

Your Guide to Assessments, Grading, Feedback and Classifications

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Section 1: Assessments

What is an assessment?

Assessments are specific moments that allow you and your teachers to monitor your progress by applying your learnt skills and knowledge to a pre-set task. This allows everyone to ensure that you are meeting the learning outcomes that are set for each module, while also giving teachers a chance to feedback formally on your progress within each module.

After each assessment you will receive feedback which focuses on the assessment criteria outlined in the module guide, along with a temporary grade. The results of each assessment will ultimately make up your final grade for your degree in Circus Arts.

The details of each assessment will be shared with you multiple times throughout the module and can always be found on the respective module brief. You can find more details on the aims and learning outcomes for each module in the Module Specifications, all of which are available on Teams.

An assessment is not:

- X** A test or a trick to catch you out.
- X** A measurement of your behavior or effort in classes.
- X** Optional- Unless under very specific mitigating circumstances the assessment provided is the assessment you must complete.
- X** A process for making complaints- Complaints can be made using the Complaint Procedure.

An assessment is:

- O** An opportunity to consolidate and reflect on your learning.
- O** A chance to practice your performance skills for a live audience.
- O** An opportunity for personal feedback from industry professionals.
- O** A chance to experiment with developing your own ideas, practices and voice.

How will I be assessed?

At the National Centre for Circus Arts, we use two modes of assessment:

- **Designated Assessments:** These are assessments that occur within a specific time and under controlled conditions. This might be a performance, a presentation, a viva (interview), or a written assessment.
- **Continuous Assessments:** This assessment occurs continuously over a term, allowing your teacher to consider all of your work within classes when deciding on a final grade. It may be that there are specific moments across the module where the teacher will designate time for continuous assessment, for example 'checkpoint presentations'. If this is the case the teacher will use these checkpoints as the primary material when choosing your grade but may also refer to other classes to help them make a final decision.

Each module will have a different assessment and assessment style. These are designed to give the best review of the skills and knowledge you have developed throughout your classes. These tasks are often based on real-world applications of the skills you are learning, with each assessment being clearly linked to the daily job of a Circus Artist.

Each task also has a set of **Assessment Criteria** which you are assessed against. These criteria can be found on the relative **Assessment Brief**. You should use these to give you a direction to head in when planning your assignment.

Remember:

When you are approaching your assessments, consider them like practice runs of the work you will be doing once you leave the degree.

Committing into the professional aspects of assignments can help you find a sense of purpose and focus in completing the task.

Think of each assessment as an opportunity to define who you want to be when you graduate from the course.

What are the different types of designated assignments?

There are a few types of designated assignments that you may come across while at the National Centre for Circus Arts:

- **Performances:** These are scheduled live performances in which you will perform in front of both the markers and an audience of classmates, other cohorts, and in some cases members of the public. These performances may include solo or ensemble pieces (where you are performing as part of a group) and will often require you to devise or develop your own material using the skills you have developed over the module.
- **Written Essays:** Some modules may require you to write short essays which explore various aspects of circus and your own practice as a circus artist. Essays will often have a strict word count which must be adhered to. The word count always has a **Contingency Amount of +/-10%**. This means if your word count is **1,500**, then you can go **150 words over or under** this without any penalty. Every **10% over or under the contingency** is then subject to a **10-mark penalty** (*if your assignment is 11% over the word count, you would have 10 marks removed from your overall grade, 20% and you would have 20 marks removed, etc...*). You may include appendices with any written assignment to provide further evidence to support your work, but these should *not be included in the word count*. Bibliographies should *not be included in the word count either*. More information on written essays, including the school referencing style, is in the Academic Writing Guide.
- **Presentation:** A presentation is a small talk which is given by either a single person or a group and is normally supported with visual documentation (PowerPoint slides, videos, handouts, practical demonstrations etc.). Presentations are always assigned a time limit which is subject to the same length penalties as written work. You will be given a time limit with a **contingency of +/-10%**, for example if your presentation had a 5 min time limit, you would be able to go over this limit by 30 seconds. Every 10% over or under the contingency is then subject to a **10 mark penalty** (*if your assignment is 11% over the time limit, you would have 10 marks removed from your overall grade, 20% and you would have 20 marks removed, etc...*).

- **Recorded Media:** You may be asked to record your assignment in the form of a video, or an audio file, for example a showreel or a podcast. The assessment task will also outline exactly what media the assignment should be in and the file type that the assignment should be uploaded as. Recordings are always assigned a time limit which is subject to the same length penalties as written work. You will be given a time limit with a **contingency of +/-10%**, for example if your recording had a 5 min time limit, you would be able to go over this limit by 30 seconds. Every 10% over or under the contingency is then subject to a **10 mark penalty** (*if your assignment is 11% over the time limit, you would have 10 marks removed from your overall grade, 20% and you would have 20 marks removed, etc...*).
- **Viva Voce:** A Viva Voce (or viva for short), is a short interview between yourself and an assessor. The interview will be based around questions which ask you to reflect, defend, or discuss something that you have created (e.g. your devised performance). You will be provided with a list of questions beforehand which may be asked, however, the conversation may head in a different direction once you are in the room.
- **Creative Portfolios:** Creative portfolios are long-form visual documents which may use written text, video, images, voice recordings, embedded web links, charts and graphs, etc. to document a creative or practice research process from start to finish. Each portfolio will ask you to focus on a range of areas from within your module and will give you a framework to explore these within. Each portfolio will have both a word count and a recorded media time limit, both of which will have a **contingency of +/-10%**. These are only applicable to your own original words and media (*pre-existing web videos and embedded pdf documents by other creatives do not count towards the word and time limits*). Every **10%** over or under the contingency is then subject to a **10-mark penalty** (*if your assignment is 11% over the word count or time limit, you would have 10 marks removed from your overall grade, 20% and you would have 20 marks removed, etc...*).
- **Other Tasks:** During your time at the National Centre for Circus Arts, you will also be tasked with a variety of other assessments which are based around real-world examples. We call these authentic assessments, and they could include:
 - Risk Assessments
 - Websites
 - Workshops
 - Warm-ups and Cool-down presentations
 - Technical Presentations
 - Training Schedules and Learning Plans
 - Scenario Tasks
 - Etc.

We are constantly reviewing how we assess at the National Centre for Circus Arts, and are always looking for ways to improve and introduce real world examples into our assessments.

What if I need support with my assessment?

Throughout your time at the National Centre for Circus Arts, you will have to complete a wide variety of assessments and tasks. You may feel confident with some and less confident with others.

You can always reach out to the Student Support Officer or the Academic Administration Manager if you are ever:

- Unsure of what the task is.
- Worried about a deadline.
- Unsure of how to gather your ideas.
- Would like to practice a presentation, performance viva
- Needing someone to look over an assignment and offer advice.
- Feeling like you don't know where to start.
- Or if you have *anything you are unsure about*.

The HE Team will always encourage you to reach out to us, we all have experience in academia and are eager and happy to help.

Remember:

Asking for support with assignments is a great way to research deeper into your ideas, practice and training. You don't need to be struggling to ask for support. Peer and Tutor Review is a major part of academia.

Organising a support meeting is a great use of your resources while at The National Centre for Circus Arts- *Don't miss out on asking for help.*

How do I submit my assignments?

For your assessment to be marked, it needs to be submitted by its specific deadline. Each assessment submission and its deadline will be slightly different:

- **Performances:** These will have a set time and space where the performance takes place. The performance will be recorded and then submitted by a HE Team member into our internal filing system. **All performances will be recorded for our records and for the external examiner.**

- **Presentations and Vivas:** These will have a set time and space where the presentation takes place. These will be recorded and then submitted by a HE Team member into our internal filing system. You may also be asked to submit files (such as presentation slides) as part of your overall assessment submission. These supporting files will need to be uploaded into the Microsoft Form for the assessment, which can be found on your Teams. **All presentations will be recorded for our records and for the external examiner.**
- **Written Assessments:** These will have to be saved in either a Word, PDF or Slides file and uploaded into the Microsoft Form for the assessment, which can be found on your Teams.
- **Recorded Media Assessments:** These will be saved in a form which is appropriate to the question (this will be detailed on the module brief but could include: .mov, .mp4, etc.) and will be uploaded to Microsoft Form for the assessment, which can be found on your Teams.

Important Information:

An assessment is an integral part of your degree, as they allow us to confirm that you are a qualified Circus Artist at a Bachelor's level. If for whatever reason you are unable to complete or attend an assessment you must inform the Academic Administration Manager as soon as possible. They will discuss this with you, as you may have a case for completing an Alternative Assessment or receiving an extension. **Where possible you must do this at least 1 full week in advance of the assessment.**

When do I submit my assignment?

For **performances and live presentations**, a date and time will be set in advance of you beginning the module. This is only subject to change in rare circumstances.

'Hand In's: For written or recorded assignments such as essays or voice recordings, you will be given a **Hand-in** deadline. This deadline will be clearly communicated to you throughout your module and can always be found in the module brief.

You can submit your work at any point after you have been given access to the Microsoft Form for the assessment; however:

Hand-in deadlines will always be on a Friday at 12:00pm (noon). *If you submit your assignment any time after this, it will be counted as a late submission.*

Important: If you are having issues with your IT and the technical aspects of submitting your work contact the Academic Administration Manager as soon as possible.

We would suggest that you submit your assignment well before your **Hand-In deadline**, to avoid any stress around the technical aspects of your submission.

Submitting Documents:

For all essays and recordings submitted via teams (excluding risk assessments), please ensure you include a title page with your assignment which states:

1. Your name
2. The module code and title
3. The assignment title
4. The date of submission
5. The word count of the assignment

You should always keep a copy of your work for your own reference, and just in case.

Remember: Written and recorded submissions which do not fall within +/- 10% of the stipulated word count or time limit will be subject to a grade penalty.

What happens if I don't submit my assignment?

Depending on the type of assessment, the penalty for not submitting can vary:

- **Performances and Presentations:** If you fail to attend an assessed performance, this will be considered a non-submission and will result in a final mark of 0.
- **Hand-In Assignments:** If you fail to submit an assignment via a hand-in, then your mark will be capped at a **60 for the first 24 hours, or a 40 for the first 48 hours after the deadline**. If the work is not submitted after 48 hours, it will be considered a non-submission and will result in a final mark of 0.

If you fail a module or a compulsory component of a module (either due to non-submission, time or absence penalties or grading) you will have **two opportunities** to retrieve these through a re-sit of the assessment, or an alternative assessment which meets the learning outcomes of the module. **All retrievals and re-sits will be capped at the pass mark of 40.**

We are held to these standards of penalty by our accrediting body, The University of Kent, and The Office of Students. If you have any issues and need assistance with your submissions, please contact us as soon as possible before the deadline, to ensure we can help you as effectively as possible.

Important:

It is important to note that **all elements of a module must be submitted**, even if they are submitted **late or incomplete**. If you are submitting a piece of work late then please contact the **Academic Administration Manager** and the **Student Support Manager** as soon as possible to discuss whether you are eligible for concession.

What if I need more time to submit my assignment?

This question is answered in greater detail in the document: [Extensions and Mitigating Circumstances \(Extension Application and Mitigating Circumstances\)](#)

If you feel that you need more time to submit your assignment (including hand-ins, and presentations), you can apply for an **extension** on the deadline via the **Extension Request Form** on Teams. However, for an extension to be granted your reason for requesting an extension must meet one of our listed mitigating circumstances:

- Family or personal problems
- Burglary or Theft (if accompanied by a Crime Report)
- Hospital Tests (if approved prior to the assessment/ submission)
- Long standing physical or mental health conditions (if approved prior to assessment/ submission)
- Operations (if approved prior to the assessment/submission OR if they are in response to an emergency)
- Significant accidents or injuries, acute ailments or conditions which coincide with assessments/submission deadlines
- Taken ill on day of assessment
- Train or bus delayed more than one hour (corroborative evidence required)
- Bereavement involving a close relative or friend
- Religious observance on the day of assessment (subject to verification)
- Anything else deemed viable by the Student Support Manager, The Academic Administration Manager, and The Head of Higher Education.

In the case of **severe or prolonged circumstances** beyond your control, which seriously affect your ability to engage with your study, the school would not allow you to be put forward for assessment, or alternative assessments will be offered in place

Examples include:

- Major injury
- Chronic physical illness or mental health conditions.

Important:

If you have a diagnosed and recognised neurodivergence which has been disclosed to The Student Support Manager, you will receive a guaranteed **1 week extension** on every **Hand In** assessment.

You must still apply for this extension via The Extension Request Form so that we can log your new deadline within our internal systems.

What happens after I submit my assignment?

After you submit your assignment, it will be checked for any academic misconduct, or submission errors and prepared for marking by the Academic Administration Officer. If the module has one primary marker, the assessment will be sent out for marking- *the primary marker is often the teacher who has taught you the most over the term*. If the module has multiple markers, then they will be sent out to each marker. The markers will then meet and discuss the appropriate grade and feedback as a panel. Occasionally, different components of an assessment will be marked by different people; this will always be outlined in your module brief.

After they have been graded, a selection of assignments will be sent to a moderator who will ensure that each grading is fair, and that the feedback is justified and related to the assessment criteria. If they feel this is not the case, they may flag it with the original marker, and new grades will be decided upon for the whole cohort.

Once everything has been agreed with the moderator, the grades are sent to the Academic Administration Manager who uploads them into our internal system. The Academic Administration Manager will then select a small batch of assignments, grades and feedback, to be sent to the External Examiner who will check over the feedback and grading to ensure that the HE Team are meeting the standards of assessment which are required for a degree.

Once the grades have been submitted into our system, the Academic Administration Manager will copy your feedback and grades into an official feedback document, which will be sent to you as soon as possible. We aim to return all feedback to you within 6 weeks of the assessment.

The External Examiner

The External Examiner is an independent body, who does not work at the National Centre for Circus Arts. Their job is to monitor the feedback and grades of each assessment on our BA (Hons) Circus Arts to ensure that every student is treated fairly and that our marking standards are in line with similar degree programmes across the country.

The External Examiner will have access to all assessed work and will be invited in to the school to watch performances, and live assessments.

At the end of each academic year they will write a report of the course, and will offer feedback on our learning, teaching and assessment practices. Occasionally, the External Examiner will ask to meet with a group of students to discuss their work and experience within the assessment cycle. The Annual Report by the external Examiner will be made available to all students on it's completion.

Remember: *The External Examiner is not examining you. They are examining our feedback and marking standards.*

IMPORTANT: Under no circumstances should students contact External Examiners directly.

Section 2: Feedback

What is assessment feedback?

Following each of your assessments, you will receive formal feedback which explains the marker's rationale for choosing your grade. This feedback will directly reference your assignment submission or performance in relation to the specific **assessment criteria** outlined in each assignment brief. The feedback you receive should give you a sense of how you have developed through the module, while also giving you a sense of direction for what to do next in your training.

Feedback allows you to recognise your strengths and helps you to improve your understanding, skills and knowledge. It is a key tool in your training, as it supports you to develop towards your future assignments and build your practice as a circus artist.

What should I expect to see in my feedback?

Your feedback will always be broken down into two sections:

- Achievement of The Assessment Criteria: *What went well.*
- Areas for Further Development: *What to work on next.*

Everyone will receive both sections, whatever the grade, the quality of the assignment, or the marker-
We will always find an area for you to improve upon to support your future learning.

Within both sections you can expect to see different things:

- **Achievement of The Assessment Criteria:**
This feedback will be based only on the work you have completed in the assignment. It should include direct references and examples pulled from your work to show how you have achieved either all, or a key selection of the **Assessment Criteria**. There may be some further reference to your work outside of the assignment and across the module, however, *your grade will be based only on the assignment.*
- **Areas for Further Development:**
This feedback will be based only on the work you have completed in the assignment. It will give you a clear indication of ways you can continue to develop your skills and knowledge in relation to the **Assessment Criteria**. It should give you practical examples of how you can work towards developing these areas, with some suggestions of resources to support your development. There may be some further reference to your work outside of the assignment and across the module; however, *your grade will be based only on the assignment.*

When can I expect to receive feedback?

You will receive formal feedback after the completion of an assessment. This feedback will be completed by both the primary marker of the module and any fellow markers involved in the assessment and moderated by a member of the HE Team. Due to the process of marking and assessment administration, we aim to return all feedback to you within **6 weeks of the assessment deadline**.

Besides formal feedback, you will also receive feedback throughout your modules from your teachers, other members of staff and your peers. This informal feedback is just as important as the feedback you receive following an assessment, as it can give you a clear indication on how you should approach completing your assignment.

How will I receive my feedback?

Your formal assessment for your feedback will be sent to you following your assessment on a formal feedback sheet. This sheet will breakdown who wrote your feedback, who moderated your feedback, the assessment criteria, the mode of assessment and your grade.

Your feedback will normally be written either by the primary marker, or between the primary marker and the Academic Administration Manager. There may be times when your feedback is given verbally. In these instances, a meeting will be set up between you and the primary marker, who will then verbally give you your feedback for the assessment. This will be recorded in note form during the meeting which will then be sent out to you later on a formal feedback sheet. **If your formal feedback is given to you verbally, you are welcome to record this meeting in either audio or video for reference.**

What should I do with my feedback?

What you do with your feedback and how you approach any areas for development is ultimately up to you, however, we would wholly encourage you to find a process to help you put your feedback into action for your future training.

One way we would encourage you to enact this is to keep a **Feedback Log**. These can help you identify:

- **What you are doing well** (so you know what to continue doing, or to do more of)
- **What you can do to improve** (so you can identify areas to focus on in your training)
- **How you have continued to develop your learning** (where feedback has had a positive impact on your learning, and process for developing which you can repeat in the future).

Your feedback log might be:

- Digital Table or Spreadsheet
- A digital document/s or portfolio
- A blog, vlog or personal podcast
- A written notebook or scrapbook
- A poster or corkboard system.

It is important that whatever system you use works for you and is clearly organised so that you can easily refer to it in the future.

Within your feedback log you should include:

- **Positive Feedback:** this might be from the marker on how you achieved the assessment criteria, or from yourself about strengths you recognised in your completion of the assignment.
- **Main points for future improvement (1-3):** You may receive a few from your primary marker, teachers, and peers, but choose three to focus on, and make sure that they are as clear and specific as you can make them.
- **Plans and goals for improvement:** Set out a single action or goal for each point to help you work towards your improvement. Make these actions as clear and as achievable as possible- *you can ask for support with this from the teachers on the module or from one of the HE Team.*
- **Improvement 'check-ins:** After set amounts of time, you can return to your previous Points for Future Improvement and reflect on how you may have developed following your feedback. Keep a brief note of what you did and any impact it may have had and date it. This will give you an easy reference for considering how best you learn and how you might approach challenges in the future.

It can also be helpful to highlight recurring comments and add in cross references with dates so that you can watch your development progress over the whole of your time at the National Centre for Circus Arts.

How To Use Your Feedback Log:

1. Look through your feedback log for areas highlighted for improvement
2. Make a list of these and reflect
3. Identify and prioritise areas based on the assessments you have coming up.
4. Seek support when needed
5. Remember your strengths and use them

What if I do not understand, or disagree with my feedback?

If at any point you do not understand or disagree with your feedback, we would always encourage you to reach out to either the **Academic Administration Manager**, or the **Student Support Manager** who can help you look over the feedback you have received. Depending on the situation, they may contact the primary markers or teachers on the module for further information.

A degree in the arts can feel very hard to objectively grade, and at times you may receive feedback that you feel is unsuccessful in encapsulating your effort or input into an assessment. This is very normal, and it is a healthy skill to hold a critical eye up to other's perceptions of what you make. However, as a degree level institution we are held to a very strict standard of grading and feedback. To ensure this, we have multiple checks in place to ensure that feedback is fair to both you and your peers. These include:

- **Assessment Criteria**- to ensure that everyone is being assessed on the same specific skills.
- **Grading Matrixes**- to give clear guidelines for feedback and grading based off a shared understanding of the different levels of work.
- **Moderation**- each assessment will have a moderator who checks either all or a reasonable selection of the grades and feedback to ensure that the written feedback is fair and aligns with the choice of grade.
- **External Marking**- throughout the year our external examiner will look at a selection of grades and feedback from each assignment. They will then raise any concerns they have over grading and feedback, which will be rectified at the end of the academic year.
- **The Exam Board and The University of Kent**- At the end of every academic year there is a formal meeting called an **Exam Board** where we are required to share all of our grades and feedback with our accrediting body, The University of Kent, who approves them for quality and ensures that we are meeting the required standards.

As you can see, feedback and grading is incredibly important from a regulatory perspective and is an integral component in you receiving an accredited degree. As a result, formal feedback or grades can sometimes feel impersonal, mathematical and not reflective of your experience as a student in a small institution, which can understandably lead to some disappointment. If you find yourself in this situation, then we would encourage you to meet with a member of the HE Team to discuss this. The Academic Administration Manager or the Student Support Manager can offer you support in working through your grading and feedback by helping explain any choices made by the marker and to work out the best steps forward.

As a school, we are constantly trying to find ways to ensure that the regulations on feedback and grading do not separate your feedback from your experience in the classroom, while also ensuring that they do offer you personal and helpful advice.

There may, however, be specific situations where a mistake is made based on contexts which are not known to the regulatory body, or through administrative errors. These might include:

- **An undisclosed concession affected your assignment** (See above for the list of appropriate concessions).
- **A mistake in the grading:** You may have received the wrong mark due to an administrative error- *you can often tell this is the case if the feedback and the grade don't align.*
- **A mistake in the feedback:** You may have received another student's feedback, or feedback which refers to something you have not done.

If any of these appear to be true for you, you may have grounds to make an **appeal**. If this is the case then please contact the Academic Administration Manager as soon as possible to organise a meeting to discuss the next stages of making an appeal.

It is important to note that an appeal **cannot be made based on academic judgement**.

You can find further details on our appeals policy, along with details on grievance and complaints in our policy: **Appendix L: Appeals, Complaints & Grievance Procedures**.

Important:

Feedback is an integral part of working as a performing artist. Throughout your career you will receive feedback in a variety of forms including: in auditions, show applications, from directors, fellow artists, coaches, in show reviews and, *most importantly*, the direct feedback of an audience.

Working out how best to receive feedback in a way which is healthy and productive towards your development as an artist is an integral part of your journey while at the National Centre for Circus Arts. Receiving and working with feedback can open doors and avenues within your work which you hadn't considered or thought of previously, helping to round you as a creative. Every artist works with feedback in very different ways- *ask the professionals you come into contact with while here how they work with feedback and find your own way of reflecting and developing.*

Section 3: Grading

What is grading?

Grades are numerical scores which represent your achievement of the learning outcomes and assessment. On a degree your grades will be a number from 1 to 100, and to pass a module you must have a final grade of at least 40. If you complete the assessment task as is expected, then your grade will most likely sit between 40 and 80. Each set of 10 between these represents a different level of achievement which can be seen in the descriptive words used in your feedback:

- **Less than 40:** Fail
- **40-49:** Satisfactory
- **50-59:** Good
- **60-69:** Very Good
- **70-79:** Excellent
- **80+:** Outstanding

In some circumstances your grade may be particularly high (80+) or particularly low (under 40) in which case your grade will be put to a panel before being given to you in your formal feedback. This is to ensure that every grade is fair for each student and is marked against the same standards.

If your grade is less than 40 (a Fail), then a meeting will be organised with the Student Support Officer and the Academic Administration Manager to discuss the next steps forward.

How will my grade be decided?

After your marker has written your feedback, they will compare what has been written to a **Grading Matrix**. A grading matrix is a table which breaks down each level of grading (Satisfactory, Good, Very Good, Excellent, Outstanding) in relation to a selection of grading criteria. The level of work required to be awarded for each stage is clearly outlined, with an example of what this may look like within the written or verbal feedback.

Sometimes, the grade may be decided between two or more markers in a panel meeting. In these circumstances, the markers will all put forward a grade for your assignment, and either an average or moderated grade will be given.

Grading work which is creative is a difficult challenge and different markers can approach choosing a grade in very different ways with varying ideas of what constitutes a higher grade. The job of the moderator is to ensure that all of the grading is balanced between the students within a module. Beyond this, part of the job of the Academic Administration Manager is to ensure that the grading is balanced across all of the modules. Both of these checks are in place to protect you from unfair grading.

Important:

Your grade **will be** decided based on:

O Your achievement of the assessment criteria.

O Your achievement of the overall Learning Outcomes (outlined in the module specification).

Your grade **cannot not** be based on:

X Any work completed outside the assessment (without a concession)

X Your level of effort towards completing the assignment

X Personal relations or preferences with a marker prior to the marking

X Anything other than the assessment criteria or the learning outcomes.

X A grade which was promised to you prior to the assessment

What does my grade do?

Before you have received your grade for an assessment, it will be logged into our internal system. Once you have completed all of the assessments for a module, our system will work out (**aggregate**) your final grade for the module based off of the weighting (a percentage) for each assessment.

You need a final grade of **40** or above to pass a module.

For example, if you had finished the module **NCA103 Movement**, your final grade might look something like this:

Autum Term

Continuous Assessment (30%): 65

Spring Term

Continuous Assessment (30%): 72

Summer Term

Continuous Assessment (20%): 68

Movement Essay (20%): 58

Final Grade: 66

You can find the weightings of each assessment in the module specification and on the assignment brief. You can use these weightings to work out how to organise your focus within the overall module.

What if I fail a component of a module?

The failure of a single component (assessment) of a module could have multiple outcomes:

- **Compulsory Components**

Some components you are required to pass so as to pass the overall module. This will be outlined in the module specification and highlighted on the assignment brief. If you receive less than **40** in one of these components, you will be required to **retrieve** the grade (see below).

- **Non-Compulsory Components**

Most of the module components are not compulsory, therefore you do not theoretically need to pass them to pass the module. However, you do need at least a final grade of **40** to pass the overall module. This means that if your grades across the rest of the module are quite high, and the component in question has a low weighting, a grade below **40** may not prevent you from passing the module. If a grade is given that is below **40** for any component, the Academic Administration Manager will work out how this may affect your final grade, or if you need to retrieve the marks lost.

If you receive below **40** in any of your assessments then a meeting will be organised to discuss the next steps forward between yourself, the Academic Administration Manager and the Student Support Manager. If you are worried that you are likely to receive a grade below **40**, for whatever reason, then you should contact the Student Support Manager or the Academic Administration Manager, both of whom can help you towards ensuring you pass the module.

If you do fail a component of a module, then you may be offered a chance to retrieve the marks. A retrieval can take different forms depending on the circumstances:

- **A re-sit of the assessment:** This is a direct re-taking of the assessment from scratch.
- **An alternative assessment:** This is an assessment designed to test the same criteria and learning outcomes, for example a creative portfolio, an essay, or a presentation. This is the most likely outcome for assessments which are practical.
- **Evidence of Achievement:** Very occasionally, we may find evidence of your achievement of the learning outcomes within other modules.

Components of a module that have been retrieved will **always** be capped at a grade of **40**.

What are the reasons I may fail an assessment or a module?

The most common reason for failing a module is due to failing to meet the assessment criteria. Often this is not a surprise to the student, as we aim to organise meetings in advance if we see that there is a chance that you may receive a grade below **40**.

Alongside this you may fail due to an issued penalty, such as:

- **Late Submission Penalty:** Submitting your work over 48 hours after the deadline would result in you failing that component.
- **Non-Submission:** If you fail to submit your work, or attend a presentation or performance, you will receive a grade of 0 for that assessment.
- **Word Count/Time Limit Penalty:** If you go over the word count or time limit and the **+/-10%** Contingency, your grade is subject to a **10-mark** penalty for every **10%** over or under. This could pull your grade down to below **40** depending on the size of the penalty and the original grade.
- **Academic Misconduct:** This may include plagiarism or general cheating and if you are found guilty you will receive a final grade of **0** with further repercussions. Details on this can be found in our **Academic Writing Guide**.

Important:

Failing a component of a module is not as catastrophic as it may initially feel- there is always a way forward.

A failed assessment is often a flag for both you and ourselves that something isn't working within your training, and is a trigger for us to find further support for you and your learning.

How do my grades become a BA Hons qualification?

This happens through a process called **classification**. At the end of your time at The National Centre for Circus Arts, all of your grades from second and third year will be used to calculate a final overall grade for your degree. Each module has a number of credits (these can be found in the programme specifications) which will dictate how much weighting each grade has.

For example, your NCA101 Discipline module is 30 credits, and your NCA104 Theatre is 15 credits; so your Discipline grade will have twice as much weight as your Theatre grade. You need 120 credits for each year of study, which is achieved by passing every module.

Each year also has its own weighting: Your grades from your second year will make up 40% of your overall grade, while the other 60% will come from your third year.

Your final grade, is called a **classification** and will be calculated using two methods, with **the highest possible classification being awarded**:

- **Average Grading**

For this method we take the average grade from across all your modules from second and third year (based on credit weightings). If the mark falls within 0.5 of the boundary for the next classification (39.5, 49.5, 59.5, 69.5) the mark is always rounded up to the nearest integer.

This final grade will then inform us of your final degree classification:

- **Less than 40:** Fail
 - **40-49:** 3rd (Third Class)
 - **50-59:** 2:2 (Lower Second Class)
 - **60-69:** 2:1 (Upper Second Class)
 - **70 and above:** 1st (First Class)
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- **Preponderance Grading**
- This is worked out by checking if a student has a percentage of credits in a specific grade band and an average grade over a specified number. Classification of BA awards using preponderance follow this structure:
- **For a 1st:** 50% of the credit graded as 70 or above, plus an average grade of 67 or over.
 - **For a 2:1:** 50% of the credit graded as 60 or above, plus an average grade of 57 or over.
 - **For a 2:2:** 50% of the credit graded as 50 or above, plus an average grade of 47 or over.
 - **For a Third:** 100% of the credit graded as 40 or above.

After all the final grades have been through an Exam Board, and have been checked through by our accrediting body, The University of Kent, you will receive a final transcript of all of your grades from across the three years and a letter confirming your final classification.

A formal certificate will then be awarded to you at a Graduation Ceremony at The University of Kent Main Campus later in the year.

More Information:

You can find further information and support with assessments in a few places:

Academic Writing Guide

Assignment Briefs

Module Specifications

Study Skills workshops and documents

University of Kent Website for more information on the process of assessments

And do not forget:

You can always reach out to The Student Support Manager and the Academic Administration Manager, along with your teachers, for more support with your assessments, or to answer any questions or concerns you have around grading and feedback.

We are here, and always happy to help!