



Pearson

Guidelines for International Centres: The use of time limited assessment activities within the Level 3 BTEC internal assessment process

Throughout this paper the word test is used to describe any type of time limited assessment activity. This document should be read in conjunction with the BTEC Internal Assessment Guidelines

Appropriate limited use of time limited assessment activities (e.g. tests) within BTEC National programmes is permitted. However, programme teams must ensure that they can be justified and are valid for the purpose stated.

When considering this type of assessment, centres should consider the following seven aspects:

- Is the test an integral part of an overall unit assessment plan?
- Do the questions use the verbs of the assessment and grading criteria so that all pass, merit and distinction assessment criteria are covered?
- Where there is a progression in the grading grid from pass through to merit and distinction, do questions targeting merit and distinction also ensure coverage of underpinning pass and merit criteria?
- Where merit and distinction criteria are independent of pass, are these criteria also assessed?
- Is the test structured to satisfy, with validity, the targeted learning outcomes and assessment and grading criteria?
- Does the unit (and programme) have an appropriate spread of assessment methods?
- Is the test assessed according to BTEC National assessment procedures?

Integration within a unit assessment plan

A test as an assessment activity should specify which of the learning outcomes and assessment and grading criteria are being targeted.

The action verbs used in each of the questions can then be attributed to individual assessment criteria and confirm that the test is valid in terms of content and level. Any assessment criteria not targeted in the test should be covered in an assignment.

Spread of assessment methods

A holistic view of the programme should be taken to ensure there is an appropriate spread of assessment methods within and across the units. The units making up the programme should collectively allow learners opportunities to develop, and be assessed in, higher level skills, such as analysis, research, teamwork and effective communication.

Where tests are used, they should not be so numerous as to skew the balance of skills that can be best developed through investigative activities, written assignments, case studies, experimentation, etc.

Structure of a test

Where a test relates only to the pass criteria of learning outcomes, each question should:

- identify the criteria and be clearly annotated with the criteria being assessed (Programme teams may wish to use the notation 1.1, 2.2 etc, to indicate the first and second listed assessment criteria for outcomes 1 and 2 respectively)
- allow the learner to provide an answer which will be 'sufficient' in unit content coverage
- be set at the appropriate level
- use the same action verbs that are published in the assessment criteria.

Where a test is used to distinguish merit and distinction performance, then the different grading components of the questions should be identified so that it is clear which assessment and grading criteria are being targeted. (Centre teams may find it convenient to use the notation M1, D2 etc for this purpose.)

The duration of the test should be clearly stated. There should be clear guidance to learners on recommended times to be spent on answering pass, merit and distinction items in the paper.

BTEC National assessment principles and procedures

The BTEC National assessment system is outcome-based. This means all learning outcomes need to be passed by achievement of all pass criteria in a unit.

This means that poor performance in one aspect of unit achievement cannot be offset by a good performance in another aspect. Learners must pass all pass criteria. If a student fails the unit they must retake all the assessment instruments i.e. the test plus any additional assignments. Centres must apply the BTEC Internal Assessment rules with regard to any resubmissions or retakes.

Centres must observe the following principles of assessment:

- It is not acceptable to use marks to assess individual questions or to aggregate marks to arrive at a final grade. A learner either achieves or fails a pass criterion.
- Each question relating to assessment and grading criterion should be assessed as a single entity with a final decision of 'grading descriptor achieved' or 'not achieved' based on the sufficiency, level and factual correctness of the answer.
- Where several assessment and grading criteria are covered, then each criterion must be separately assessed and the final assessment must clearly state which assessment criteria have or have not been achieved.
- Where more than one question is used to cover an individual assessment criterion then all questions must be answered at an acceptable level before 'criterion achieved' is recorded.
- The final assessment should clearly state which outcome(s), assessment criteria and grade descriptors have been achieved.
- Where applicable any necessary remedial action should also be listed.
- No overall grade of Pass, Merit or Distinction should be given for a test that covers only part of a unit.