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Pearson Level 3  
Alternative Academic Qualification BTEC National in

# Early Childhood Development (Extended Certificate)

## Transition Guide

*First teaching from September 2025*

Pre-publication draft

Qualification Number: 610/3966/4

**This document is for centres/practitioners moving (transitioning) from Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Extended Certificate in Children's Play Learning and Development to the Pearson Level 3 Alternative Academic Qualification BTEC National in Early Childhood Development (Extended Certificate)**

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## Introducing the BTEC Level 3 Nationals from 2025 (AAQs)

The BTEC Nationals from 2025 qualifications provide students with meaningful and practical learning experiences across a range of career sectors. They equip students with the applied knowledge, skills and personal attributes they need to enter and thrive in higher education and meet the demands of future employment in our fast-changing world.

BTEC Nationals from 2025 (AAQ) are:

- **Engaging and future-focused** - providing opportunities for students to learn in real, relatable and practical ways and designed to ensure that they develop critical knowledge and transferable skills to navigate the future.
- **Accessible and fair for students, balanced with the demands of progression to the next stage of learning** - the use of the N Grade and our holistic approach to designing assessment criteria means that qualifications are attainable for students whilst ensuring that they have a solid foundation of skills and knowledge, and the confidence to progress.
- **Accepted and supported by universities** - developed in collaboration with educators and universities to ensure students have the right combination of skills and knowledge for success in higher education. Over 100 letters of support from universities.
- **Well supported and straightforward to deliver and administer** - simple structure making unit combination more straightforward; uniformed format of external assessment across subjects to streamline administration; Pearson-Set Assignment Briefs (PSABs) removing the need for centres to plan their own assignments, and wide range of training and support.



## What is new?

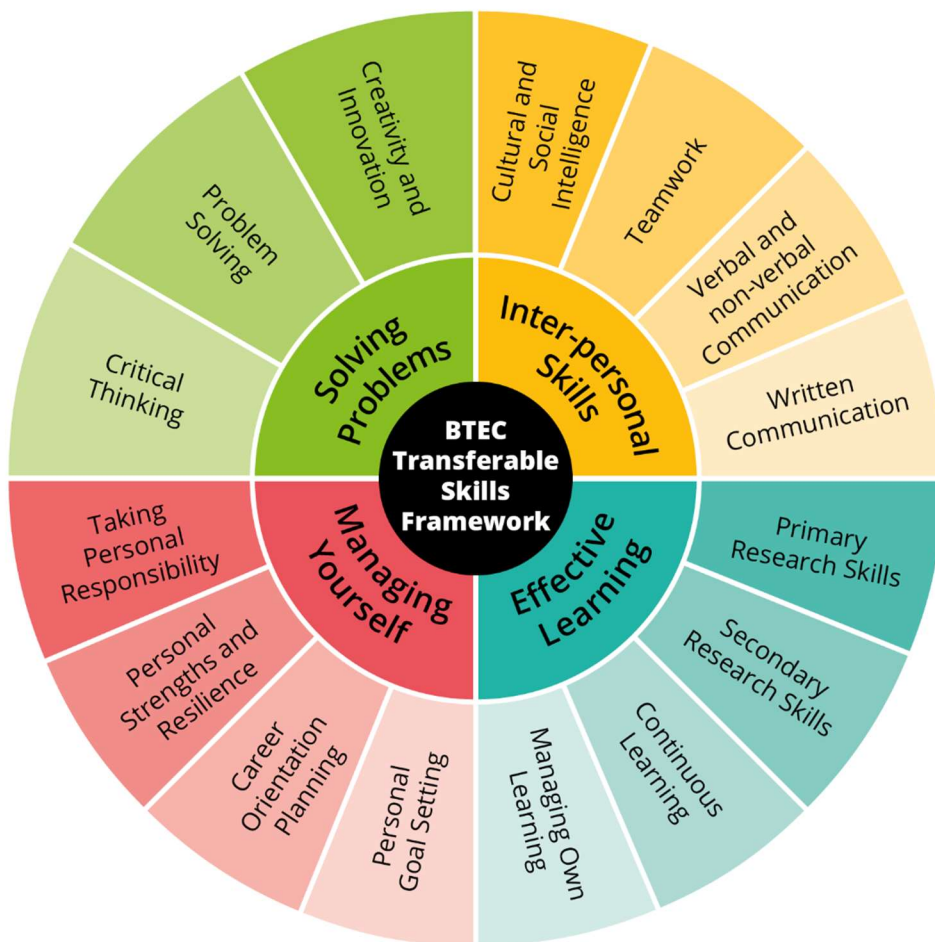
### *Preparing students for their future*

Our new BTEC Level 3 Nationals from 2025 (AAQ) qualifications are designed with a clear focus on the future.

Our aim is to ensure that students are given every opportunity to develop the new knowledge, skills, attitudes and values they need to navigate and thrive through the uncertainty and to shape their world. We have identified three critical skill areas for the future – *transferable skills, digital skills and sustainability* – and have designed our new BTEC qualifications with these areas at the heart. Join us on the journey as we prepare young people to be the best versions of themselves for the future.

[Read our brochure.](#)

Click on the infographic to see further information.



## What makes it easy to transition to the new BTEC National from 2025 (AAQ)?

- Auto approval - if you are currently approved to deliver BTEC Nationals you will receive automatically approval for the new qualification.\*
- Refreshed and updated content and assessments – to ensure your learners continue to progress to popular progression routes into HEIs and beyond.
- Simple, manageable and flexible structure – you can continue to structure your delivery of teaching, learning and assessment when it best suits you and your learners.
- Unchanged Quality Assurance process with Standards Verification at the heart.
- Assessments - Externally Assessed Exams available twice a year, and Internally Assessed units, Assessments set by Pearson, and taken by learners when they are ready.
- Familiar retake and resubmission rules.
- Grading, marking and assessment methodologies unchanged - you can continue to teach and assess with confidence.
- Dedicated support - our Subject Advisors and assessments teams are here to support you every step of the way.

\*You must be approved in the relevant sector to receive automatic approval.





## Support offer

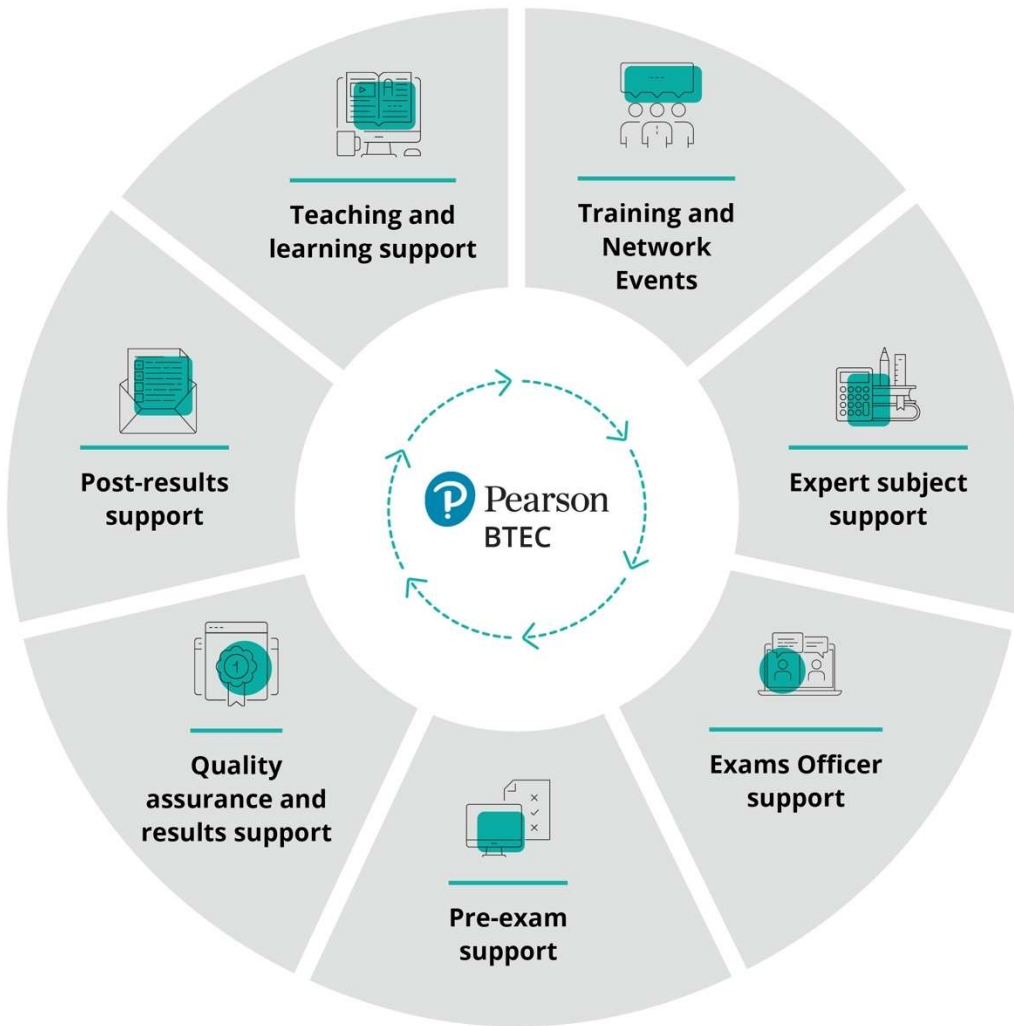
### Complimentary resources and services

- **BTEC National Teacher Guide** – a comprehensive guide to support preparation for delivery of your new BTEC National AAQ.
- **Sample Assessment Materials** - showing how tasks, questions and marking will be applied, which can be used as sample papers/tasks to prepare learners.
- **Exam Wizard** - an online resource containing a bank of past paper questions and support materials to help you create your own mock exams and tests.
- **Results Plus** - a free online results analysis tool for teachers that gives you a detailed breakdown of your students' performance in BTEC external assessments.
- **Training and standardisation** – Getting Started and Preparing to Assess training events and recorded sessions will be available from July 2024 onwards.
- **Network events** – an opportunity to hear about the latest developments from subject experts within Pearson and to share good practice with fellow centres.
- Dedicated **Subject Advisor** available throughout the year so please do get in touch if you would like any support or guidance with:
  - Planning your courses
  - Overview of BTEC quality assurance processes
  - Suggested resources
  - Teaching and Assessment of internal units and components
  - Teaching external units and components
  - The training and support materials we have available.

### Comprehensive Package of Paid resources

- **Student Books** – provide concise yet complete coverage of each sector, with ample student activities and assessment practice, covering all mandatory and optional units. Available in print and e-book formats.
- **Teacher Packs** – provide further supporting teacher resources for each sector. Designed to help students excel, including a front-of-class version of the e-book, activity sheets, fact sheets, videos and interactive knowledge check quizzes. Available as a bundle of units for each sector or as single unit packs.

Click on the infographic  
to see further information.





## Qualification Structure

### Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Extended Certificate in Children's Play Learning and Development

Unit number	Unit title	GLH	How assessed
<b>Mandatory units - learners complete and achieve all units</b>			
1	Children's Development	120	External
2	Development of Children's Communication, Literacy and Numeracy Skills	120	External
3	Play and Learning	60	Internal
<b>Optional units - learners complete one unit</b>			
5	Keeping Children Safe	60	Internal
6	Children's Physical Development, Care and Health Needs	60	Internal
10	Working with Parents and Others in Early Years	60	Internal
11	The Early Years Foundation Stage	60	Internal

### Pearson Level 3 Alternative Academic Qualification BTEC National in Early Childhood Development (Extended Certificate)

Unit number	Unit title	GLH	How assessed
<b>100% Mandatory units - learners complete all units</b>			
1	Children's Development	90	External
2	Keeping Children Safe	90	External
3	Play and Learning	90	Internal
4	Research and Reflective Practice in an Early Childhood Setting	90	Internal

## Summary of key similarities and differences

- **Continued vocational approach** to the qualification ensuring practical application and skill development important for progression into higher education.
- **Established and well-recognised grade profiles** inclusive of Pass, Merit and Distinction.
- We've listened to feedback from all parts of the early year's subject community, including higher education. We've used this opportunity of curriculum change to **redesign this qualification so that it reflects the demands of a truly modern and evolving early years environment.**
- **Mandatory content to focus on key areas of early childhood development.**
- **Enhanced content** on keeping children safe.
- **Enhanced opportunities** to apply research and reflective practice skills.
- **Recommended that students are given the opportunity to undertake a work placement whilst enrolled on this course.** The work placement setting should be with children from birth up to eight years and support students with completion of Unit 4: Research and Reflective Practice in an Early Childhood Setting. However, please note that students who do not have the opportunity to complete a work placement can still achieve this unit.



## Assessment Structure

Pearson Level 3 Alternative Academic Qualification BTEC National in Early Childhood Development  
(Extended Certificate)

Mandatory units, learners complete all units				Assessments
1	Children's Development	90 GLH	External	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An external examination set and marked by Pearson</li> <li>80 marks</li> <li>Available January and June</li> <li>First Assessment June 2026.</li> </ul>
2	Keeping Children Safe	90 GLH	External	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An external examination set and marked by Pearson</li> <li>80 marks</li> <li>Available January and June</li> <li>First assessment June 2026.</li> </ul>
3	Play and Learning	90 GLH	Internal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pearson sets the assignment for the assessment of this unit</li> <li>The PSAB will take approximately 15 hours to complete, and consists of 3 tasks</li> <li>The PSAB will be marked by centres and verified by Pearson</li> <li>You will make assessment decisions for the PSAB using the assessment criteria provided in the specification</li> <li>The PSAB will be valid for the lifetime of this qualification.</li> </ul>
4	Research and Reflective Practice in an Early Childhood Setting	90 GLH	Internal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pearson sets the assignment for the assessment of this unit</li> <li>The PSAB will take approximately 15 hours to complete, and consists of 3 tasks</li> <li>The PSAB will be marked by centres and verified by Pearson</li> <li>You will make assessment decisions for the PSAB using the assessment criteria provided in the specification.</li> <li>The PSAB will be valid for the lifetime of this qualification.</li> </ul>

## Pearson Set Assignment Briefs

Internally assessed units are assessed using a Pearson Set Assignment Brief (PSAB), which is set by Pearson, marked by you and subject to external standards verification. The PSAB will be valid for the lifetime of this qualification, with [clear guidance on how to deliver for each new cohort](#).



## Mapping Guide

Mapping of Pearson Level 3 Alternative Academic Qualification BTEC National in Early Childhood Development (Extended Certificate) to the Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Extended Certificate in Children’s Play, Learning and Development specification.

Title: Pearson Level 3 Alternative Academic Qualification BTEC National in Early Childhood Development (Extended Certificate)	Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Extended Certificate in Children’s Play, Learning and Development	Comments
<b>Unit 1: Children’s Development (90 GLH) External</b>	<b>Unit 1: Children’s Development (120 GLH) External</b>	
<p><b>Assessment outcomes:</b></p> <p><b>AO1</b> Demonstrate knowledge of the principles, patterns, theories and models of child development and factors that impact on children’s development from birth up to eight years</p> <p><b>AO2</b> Demonstrate understanding of the principles, patterns, theories and models of child development and factors that impact on children’s development from birth up to eight years</p> <p><b>AO3</b> Apply knowledge and understanding of the principles, patterns, theories and models of child development that impact on children’s development from birth up to eight years</p> <p><b>AO4a</b> Analyse information related to children’s holistic development in context, demonstrating the ability to interpret theory of children’s development and predict the potential impact of factors on children’s development and provision and practice for children from birth up to eight years</p> <p><b>AO4b</b> Evaluate information related to children’s holistic development in context, demonstrating the ability to interpret theory of children’s development and predict the potential impact of factors on children’s development and provision and</p>	<p><b>Assessment outcomes:</b></p> <p><b>AO1</b> Demonstrate knowledge of the principles and patterns, theories and models that inform children’s growth and development from birth to seven years 11 months</p> <p><b>AO2</b> Demonstrate understanding of the principles and patterns, theories and models that inform children’s growth and development from birth to seven years 11 months</p> <p><b>AO3</b> Apply knowledge and understanding of children’s growth and development to real life scenarios from birth to seven years 11 months</p> <p><b>AO4</b> Analyse and evaluate information related to children’s holistic growth and development in context, through demonstrating ability to interpret theory and predict the potential impact on early years practice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unit title remains the same</li> <li>• 90 GLH instead of 120 GLH</li> <li>• External assessment still applies</li> <li>• Scope is now birth to eight years old</li> <li>• AO4 is now two separate learning outcomes.</li> </ul>

practice for children from birth up to eight years.		
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Unit 2: Keeping Children Safe (90 GLH) External	Unit 5: Keeping Children Safe (60 GLH) Internal	
<p><b>Assessment outcomes:</b></p> <p><b>AO1</b> Demonstrate knowledge of health and safety and safeguarding in early years settings</p> <p><b>AO2</b> Demonstrate understanding of health and safety and safeguarding in early years settings</p> <p><b>AO3</b> Apply knowledge and understanding of health and safety and safeguarding in early years settings</p> <p><b>AO4a</b> Analyse information and potential issues relating to health and safety and safeguarding in early years settings</p> <p><b>AO4b</b> Evaluate information and potential issues relating to health and safety and safeguarding in early years settings.</p>	<p><b>Learning aims:</b></p> <p><b>A</b> Investigate legal responsibilities and approaches to health and safety in early years settings</p> <p><b>B</b> Explore procedures for prevention and control of infection in early years settings</p> <p><b>C</b> Examine how early years professionals safeguard children and respond to concerns that a child has been abused</p> <p><b>D</b> Demonstrate how to recognise and assess hazards and risks to children and respond to emergencies in an early years setting.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unit title remains the same</li> <li>• Increase in GLH to reflect responsibilities of a professional to maintain health and safety as well as ensuring effective safeguarding measures are in place</li> <li>• External assessment of the unit instead of Internal</li> <li>• Sample assessment materials will be available to help centres prepare students for external assessment.</li> </ul>
Unit 3: Play and Learning (90 GLH) Internal	Unit 3: Play and Learning (60 GLH) Internal	
<p><b>Learning aims:</b></p> <p><b>A</b> Examine types of play and learning activities and how they promote children's learning and development</p> <p><b>B</b> Investigate theoretical perspectives to learning and development in early childhood</p> <p><b>C</b> Understand curriculum, approaches to play and their impact on practice in early childhood environments</p> <p><b>D</b> Understand how to plan activities and experiences to support children's play, learning and development.</p>	<p><b>Learning aims:</b></p> <p><b>A</b> Examine types of play and learning activities and the benefits for children's learning and development</p> <p><b>B</b> Investigate theoretical perspectives to learning and development, curriculum approaches to play and their influence on current early years practice</p> <p><b>C</b> Demonstrate skills required by early years professionals to support children's purposeful play and learning opportunities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unit title remains the same</li> <li>• Increase in GLH from 60 to 90</li> <li>• Addition of understanding how to plan activities and experiences</li> <li>• Remains internal assessment</li> </ul>

Unit 4 Research and Reflective Practice in an Early Childhood Setting (90 GLH) Internal	Unit 4 Enquiries into Current Research in Early Years Practice (120 GLH) External	
<p><b>Learning aims:</b></p> <p><b>A</b> Understand types of information and data related to research into provision and practice in children's care and education (0 – 8 years)</p> <p><b>B</b> Understand the purpose and impact of research in the children's care and education sector (0 – 8 years)</p> <p><b>C</b> Know the purpose of reflective practice for those working in the children's care and education sector (0 – 8 years)</p> <p><b>D</b> Understand and apply theories and approaches for reflective practice.</p>	<p><b>Assessment outcomes:</b></p> <p><b>AO1</b> Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of methods, skills and ethical issues related to carrying out research in the early years sector</p> <p><b>AO2</b> Apply knowledge and understanding of the methods, skills and ethical issues to current research in the early years sector</p> <p><b>AO3</b> Analyse information and data related to current research on early years practice, demonstrating the ability to interpret the potential impact and influence of the research on early years practice</p> <p><b>AO4</b> Evaluate current early years research to make informed judgements about the validity of the research methods used, further areas for research and the potential impact of the research on early years practice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not a unit in current Extended Certificate in Children's Play Learning and Development, mandatory unit in Diploma only</li> <li>• Consultation with professionals highlighted the need for learners to be able to research and reflect</li> </ul>

