Pearson
BTEC Level 6 Diploma in Project, Research and Study Skills (QCF)

BTEC Professional qualifications

Specification

First teaching December 2013

PEARSON

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BTEC Professional qualification titles covered by this specification

Pearson BTEC Level 6 Diploma in Project, Research and Study Skills (QCF)

This qualification has been accredited to the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) and is eligible for public funding as determined by the Department for Education (DfE) under Section 96 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000.

The qualification title listed above features in the funding lists published annually by the DfE and the regularly updated website www.education.gov.uk/. The QCF Qualification Number (QN) should be used by centres when they wish to seek public funding for their learners. Each unit within a qualification will also have a QCF unit code.

The QCF qualification and unit codes will appear on learners' final certification documentation.

The QN for the qualification in this publication is:

Pearson BTEC Level 6 Diploma in Project, Research and Study Skills (QCF)   601/1844/1

This qualification title will appear on learners' certificates. Learners need to be made aware of this when they are recruited by the centre and registered with Pearson.

This qualification is accredited by Ofqual as being Stand Alone.

Welcome to the Pearson BTEC Level 6 Diploma in Project, Research and Study Skills (QCF)

We are delighted to introduce our new qualification, available for teaching from December 2013. This qualification conforms to the requirements of the new QCF (Qualifications and Credit Framework).

Focusing on the Pearson BTEC Level 6 Diploma in Project, Research and Study Skills (QCF)

The broad purpose of the qualification is to give learners the opportunity to understand and develop the skills needed for research. These skills may be relevant to learners wanting to apply for further higher education courses, such as post graduate Masters level degrees and conversion courses, or to those in the workplace wanting to develop or refresh these skills in relation to their work responsibilities. The qualification includes a unit on research and study skills, which learners can use for the understanding of the skills and knowledge required, the Major Project unit allows the application of these skills to a live project. This allows learners to research a topic in a sector with; which they are already familiar, through previous study or work, or an area into which they would like to progress, either for further study or work.

Possible progression routes to this qualification are from HND Diplomas or Foundation degrees. Possible progression routes from this qualification are an undergraduate degree or a Master's degree, including a conversion course.

Contents

What are BTEC Level 6 Professional qualifications?

BTEC Professional qualifications are qualifications at Level 4 to Level 8 in the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) and are designed to provide professional work-related qualifications in a range of sectors. They give learners the knowledge, understanding and skills that they need to prepare for employment. The qualifications also provide career development opportunities for those already in work. Consequently they provide a course of study for full-time or part-time learners in schools, colleges and training centres.

BTEC Professional qualifications provide much of the underpinning knowledge and understanding for the National Occupational Standards for the sector, where these are appropriate. They are supported by the relevant Standards Setting Body (SSB) or Sector Skills Council (SSC). A number of BTEC Professional qualifications are recognised as the knowledge components of Apprenticeships Frameworks.

On successful completion of a BTEC Professional qualification, learners can progress to or within employment and/or continue their study in the same, or related vocational area.

The QCF is a framework that awards credit for qualifications and units and aims to present qualifications in a way that is easy to understand and measure. It enables learners to gain qualifications at their own pace along flexible routes.

There are three sizes of qualification in the QCF:

- Award (1 to 12 credits)
- Certificate (13 to 36 credits)
- Diploma (37 credits and above).

Every unit and qualification in the framework will have a credit value.

The credit value of a unit specifies the number of credits that will be awarded to a learner who has achieved the learning outcomes of the unit.

The credit value of a unit is based on:

- one credit for those learning outcomes achievable in 10 hours of learning
- learning time – defined as the time taken by learners at the level of the unit, on average, to complete the learning outcomes of the unit to the standard determined by the assessment criteria.

The credit value of the unit will remain constant in all contexts, regardless of the assessment method used for the qualification(s) to which it contributes.

Learning time should address all learning (including assessment) relevant to the learning outcomes, regardless of where, when and how the learning has taken place.

Pearson BTEC Level 6 Award

The Pearson BTEC Level 6 Award provides an introduction to the skills, qualities and knowledge that may be required for employment in a particular vocational sector.

Pearson BTEC Level 6 Certificate

For adult learners the Pearson BTEC Level 6 Certificate can extend their knowledge and understanding of work in a particular sector. It is a suitable qualification for those wishing to change career or move into a particular area of employment following a career break.

Pearson BTEC Level 6 Diploma

The Pearson BTEC Level 6 Diploma extends the work-related focus from the Pearson BTEC Level 6 Certificate. There is potential for the qualification to prepare learners for employment in a particular vocational sector and it is suitable for those who have decided that they wish to enter a specific area of work.

Key features of the Pearson BTEC Level 6 Diploma in Project, Research Methods and Study Skills (QCF)

The Pearson BTEC Level 6 Diploma in Project, Research Methods and Study Skills (QCF) has been developed to give learners the opportunity to:

- engage in learning that is relevant to them and that will give them opportunities to develop a range of skills and techniques, and attributes essential for successful performance in working life
- achieve a nationally recognised Level 6 vocationally-related qualification
- progress to employment in a particular vocational sector
- progress to related general and/or vocational qualifications.

National Occupational Standards

Where relevant, Pearson BTEC Level 6 qualifications are designed to provide some of the underpinning knowledge and understanding for the National Occupational Standards (NOS), as well as developing practical skills in preparation for work and possible achievement of NVQs in due course. NOS form the basis of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs).

Pearson BTEC Level 6 (QCF) qualifications do not purport to deliver occupational competence in the sector, which should be demonstrated in a work context.

Rules of combination

The rules of combination specify the credits that need to be achieved, through the completion of particular units, for the qualification to be awarded. All accredited qualifications within the QCF have rules of combination.

Rules of combination for the Pearson BTEC Level 6 qualifications

When combining units for a Pearson BTEC Level 6 Diploma in Project, Research and Study Skills (QCF), it is the centre's responsibility to ensure that the following rule of combination is adhered to.

Pearson BTEC Level 6 Diploma in Project, Research and Study Skills (QCF)

1   Qualification credit value: a minimum of 40 credits.

2   Minimum credit to be achieved at, or above, the level of the qualification: 40 credits.

3   All credits must be achieved from the units listed in this specification.

Pearson BTEC Level 6 Diploma in Project, Research and Study Skills (QCF)

The Pearson BTEC Level 6 Diploma in Project, Research and Study Skills (QCF) is a 40–credit and 120–guided learning hour (GLH) qualification that consists of 2 mandatory units.

Pearson BTEC Level 6 Diploma in Project, Research and Study Skills (QCF)			
Unit	Unit titles	Credit	Level
1	Major Project	30	6
2	Research Methods and Study Skills	10	6

Assessment

Both units within this qualification are internally assessed. The qualifications are criterion referenced, based on the achievement of all the specified learning outcomes.

To achieve a 'pass' a learner must have successfully passed **all** the assessment criteria.

Guidance

The purpose of assessment is to ensure that effective learning has taken place to give learners the opportunity to:

● meet the standard determined by the assessment criteria and

● achieve the learning outcomes.

All the assignments created by centres should be reliable and fit for purpose, and should be built on the unit assessment criteria. Assessment tasks and activities should enable learners to produce valid, sufficient and reliable evidence that relates directly to the specified criteria. Centres should enable learners to produce evidence in a variety of different forms, including performance observation, presentations and posters, along with projects, or time-constrained assessments.

Centres are encouraged to emphasise the practical application of the assessment criteria, providing a realistic scenario for learners to adopt, and making maximum use of practical activities. The creation of assignments that are fit for purpose is vital to achievement and their importance cannot be over-emphasised.

The assessment criteria must be clearly indicated in the assignments briefs. This gives learners focus and helps with internal verification and standardisation processes. It will also help to ensure that learner feedback is specific to the assessment criteria.

When designing assignments briefs, centres are encouraged to identify common topics and themes. A central feature of vocational assessment is that it allows for assessment to be:

● current, i.e. to reflect the most recent developments and issues

● local, i.e. to reflect the employment context of the delivering centre

● flexible to reflect learner needs, i.e. at a time and in a way that matches the learner's requirements so that they can demonstrate achievement.

Qualification grade

Learners who achieve the minimum eligible credit value specified by the rule of combination will achieve the qualification at pass grade*.*

In the Pearson BTEC Level 6 Professional qualifications each unit has a credit value which specifies the number of credits that will be awarded to a learner who has achieved the learning outcomes of the unit. This has been based on:

● one credit for those learning outcomes achievable in 10 hours of learning time

● learning time being defined as the time taken by learners at the level of the unit, on average, to complete the learning outcomes of the unit to the standard determined by the assessment criteria

● the credit value of the unit remaining constant regardless of the method of assessment used or the qualification to which it contributes.

Quality assurance of centres

Pearson BTEC Levels 4–7 qualifications provide a flexible structure for learners enabling programmes of varying credits and combining different levels. For the purposes of quality assurance, all individual qualifications and units are considered as a whole.

Centres delivering the Pearson BTEC Levels 4–7 qualifications must be committed to ensuring the quality of the units and qualifications they deliver, through effective standardisation of assessors and verification of assessor decisions. Centre quality assurance and assessment is monitored and guaranteed by Pearson.

The Pearson quality assurance processes will involve:

● centre approval for those centres not already recognised as a centre for BTEC qualifications

● approval for the Pearson BTEC Levels 4–7 qualifications and units.

For all centres delivering BTEC qualifications at Levels 4–7, Pearson allocates a Standards Verifier (EE) for each sector offered, who will conduct an annual visit to quality assure the programmes.

Approval

Centres are required to declare their commitment to ensuring the quality of the programme of learning and providing appropriate assessment opportunities for learners that lead to valid and accurate assessment outcomes. In addition, centres will commit to undertaking defined training and online standardisation activities.

Centres already holding BTEC approval are able to gain qualification approval online. New centres must complete a centre approval application.

Quality assurance guidance

Details of quality assurance for the Pearson BTEC Levels 4–7 qualifications are available on our website (www.edexcel.com) under Signposts to Quality (www.edexcel.com/quals/BTEC/quality/Pages/default.aspx).

Programme design and delivery

Mode of delivery

Pearson does not normally define the mode of delivery for Pearson BTEC Level 4 to Level 8 qualifications. Centres are free to offer the qualifications using any mode of delivery (such as full-time, part-time, evening only, distance learning) that meets their learners' needs. Whichever mode of delivery is used, centres must ensure that learners have appropriate access to the resources identified in the specification and to the subject specialists delivering the units. This is particularly important for learners studying for the qualification through open or distance learning.

Learners studying for the qualification on a part-time basis bring with them a wealth of experience that should be utilised to maximum effect by tutors and assessors. The use of assessment evidence drawn from learners' work environments should be encouraged. Those planning the programme should aim to enhance the vocational nature of the qualification by:

- liaising with employers to ensure a course relevant to learners' specific needs
- accessing and using non-confidential data and documents from learners' workplaces
- including sponsoring employers in the delivery of the programme and, where appropriate, in the assessment
- linking with company-based/workplace training programmes
- making full use of the variety of experience of work and life that learners bring to the programme.

Resources

Pearson BTEC Level 6 qualifications are designed to give learners an understanding of the skills needed for specific vocational sectors. Physical resources need to support the delivery of the programme and the assessment of the learning outcomes, and should therefore normally be of industry standard. Staff delivering programmes and conducting the assessments should be familiar with current practice and standards in the sector concerned. Centres will need to meet any specific resource requirements to gain approval from Pearson.

Where specific resources are required these have been indicated in individual units in the *Essential resources* sections.

Delivery approach

It is important that centres develop an approach to teaching and learning that supports the vocational nature of Pearson BTEC Level 6 qualifications and the mode of delivery. Specifications give a balance of practical skill development and knowledge requirements, some of which can be theoretical in nature. Tutors and assessors need to ensure that appropriate links are made between theory and practical application and that the knowledge base is applied to the sector. This requires the development of relevant and up-to-date teaching materials that allow learners to apply their learning to actual events and activity within the sector. Maximum use should be made of learners' experience.

Access and recruitment

Pearson's policy regarding access to its qualifications is that:

- they should be available to everyone who is capable of reaching the required standards
- they should be free from any barriers that restrict access and progression
- there should be equal opportunities for all wishing to access the qualifications.

Centres are required to recruit learners to BTEC qualifications with integrity. This will include ensuring that applicants have appropriate information and advice about the qualifications and that the qualification will meet their needs. Centres should take appropriate steps to assess each applicant's potential and make a professional judgement about their ability to successfully complete the programme of study and achieve the qualification. This assessment will need to take account of the support available to the learner within the centre during their programme of study and any specific support that might be necessary to allow the learner to access the assessment for the qualification. Centres should consult Pearson's policy on learners with particular requirements.

Centres will need to review the entry profile of qualifications and/or experience held by applicants, considering whether this profile shows an ability to progress to a higher level qualification.

Please note that UK Border Agency (UKBA) requires adult students to have acceptable English language ability before they can apply to become an adult student under Tier 4 (General) of the points-based system. As an education provider you must ensure that the applicant is competent in the English language at a minimum of Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) level B1 for a QCF level 4 or 5 qualification and a minimum of CEFR level B2 for a QCF level 6 qualification. The only exception is for an applicant to a Higher Education Institution (HEI) who is gifted; or competent at CEFR level B1 and the HEI believes that the applicant will reach B2 level after a short period of pre-sessional language training before the main course.

Restrictions on learner entry

The Pearson BTEC Level 6 Diploma in Project, Research and Study Skills (QCF) is accredited on the QCF for learners aged 18 and above.

Access arrangements and special considerations

Further information on access arrangements can be found in the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) document Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration for General and Vocational qualifications.

Details on how to make adjustments for learners with protected characteristics are given in the document Pearson Supplementary Guidance for Reasonable Adjustment and Special Consideration in Vocational Internally Assessed Units.

Both documents are on our website at: www.edexcel.com/policies

Recognition of Prior Learning

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a method of assessment (leading to the award of credit) that considers whether a learner can demonstrate that they can meet the assessment requirements for a unit through knowledge, understanding or skills they already possess and so do not need to develop through a course of learning.

Pearson encourages centres to recognise learners' previous achievements and experiences whether at work, home and at leisure, as well as in the classroom. RPL provides a route for the recognition of the achievements resulting from continuous learning.

RPL enables recognition of achievement from a range of activities using any valid assessment methodology. Provided that the assessment requirements of a given unit or qualification have been met, the use of RPL is acceptable for accrediting a unit, units or a whole qualification. Evidence of learning must be sufficient, reliable and valid.

Unit format

All units in the Pearson BTEC Level 6 Professional qualifications have a standard format. The unit format is designed to give guidance on the requirements of the qualification for learners, tutors, assessors and those responsible for monitoring national standards.

Each unit has the following sections.

Unit title

The unit title is accredited on the QCF and this form of words will appear on the learner's Notification of Performance (NOP).

Unit code

Each unit is assigned a QCF unit code that appears with the unit title on the National Database of Accredited Qualifications.

QCF level

All units and qualifications within the QCF will have a level assigned to them, which represents the level of achievement. There are nine levels of achievement, from Entry Level to Level 8. The level of the unit has been informed by the QCF level descriptors and, where appropriate, the NOS and/or other sector/professional benchmarks.

Credit value

All units have a credit value. The minimum credit value that may be determined for a unit is one, and credits can only be awarded in whole numbers. Learners will be awarded credits for the successful completion of whole units.

Guided learning hours

Guided learning hours are defined as all the times when a tutor, trainer or facilitator is present to give specific guidance towards the learning aim being studied on a programme. This definition includes lectures, tutorials and supervised study in, for example, open learning centres and learning workshops. It also includes time spent by staff assessing learners' achievements. It does not include time spent by staff in day-to-day marking of assignments or homework where the learner is not present.

Unit aim

The aim provides a clear summary of the purpose of the unit and is a succinct statement that summarises the learning outcomes of the unit.

Unit introduction

The unit introduction gives the reader an appreciation of the unit in the vocational setting of the qualification, as well as highlighting the focus of the unit. It gives the reader a snapshot of the unit and the key knowledge, skills and understanding gained while studying the unit. The unit introduction also highlights any links to the appropriate vocational sector by describing how the unit relates to that sector.

Learning outcomes

The learning outcomes of a unit set out what a learner is expected to know, understand or be able to do as the result of a process of learning.

Assessment criteria

The assessment criteria of a unit specify the standard a learner is expected to meet to demonstrate that a learning outcome, or set of learning outcomes, has been achieved. The learning outcomes and assessment criteria clearly articulate the learning achievement for which the credit will be awarded at the level assigned to the unit.

Unit content

The unit content identifies the breadth of knowledge, skills and understanding needed to design and deliver a programme of learning to achieve each of the learning outcomes. This is informed by the underpinning knowledge and understanding requirements of the related National Occupational Standards (NOS), where relevant. The content provides the range of subject material for the programme of learning and specifies the skills, knowledge and understanding required for achievement of the unit.

Each learning outcome is stated in full and then the key phrases or concepts related to that learning outcome are listed in italics followed by the subsequent range of related topics.

Relationship between content and assessment criteria

The learner should have the opportunity to cover all of the unit content.

It is not a requirement of the unit specification that all of the content is assessed. However, the indicative content will need to be covered in a programme of learning in order for learners to be able to meet the standard determined in the assessment criteria.

Content structure and terminology

The information below shows the unit content is structured and gives the terminology used to explain the different components within the content.

- Learning outcome: this is shown in bold at the beginning of each section of content.

- Italicised sub-heading: it contains a key phrase or concept. This is content which must be covered in the delivery of the unit. Colons mark the end of an italicised sub-heading.

- Elements of content: the elements are in plain text and amplify the sub-heading. The elements must be covered in the delivery of the unit. Semi-colons mark the end of an element.

- Brackets contain amplification of content which must be covered in the delivery of the unit.

- 'e.g.' is a list of examples, used for indicative amplification of an element (that is, the content specified in this amplification could be covered or could be replaced by other, similar material).

Essential guidance for tutors

This section gives tutors additional guidance and amplification to aid understanding and a consistent level of delivery and assessment. It is divided into the following sections.

- *Delivery* – explains the content's relationship to the learning outcomes and offers guidance about possible approaches to delivery. This section is based on the more usual delivery modes but is not intended to rule out alternative approaches.

- *Assessment* – gives amplification about the nature and type of evidence that learners need to produce in order to achieve the unit. This section should be read in conjunction with the assessment criteria.

- *Essential resources* – identifies any specialist resources needed to allow learners to generate the evidence required for each unit. The centre will be asked to ensure that any requirements are in place when it seeks approval from Edexcel to offer the qualification.

- *Indicative resource materials* – gives a list of learner resource material that benchmarks the level of study.

Units

Unit 1: Major Project

Unit code: Y/503/7221

QCF Level 6: BTEC Professional

Credit value: 30

Guided learning hours: 80

Unit aim

This unit aims to give learners the skills required to undertake a major project relevant to practice in a selected sector. The major project will assess learners' ability to apply their knowledge of the sector, and their use of appropriate research, study and analytical skills to investigate a sector-related topic and solve problems.

Unit introduction

Learners are required to formulate a project proposal related to a sector and area that interests them and that will contribute to their professional development. The major project may be:

● a design study arising from a real application, for example engineering

● the development of a product or hardware to meet employer or business requirements

● a project which supports a tutor's research interests.

Learners will carry out an initial critical review of key secondary sources of knowledge for the project proposal. They will select and justify an appropriate research methodology for their project proposal, and present the proposal, before undertaking the project.

Learners will collect and analyse research data using appropriate established techniques, use established techniques to address their project requirements, critically evaluate the project outcomes and make justified recommendations for further study.

Learners must obtain approval for their project topic from their tutor before they begin developing the project proposal.

Learning outcomes and assessment criteria

In order to pass this unit, the evidence that the learner presents for assessment needs to demonstrate that they can meet all the learning outcomes for the unit. The assessment criteria determine the standard required to achieve the unit.

On completion of this unit a learner should:

Learning outcomes	Assessment criteria
1 Be able to produce a project proposal relevant to a sector	1.1 Formulate realistic aims and objectives for the project
	1.2 Undertake an initial critical review of key information sources for the project
	1.3 Critically analyse initial findings to inform the viability and structure of the project
	1.4 Present a clear justification of the methodology for the project
2 Be able to plan and manage the project	2.1 Develop a realistic strategy for undertaking the project
	2.2 Specify the resource implications for completion of the project
	2.3 Develop a detailed schedule for the proposed project
	2.4 Monitor progress of the project against agreed milestones and timelines
3 Be able to implement the project to address identified requirements	3.1 Undertake a coherent critical review of the key body of knowledge relevant to the project requirements
	3.2 Collect and collate primary data relevant to the project requirements
	3.3 Use established techniques to address the project requirements
	3.4 Analyse the benefits and limitations of the project findings

Learning outcomes	Assessment criteria
4 Be able to critically evaluate the project outcomes	4.1 Critically evaluate the project outcomes in terms of the original project proposal 4.2 Critically evaluate own performance in undertaking the project 4.3 Make justified recommendations for further study
5 Be able to present the project outcomes	5.1 Present the project outcomes coherently in an agreed format

Unit content

1 Be able to produce a research proposal relevant to a sector

Project aims and objectives: terms of reference; duration and milestones; rationale for selection; methodology for data collection and analysis; type of research; relevance/importance of the proposal to the sector

Review of key information sources: secondary sources; qualitative research sources, e.g. sector stakeholders

Critical analysis of research findings: credibility, validity, reliability of sources and findings

Methodology: research and select most relevant type(s) for project; pure or applied research, developmental, longitudinal, survey, questionnaire, case study presenting justification: professional delivery format; use of appropriate media; use of appropriate terminology

2 Be able to plan and manage the project

Strategy: project design; procedure; work breakdown; methods of investigation, methods of data collection

Resource implications: e.g. materials, equipment, personnel, computing, software, any costs (set–up costs, operating costs, research costs, travel costs, time on project)

Project schedule: e.g. Gantt chart (main tasks, sub-tasks and dates by which tasks/deliverables are to be completed), use of computer-based project–management tools, contingency planning

Monitoring project progress: e.g. periodic meetings with supervisor, Gantt chart review

3 Be able to implement the project to address identified requirements

Critical review of key body of knowledge: credibility, validity, reliability of secondary research sources; frequency of references and esteem of publications in the sector; review qualitative research sources, e.g. interviews with sector stakeholders

Collect and collate primary data: quantitative research, e.g. questionnaires, interviews, surveys; qualitative research, e.g. case study, observation, interviews; selection and use of appropriate primary research instruments; systematic recording; methological problems (bias, variables and their control, validity and reliability); pre–and/or post-implementation primary research

Established techniques: research analysis (primary and secondary data, qualitative and quantitative data analysis such as interpreting transcripts, coding techniques, statistical tables, comparison of variables, trends, forecasting); other techniques, e.g. application of current practice and theory (including from the wider sector context), application of technology (specialist software), production of prototype

Benefits and limitations: 'bluesky' thinking for sector; confirming/disagreeing with sector knowledge; conflict/agreement with recognised authorities

4 Be able to critically evaluate the project outcomes

Critical evaluation of project outcomes: objectives, focus, benefits, methodology difficulties; aims and objectives, evidence and findings (validity, reliability, benefits, difficulties), conclusion(s) (including how the work relates to a wider context such as theory and/or practice elsewhere)

Critical evaluation of own performance: overview of success or failure of project planning/management, independence, initiative, research/implementation skills

Recommendations for further study: e.g. significance of project investigation, application of research results, implications and importance to the sector, limitations of the investigation, improvements, recommendations for the future, areas for future research

5 Be able to present the project outcomes

Presentation: professional delivery format in media appropriate to the audience, e.g. formal written format, by viva voce or oral presentation, diagrammatic or graphical figures; critique of topic selected, secondary sources reviewed, methods used, own learning, procedures and techniques, drawing arguments together to reach conclusions on research findings

Essential guidance for tutors

Delivery

This unit will need to be delivered throughout the entire learning programme in learning outcome order. It is essential that sufficient tutor support and

guidance is provided to enable learners to select an appropriate and viable project proposal that can be developed into the required substantial project.

It may be useful to deliver lectures on methodology, referencing, data and analysis in the first few weeks of the unit. Centres may wish to give learners a project guide covering methodology, referencing, data, analysis and format for presentation of the project proposal and the project report.

Once the project proposal has been approved, it is essential that learners have regular tutorials to monitor progress and ensure completion of the project to time.

Assessment

To pass this unit learners must meet all the assessment criteria.

In assessing the research project report, the following performance themes should be considered:

- presentation of information
- applications of methods/knowledge/techniques to achieve solutions
- the depth/breadth of knowledge and/or understanding shown
- deployment of judgemental, critical, analytical or creative skills.

For example:

- Is there sufficient background for the assessors to understand the context of the project?
- Are the aims and objectives of the project clearly stated and realistic?
- Is there a clear relationship between the literature review and the project aims and objectives?
- How does the work relate to a wider context, for example theory and/or practice elsewhere?
- Are the methods used, and the results and the outcomes clearly described?
- Is there clear presentation of relevant information and evidence to support the learner's arguments/conclusions?
- Has the learner shown originality, and how well have they used their own experience and material gleaned from elsewhere (theories, case studies etc) to back up the thrust of the argument?
- How well does the project draw together the arguments presented to reach conclusions?
- Were the methods chosen appropriate with hindsight?
- Was the extent/coverage of the topic adequate?
- Has the learner presented a coherent critical evaluation of thier performance?

As a guide, it is suggested that a research proposal will be in the region of 1,000 to 1,500 words. The 1,000 to 1,500 words can be incorporated in the final project report which should be in the region of 7,000 to 10,000 words.

Indicative resource materials

Books

Bell J – *Doing Your Research Project*, 5th Edition (Open University Press, 2010) ISBN 978-0335235827

Kumar R – *Research Methodology: A Step-by-Step Guide for Beginners*, 3rd Edition (Sage Publications Ltd, 2010) ISBN 978-1849203012

Truss L – *Eats, Shoots and Leaves: The Zero Tolerance Approach to Punctuation* (Gotham Books, 2009) ISBN 978-1592404889

Unit 2: Research Methods

Unit code: F/505/722

QCF Level 6: BTEC Professional

Credit value: 10

Guided learning hours: 40

Unit aim

This unit aims to develop the learner's ability to initiate and carry out research. Learners will develop skills in formulating an idea to research, gathering relevant data, and presenting their findings.

Unit introduction

Research is undertaken for many reasons. It may be theoretical or academic research that derives from the personal interests of the researcher, or it may be practical research designed, for example, to answer a question, provide evidence for a given course of action, or help people to do their jobs. In a professional or working context it will more than likely be a mixture of the two.

Whatever the purpose, if it is to be of any value, it must be systematically approached and rigorously carried out. This unit is designed to give learners the skills needed to carry out such systematic and rigorous research. They will consider how to formulate a research ideal, develop their skills in gathering data using various techniques, and present their findings in an appropriate format, following the conventions in style, layout and referencing.

Learning outcomes and assessment criteria

In order to pass this unit, the evidence that the learner presents for assessment needs to demonstrate that they can meet all the learning outcomes for the unit. The assessment criteria determine the standard required to achieve the unit.

On completion of this unit a learner should:

Learning outcomes	Assessment criteria
1 Be able to formulate a research proposal	1.1 Develop a viable research question
	1.2 Undertake a critical review of the relevant literature
	1.3 Formulate a research proposal, justifying the chosen methodology and method
2 Be able to gather data	2.1 Gather data using relevant data gathering methods
	2.2 Systematically and accurately record data gathered
	2.3 Work ethically when gathering and recording data
3 Be able to present referenced research findings in an appropriate format	3.1 Interpret research data using relevant analytical techniques
	3.2 Present justified findings in an appropriate format
	3.3 Support presentation using appropriate referencing and bibliographic conventions

Unit content

1 Be able to formulate a research proposal

Develop research question: e.g. personal interest, feasibility, value

Literature review: define research parameters; conduct search; obtain literature; evaluate literature; record evaluation

Research methodologies: philosophies, e.g. positivism, realism, interpretivism, pragmatism; approaches, e.g. deductive, inductive; strategies, e.g. experiment, survey, case study, action research, grounded theory, ethnography, archival

Research methods: e.g. mono-method, mixed method, multi-method, cross-sectional, longitudinal

Research proposal: e.g. aims, intended outcomes, rationale, relationship to previous research, proposer's suitability, methodology, methods, schedule, risks

2 Be able to gather data

Data: type of data, e.g. primary, secondary, quantitative, qualitative; format of data, e.g. written, spoken, visual, graphic, audio, audio-visual

Data–gathering methods: desk-based, e.g. internet, library, archive; fieldwork, e.g. questionnaires, telephone surveys, interviews, focus groups

Recording data: recording (audio, audio-visual, transcription); note-taking, e.g. key points, summaries; storage of data records

Ethical considerations: use of participants and respondents (consent, privacy, confidentiality, anonymity, right to withdraw); integrity of researcher; relationships with sponsors; non-discriminatory language, e.g. gender, race, disability, religion

3 Be able to present referenced research findings in an appropriate format

Analysis of data: quantitative analysis, e.g. type of data, coding data, data matrices, computer–aided analysis, deduction of explanations, deduction of trends; qualitative analysis e.g. manual, computer aided, deductively–based procedures, inductively–based procedures, pattern matching, explanation building, analytic induction, grounded theory, discourse analysis, narrative analysis; graphical representation of analysed data, e.g. graphs, pie charts, bar charts

Research findings: evidence considered, including validity, reliability, implications, limitations

Presentation format: format, e.g. report, oral presentation, audio-visual; lay-out; structure (abstract, introduction, presentation of argument, conclusion, bibliography); language, e.g. register, vocabulary, non-discriminatory language, grammar, spelling, punctuation; process, e.g. drafting, proofreading, final copy

Referencing: conventions, e.g. Modern Language Review, Harvard, American Psychological Association; bibliographies; statements about how references have been used

Essential guidance for tutors

Delivery

It is important that this unit is delivered at the beginning of the programme, to prepare learners for their work on the major project.

Assessment

To pass this unit, learners must meet all the assessment criteria. The unit is designed to provide the underpinning knowledge and opportunities to develop the required skills necessary for successful completion of the major project.

It is envisaged that the criteria for this unit will give centres the opportunity to provide learners with examples with which to develop their skills and knowledge in preparation for Unit 1, where live individual research, analysis and presentation will be undertaken for the Major Project.

Indicative resource materials

Books

Bryman A – *Social Research Methods*, 3rd edition, (Oxford University Press) (2008) ISBN 978-0-19-920295-9

Kumar R – *Research Methodology: A Step-by-Step Guide for Beginners* (Sage Publications) (2005) ISBN-13: 9781412911948.

Further information and useful publications

For further information about the qualifications featured in this specification, or other Pearson qualifications, or visit our website (www.edexcel.com).

Key publications:

● Adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties – Access and Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments, General and Vocational qualifications (Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ))

● Equality Policy (Pearson)

● Recognition of Prior Learning Policy and Process (Pearson)

● UK Information Manual (Pearson)

● UK Quality Vocational Assurance Handbook (Pearson).

All of these publications are available on our website.

Professional development and support

Pearson supports UK and international customers with training related to BTEC qualifications. This support is available through a choice of training options offered in our published training directory, or through customised training at your centre.

The support we offer focuses on a range of issues including:

● planning for the delivery of a new programme

● planning for assessment and grading

● developing effective assignments

● building your team and teamwork skills

● developing learner-centred learning and teaching approaches

● building functional skills into your programme

● building in effective and efficient quality-assurance systems.

The national programme of training we offer is on our website at www.edexcel.com/training. You can request customised training through the website or you can contact one of our advisers in the Training from Pearson team via Customer Services to discuss your training needs.

BTEC training and support for the lifetime of the qualifications

Training and networks: our training programme ranges from free introductory events through sector-specific opportunities to detailed training on all aspects of delivery, assignments and assessment. In addition, we have designed our new network events programme to allow you to share your experiences, ideas and best practice with other BTEC colleagues in your region. Sign up to the training you need at: www.btec.co.uk/training

Regional support: our team of Curriculum Development Managers and Curriculum Support Consultants, based around the country, are responsible for providing advice and support in centres. They can help you with planning and curriculum developments. Call **0844 576 0027** to contact the curriculum team for your centre.

Your BTEC Support team

Whether you want to talk to a sector specialist, browse online or submit your query for an individual response, there is someone in our BTEC Support team to help you whenever – and however – you need, with:

● Welcome Packs for new BTEC centres: if you are delivering BTEC for the first time, we will send you a sector-specific Welcome Pack designed to help you get started with these qualifications

● Subject Advisers: find out more about our subject adviser team – immediate, reliable support from a fellow subject expert – at: www.edexcel.com/subjectadvisors

● BTEC Hotline: call the BTEC Hotline on 0844 576 0026 with your query

● Ask the Expert: submit your question online to our Ask the Expert online service (www.edexcel.com/Aboutus/contact-us/ask-expert/Pages) and we will make sure your query is handled by a subject specialist.

Annexe A

Glossary of accreditation terminology

Accreditation start/end date	The first/last dates that Pearson can register learners for a qualification.
Certification end date	The last date on which a certificate may be issued by Pearson.
Credit value	All units have a credit value. The minimum credit value that may be determined for a unit is one, and credits can only be awarded in whole numbers. Learners will be awarded credits for the successful completion of whole units.
Guided Learning Hours (GLH)	Guided learning hours are defined as all the times when a tutor, trainer or facilitator is present to give specific guidance towards the learning aim being studied on a programme. This definition includes lectures, tutorials and supervised study in, for example, open learning centres and learning workshops. It also includes time spent by staff assessing learners' achievements. It does not include time spent by staff in day-to-day marking of assignments or homework where the learner is not present.
Learning Aims Database	Link to the Learning Aims Database, which features detailed funding information by specific learning aim reference.
Learning Aim Reference	Unique reference number given to the qualification by the funding authorities on accreditation.
Level	The level at which the qualification is positioned in the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF).
Qualification Number (QN)	Unique reference number given to the qualification by the regulatory authorities on accreditation.
Register of Regulated Qualifications	Link to the entry on the Register of Regulated Qualifications for a particular qualification. This database features detailed accreditation information for the particular qualification.
Section 96	Section 96 is a section of the Learning and Skills Act 2000. This shows for which age ranges the qualification is publicly funded for under-19 learners.
Title	The accredited title of the qualification.

Annexe B

BTEC Specialist and Professional qualifications

BTEC qualifications on the NQF	Level	BTEC Specialist and Professional qualifications on the QCF	BTEC qualification suites on the QCF
BTEC Level 7 Advanced Professional qualifications BTEC Advanced Professional Award, Certificate and Diploma	**7**	**BTEC Level 7 Professional qualifications** BTEC Level 7 Award, Certificate, Extended Certificate and Diploma	
BTEC Level 6 Professional qualifications BTEC Professional Award, Certificate and Diploma	**6**	**BTEC Level 6 Professional qualifications** BTEC Level 6 Award, Certificate, Extended Certificate and Diploma	
BTEC Level 5 Professional qualifications BTEC Professional Award, Certificate and Diploma	**5**	**BTEC Level 5 Professional qualifications** BTEC Level 5 Award, Certificate, Extended Certificate and Diploma	**BTEC Level 5 Higher Nationals** BTEC Level 5 HND Diploma
BTEC Level 4 Professional qualifications BTEC Professional Award, Certificate and Diploma	**4**	**BTEC Level 4 Professional qualifications** BTEC Level 4 Award, Certificate, Extended Certificate and Diploma	**BTEC Level 4 Higher Nationals** BTEC Level 4 HNC Diploma
BTEC Level 3 qualifications BTEC Award, Certificate, Extended Certificate and Diploma	**3**	**BTEC Level 3 Specialist qualifications** BTEC Level 3 Award, Certificate, Extended Certificate and Diploma	**BTEC Level 3 Nationals** BTEC Level 3 Certificate, Subsidiary Diploma, Diploma and Extended Diploma

BTEC qualifications on the NQF	Level	BTEC Specialist and Professional qualifications on the QCF	BTEC qualification suites on the QCF
BTEC Level 2 qualifications BTEC Award, Certificate, Extended Certificate and Diploma	**2**	**BTEC Level 2 Specialist qualifications** BTEC Level 2 Award, Certificate, Extended Certificate and Diploma	**BTEC Level 2 Firsts** BTEC Level 2 Certificate, Extended Certificate and Diploma
BTEC Level 1 qualifications BTEC Award, Certificate, Extended Certificate and Diploma	**1**	**BTEC Level 1 Specialist qualifications** BTEC Level 1 Award, Certificate, Extended Certificate and Diploma	**BTEC Level 1 qualifications** BTEC Level 1 Award, Certificate and Diploma (vocational component of Foundation Learning)
	E	**BTEC Entry Level Specialist qualifications** BTEC Entry Level Award, Certificate, Extended Certificate and Diploma	**BTEC Entry Level qualifications (E3)** BTEC Entry Level 3 Award, Certificate and Diploma (vocational component of Foundation Learning)

NQF = National Qualifications Framework

QCF = Qualifications and Credit Framework

QCF qualification sizes

Award	1–12 credits
Certificate	13–36 credits
Diploma	37+ credits

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32   Pearson BTEC Level 6 Diploma professional qualification in Project, Research and Study Skills (QCF) –
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