted

Records of any appeal, including all materials and evidence must be kept for 6 years after the date of the appeal.

The British Computer Society (BCS) External Appeals

If the College is unable to resolve an appeal through its internal appeals procedure, then the Learner has the right to submit an appeal directly to BCS. Learner appeals must be made within 20 days of the date of the assessment and will incur a fee of £10. This fee will be refunded if the Learner's result improves following the appeal. Appeals should be sent to qualityassuranceteam@bcs.uk

Following an initial review of an appeal BCS write to the appellant with details of their decision to either:

- Amend the decision in light of the new rationale/evidence being put forward and which has now been reviewed
- Confirm we stand by the original decision

The Learner will then have the right to seek an independent review. This will be carried out by someone who is not an employee of BCS or otherwise connected to BCS.

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