



Pearson

Licensed Higher Nationals

Centre Guide for Higher Education Institutions offering Higher Nationals under Licence



Contents

Introduction.....	3
Becoming an HEI Pearson Trademark Licensed Centre	5
The HEI Pearson Trademark Licence	5
Collaborative Arrangements	5
Developing your own higher-level qualifications	6
The Pearson Intellectual Property Licence	6
Higher Nationals awarded by HE institutions under the Licence.....	7
Review and approval of Higher Nationals under the Licence	7
Student Registrations and Certification	8
Summary of the HEI Licence Agreement and Maintenance Process.....	9
Quality Assurance	10
Named contact	10
Support.....	11
Service Operations	11
Appendix.....	12

Introduction

This guide supports the Pearson Higher National Licence Agreement for Universities offering Higher National qualifications under both Trademark Licence (TM) and Intellectual Property Licence (IP) from Pearson.

It provides practical support and information for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) operating under the TM or IP Licences, including guidance on becoming a Licensed Higher National Centre, and ongoing administration and communication requirements.

The Pearson Trademark (TM) Licence Agreement enables Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to design, validate, deliver, and award qualifications named as Higher National Diplomas and Higher National Certificates, under a Trademark Licence Agreement from Pearson.

In the HEI Higher National Pearson Trademark Licence Agreement, an HEI is defined as a University with Taught Degree Awarding Powers, established with the primary aim of providing higher education.

The Pearson Intellectual Property (IP) Licence Agreement enables HEIs to deliver and award qualifications named as Higher National Diplomas and Higher National Certificates using the programme specifications of the Pearson BTEC Higher National qualification suite.

What are BTEC Higher Nationals?

Pearson BTEC Higher Nationals are higher-level qualifications designed to support progression into employment or into completing a degree. Students taking a BTEC Higher National can expect to complete a thorough and engaging programme of study, which will equip them with the higher-level skills and competencies in their chosen discipline. This reflects the requirements of professional organisations and where appropriate meets the requirements for National Occupational Standards (NOS) for each sector or industry.

Pearson BTEC Higher Nationals are available as Higher National Certificates (HNCs) (at level 4) and Higher National Diplomas (HNDs) (at level 5). They are internationally recognised qualifications with the potential for career progression and professional membership, and professional development for those already in employment. They may also be used as a component of Higher Apprenticeships with progression to Degree Apprenticeships as well as other higher education courses.

The HNC is equivalent to the first year of a full-time undergraduate degree and the HND to the first and second year of a full-time undergraduate degree. On successful completion of level 5, students are able to progress to level 6 and achieve a degree.

What is the HEI Pearson Trademark Licence?

Pearson Education Ltd is the owner, developer and administrator of Higher National qualifications in England, Wales and Ireland. The HEI Pearson Trademark Licence enable HEIs to design, validate, deliver and award their own Higher National Diplomas/Certificates.

In order to ensure that Higher National students continue to benefit from the same progression opportunities, Higher National programmes delivered under the Pearson Trademark Licence must map their higher nationals to the core content of existing BTEC Higher National programmes, where in place. The aim of this design principle is to preserve recognition from employers and professional bodies.

Universities must also identify student progression opportunities at the point of validation of the awards.

Becoming an HEI Pearson Trademark Licensed Centre

If you wish to become an HEI Pearson Trademark Licensed Centre, you should contact LicenseHN@pearson.com expressing your interest. You will then need to complete an application form and follow the named processes. A copy of the approval application form can be found [here](#).

The HEI Pearson Trademark Licence

The HEI Pearson Trademark Licence is available [here](#), which needs to be completed on successful approval of your centre.

Two copies of the Licence Agreement are to be signed by your Vice Chancellor/Head of the HEI and returned to our University Principal Examiner at LicenseHN@pearson.com accompanied by the required supporting evidence.

The supporting evidence required should include:

- confirmation of HEI status;
- evidence of understanding, or, experience of development and delivery of BTEC higher level programmes;
- named senior manager with responsibility for Academic Quality & Standards and specifically HNs under trademark licence;
- published Quality Assurance documentation (e.g. Academic Quality & Standards Policies) and evidence of satisfactory external quality assurance records.

If any further evidence or clarification is required, you will be sent a request for further information.

Once the application has been approved, a countersigned copy of the HEI Trademark Licence will be returned to you.

Qualifications offered under the Trademark Licence Agreement are awarded and certificated by the HEI and not Pearson.

HEIs must therefore adhere to the UK Quality Code for Higher Education when awarding these qualifications. The Higher Nationals awarded by an HEI under the HEI Pearson Trademark Licence are not regulated by Ofqual.

The Trademark Licence is valid for three years, but the schedules, which are at the end of the Trademark Licence Agreement, need to be completed annually and returned by the **30th June** of each year to indicate any changes including new collaborative partners.

Collaborative Arrangements

Clear instructions for the approval of all collaborative arrangements are contained in the Trademark Licence Agreement.

Developing your own higher-level qualifications

The HEI Trademark Licence Agreement authorises your institution to develop its own centre-devised Higher Nationals using its own content, titles and units, tailored to meet local needs. It is the responsibility of your institution to set up your own validation panels in order to do this and to ensure that progression routes are available, and students are aware of them.

Where a Pearson BTEC Higher National qualification already exists with a closely related title and/or content, the centre-devised programme under Trademark Licence must cover the same core content as in the equivalent BTEC Higher National programme. Where there is no equivalent BTEC Higher National programme then there is no requirement of this kind.

There is no requirement for centre-devised Higher Nationals to mirror the current Pearson title exactly beyond the core requirement as above. However, many HEIs consider it good practice to align their qualifications with the nationally recognised qualifications to enable those students who complete a licensed HNC to progress to an HND at another institution if required at a later date.

All Higher Nationals under Trademark Licence which are centre devised **must** follow the Pearson Higher National Academic Regulations (appendix).

All programme information must clearly state that the Higher National is awarded by your university, and not by Pearson. Similarly, certification must state that the HNC or HND is awarded by the university under the Pearson Trademark Licence Agreement.

Please note: if you wish to offer Pearson BTEC Higher National (Ofqual regulated) – you must seek centre and programme approval from Pearson; the BTEC Higher National would then be Ofqual regulated and Pearson would be responsible for the award of the qualification. If you wish to use the entire content of a BTEC qualification, but still award the qualifications as your own, then please follow the guidelines for Pearson's Intellectual Property Licence in the next section.

The Pearson Intellectual Property Licence

Universities may wish to use the entire content of the new BTEC (RQF) Higher Nationals qualifications in order to offer them as their own validated awards. This route will be available to universities already approved by Pearson as trademark licensed centres and who have already signed the Pearson Trademark Licence Agreement. Universities who want to use the BTEC (RQF) qualifications content will be asked to sign a Pearson Intellectual Property (IP) Licence Agreement protecting the use of Pearson's intellectual property in the awards and which specifies that the content cannot be used for any other purpose. The content is defined as: Title of the Award, Unit Content, Learning Outcomes, Assessment Criteria and Rules of Combination. If this option is chosen, the **content must be used in its entirety**.

Universities will be responsible for the validation, quality assurance, awarding and certification. A copy of the IP Licence Agreement can be found [here](#).

If you wish to discuss this further, please contact LicenseHN@pearson.com

Higher Nationals awarded by HE institutions under the Licence

Individual Higher National units are graded at either Pass, Merit or Distinction. Where a Trademark Licensed HEI uses percentages or literal grading, they should map their unit grading system to Pass, Merit or Distinction. Typically, this would be 40% to 54% = Pass; 55% to 69% = Merit; and 70% or above = Distinction.

Higher National awards also have an overall grade i.e. HNC or HND with Pass; HNC or HND with Merit, HNC or HND with Distinction. The procedure used by licensed HE institutions in determining the overall qualification grade should be in line with that used for other awards made by the HE Institution.

Review and approval of Higher Nationals under the Licence

As an Awarding Organisation in its own right, you are responsible for the validation of the qualifications. However, as part of the HEI Licence, and to comply with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, you are required to provide us annually, through schedules 1 and 2 of the Trademark Licence Agreement, details of:

- All newly validated qualifications;
- Revisions to existing qualifications;
- Programme specifications for any new or revised qualifications;
- Re-validation of any qualifications;
- Details of collaborative partners.

Pearson will review the new or revised programme specification(s) and if appropriate, issue a programme code for the qualification(s). Please note that unless informed otherwise, our systems will record the approval period as five years, by default. If you wish a qualification to be validated for a period longer than five years, you must follow the procedure below.

Requests to seek Pearson approval of new qualifications, or, to extend existing ones must be submitted by completing the form which can be found [here](#).

You should send the above information to our University Principal Examiner at:

LicenseHN@pearson.com

Student Registrations and Certification

Registration

At the start of each academic year, you **must** register students with us before 15th November via Edexcel online (if your university operates recruitment throughout the academic year, then students must be registered with us within 4 weeks of enrolling). Registration information must include:

- Qualification details
- Student details

On confirmation of the student registration figures, we will invoice you for the registration fees within 30 days.

Student completion, partial achievement, (defined by credits achieved) and withdrawal data must also be entered into the relevant field in the learner record on Edexcel Online (EOL).

Certification

You are responsible for producing and distributing certificates to successful students at the end of the programme.

Certificates should note that students have followed a Higher National qualification awarded by your institution under the trademark of Pearson.

The certificates should state the following:

Higher National (Certificate / Diploma) in (Subject) awarded by (University Name) Higher National is a registered trademark of Pearson Education Ltd

Pearson logos should not be used.

Summary of the HEI Licence Agreement and Maintenance Process

Centre	Pearson Qualification Services
Email request for an HEI to become a Pearson UK licensed centre.	Contact: LicenseHN@Pearson.com . Request is acknowledged.
Complete and submit the approval application form to become a Licensed Centre.	<p>HEI receives the completed approval application</p> <p>Approval application reviewed. Visit to HEI undertaken</p> <p>If successful, the Licence Agreement is sent to the HEI for completion</p> <p>If unsuccessful the HEI is provided with guidance and invited to resubmit the application within 6 weeks.</p>
Send signed copies of the Licence Agreement to Pearson with all details of qualification programmes to be run (schedules 1 and 2 of the Licence Agreement) to Pearson.	Contact: LicenseHN@pearson.com who will return countersigned copy of the HEI Licence
<p>Ensures that:</p> <p>All Higher National programmes provided under an HEI Pearson Licence agreement with Pearson take account of relevant QAA subject and qualification benchmark statements.</p> <p>Newly validated Higher National qualifications contain the same core content as the equivalent BTEC Higher National.</p> <p>All Higher National programmes provided under Licence meet the Pearson BTEC Higher National academic regulations.</p>	Pearson University Principal Examiner provides support
<p>For licensed Higher Nationals, the Institution sends:</p> <p>Details of newly validated qualifications</p> <p>Revisions of existing qualifications</p> <p>Programme specifications for new or revised qualifications and extensions to the validations of any qualification</p>	Contact: LicenseHN@pearson.com Pearson scrutinises the programme specification (including core content mapping to equivalent BTEC Higher National programme) and if the specification is appropriate, issues a programme code for the qualification which will usually be valid for 5 years.
Register qualification and student details for the HEI Licensed centre and any partner centre(s) on Edexcel Online before 15th November	Pearson invoices the centres for registration fees.
Appoint your own External Examiners (EEs). The EEs report to your Institution, using your usual procedures, e.g. for training, monitoring and	

remuneration and in accordance with QAA's expectations for External Examiners. You do not need to send names and details of the EEs to Pearson. EE reports should be made available to Pearson on request.	
The HEI certifies students. The HEI updates student registration details, completion, partial achievement and withdrawal data on Edexcel Online by 30th September each year.	For guidance on the required certificate content contact LicenseHN@pearson.com Contact examsofficers@pearson.com if further assistance is needed. Contact ukapprovals@pearson.com for details about your approved qualifications Pearson will monitor your Higher National students' recruitment, completion and achievement rates.
Send the Institutional Review Report (IRR) on each of the validated qualifications for the previous academic year to Pearson, using the supplied pro-forma, found on the Edexcel website by 31st December each year.	Send to LicenseHN@pearson.com All of the IRRs will be analysed, and an annual overview report will be produced. The University Principal Examiner visits some Licensed HEIs each year
Send updated centre contact details for correspondence relating to licensed qualifications.	Send to LicenseHN@pearson.com
HEI programme leaders, and administrative staff will be invited to attend stakeholders' meetings run by Pearson	

Quality Assurance

You are responsible for recruiting, training and remunerating External Examiners to undertake external quality assurance for all of your Higher National qualifications under Licence. We require you to complete an annual Institutional Review Report (IRR), summarising the year's quality assurance activity, findings and subsequent actions, plus any relevant qualification or procedural updates. IRRs are received and monitored by our University Principal Examiner, who collates the information from all HEI Licensed centres and publishes it in an Annual Report.

IRRs must be submitted to us by 31st December each year. Please send your IRR to:
LicenseHN@pearson.com

The University Principal Examiner will also visit HEIs either on request or within an organised annual schedule.

Named contact

You must ensure that the contact details for the person responsible for Academic Quality & Standards relating to your trademark licensed qualifications up to date. This person will be our named contact for all correspondence relating to your Licensed qualifications.

Updated contact details should be sent to LicenseHN@pearson.com

Support

If you require support or guidance at any time during the year, we have a team who will be ready to support you. For information about programme approval please contact

LicenseHN@pearson.com and for registration of students please contact our Customer Service Qualification team [here](#).

The University Principal Examiner is available to offer support and guidance to all licensed HEIs and to those seeking to become a centre. Please contact LicenseHN@pearson.com

Service Operations

For any question about registering students please contact our Customer Service team at:

examsofficers@pearson.com or enquiries about Approvals please contact:

ukapprovals@pearson.com

Your centre is also allocated a named account specialist for further information.

Please contact: examsofficers@pearson.com

Academic Regulations

Higher National Qualifications Under Licence

1. Level and Credit Requirements for the Awards

1.1 Higher National (HN) qualifications will be available at level 4 and level 5 are mapped to the QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

1.1.1 Level 4 will be called a Higher National Certificate

1.1.2 Level 4 and 5 will be called a Higher National Diploma

1.2 Higher National Diplomas ("HNDs")

HNDs will comprise two stages of 120 credits each:

1.2.1 Stage 1 will comprise units at level 4.

1.2.2 Stage 2 will comprise units at level 5.

1.3 Higher National Certificate ("HNCs")

HNCs will comprise one stage of 120 credits at level 4.

2. Key Guiding Characteristics

2.1 Higher National qualifications will have Total Qualification Time (TQT) and Guided Learning (GL) totals as follows:

2.1.1 an HND will be worth 2400 hours of TQT and 960 hours of GL.

2.2.1 an HNC will be worth 1200 hours of TQT and 480 hours of GL.

2.2 Core/compulsory modules credit values may vary by subject but will not be less than 30% of the whole qualification.

2.3 All Higher Nationals share the following guiding characteristics:

2.3.1 Include significant employer/industry involvement in their development and design.

2.3.2 Demonstrate access from level 3.

- 2.3.3** Demonstrate that graduates at each level of the HN have the requisite skills and abilities to progress to the next level of study should they so choose. This includes ensuring that HND graduates can progress to level 6.
- 2.3.4** Include mandatory work skills development through work experience and/or realistic work-related learning.
- 2.3.5** Evidence of development and assessment of students' knowledge and skills in:
 - 2.3.5.1** Communication, including written English, or relevant other language
 - 2.3.5.2** Numeracy
 - 2.3.5.3** Enterprise and commercial awareness
 - 2.3.5.4** Problem solving
 - 2.3.5.5** Self-reflection and critical appraisal