Getting started with next generation BTEC Firsts

Your step-by-step guide
Welcome to your step-by-step guide to getting started with teaching next generation BTEC Firsts. We’ve developed this guide to explain the processes involved in:

- helping ensure your BTEC experience runs smoothly once your centre has been approved
- the steps you need to take to make sure you start off on the right foot.

We’ll take you through the processes themselves, explain why they’re important, and point you in the direction of all the support we offer to help you deliver BTEC with confidence.

If you need more help, get in touch via www.btec.co.uk/contactus

The BTEC Team
Getting to know BTEC Firsts: your specification, delivery guide and sample assessment materials

**Specification**
Your specification covers everything you need to know to deliver and assess your BTEC First including:
- overview of every unit
- learning aims
- assessment criteria
- how to grade the overall qualification.

You can download the specification from the subject area of our BTEC Firsts from 2012 pages.

**Sample Assessment Materials (SAMs)**
These materials give you an idea of the actual question papers or onscreen tests and mark schemes in advance of the examinations.

You can download SAMs from the subject area of our BTEC Firsts from 2012 pages.

**Delivery Guide**
This delivery guide is a companion to your specification. It contains ideas for practical activities, realistic scenarios and independent learning, helping to bring the content of the units to life. The guide has been developed with teachers who understand the challenges of finding new and engaging ways to deliver a BTEC programme, which means you can be sure the guidance is relevant and achievable.

You can download the delivery guide from the subject area of our BTEC Firsts from 2012 page.
Planning your BTEC Course

Building and planning your course
The very first step to creating a successful BTEC course is to select which units you’re going to teach, and when and how you’re going to assess them.

Planning your course in myBTEC
myBTEC saves you time by making the course building and planning process as intuitive as possible.
You can choose your units, check rules of combination, use the clone function to copy courses and allocate your BTEC colleagues to each course.
Find out if myBTEC is live for your BTEC First qualifications.

Building your assessment plan
Your assessment plan is the timetable you create at the start of your course for how you will deliver and assess your BTEC – which units you’ll teach and when you’ll teach them. It provides a calendar for delivery, and means your Standards Verifier can plan sampling to fit around your delivery. Learn more about standardisation.

Sample Schemes of Work
The sample Schemes of Work, downloadable from the subject area of the BTEC First from 2012 webpages, give an overview of what you need to cover for each unit, broken down by topic, and how each topic meets the learning aims. The samples are an invaluable tool to help you make the most of your planning time and give you the opportunity to add in your own activities.
Quality assurance: Confidence in the national standard

What is quality assurance?

Quality assurance is the name we give the process of ensuring that the internally assessed parts of the BTEC give your learners the results they deserve, and that centres assess every BTEC assignment to the highest standards. This process involves:

- ensuring all assignment briefs are written to give your learners the best chance to demonstrate their knowledge
- marking all assignments consistently
- ensuring that your centre’s assignments are being marked in line with the national standard.

Before you start delivering BTEC, you need to ensure you are confident to assess your learners’ work to the correct standard.

Learn more

Your Quality Assurance team

Quality Nominee (QN)

If your centre has previously delivered BTEC, you will already have a Quality Nominee. The QN has overall responsibility for all BTEC qualifications in a centre. We’ll send regular information to the Quality Nominee about all aspects of BTEC qualifications, which they will then share in their centre; they are the key point of contact for everything relating to BTEC standards and Quality Assurance. If you are new to BTEC, you will need to appoint a Quality Nominee. Learn more

Lead Internal Verifier (Lead IV)

You will need a Lead IV for every subject area. It’s their responsibility to sign off all assignments to ensure they are fit for purpose and give the learner the best chance to achieve the right grade.

Standards Verifier

Every year, we take a sample of your centre’s assessed assignments to ensure there is consistency both in your centre, and across all BTEC programmes nationally. This process is managed by a Pearson Standards Verifier who will be appointed to your centre.
Internal Verification: Apply the standard

Internal verification is the process you use in your centre to ensure
- all assignment briefs are fit for purpose
- work is consistently assessed to the same high standard.

Your Lead Internal Verifier will oversee the process.
They have responsibility for signing off all assignment briefs and assessment decisions.

**Standardisation**
All subject areas must have a registered Lead IV who is also responsible for undertaking standardisation training with their BTEC team to ensure everyone has the knowledge and support they need to assess to the correct standard from the beginning of the course. To register as a Lead IV, you must update Edexcel Online to show that you have completed the standardisation training materials available through OSCA with your team.

**Running next generation and QCF BTEC Firsts**
If your centre is running BTECs from 2010(QCF) as well as BTEC Firsts from 2012/13(NQF), the Lead IV for these two qualifications can be the same person, but they must complete both Lead IV registration exercises. Learn more about what’s different for next generation for BTEC Firsts.
Standards Verification: Maintaining the national standard

Standards verification gives you peace of mind that you are carrying out assessment of your BTEC course correctly and to the national standards. We undertake standards verification to ensure reliability of assessment across all BTEC centres, and it will ensure you have accurate assessment and verification records.

How we do it

Your Standards Verifier will sample a range of assignments you have assessed to ensure they are marked to national standards. They will work with you to identify good practice and areas for further development, giving you guidance on how you can improve assessment in your centre.

When we do it

We begin allocating Standards Verifiers from November every year, and they will contact you to arrange when your sampling will take place, based on your assessment plan. All sampling must be completed by the end of June the following year.
Writing assignments

Assignment writing – learning aims
All BTEC assignments are written to meet the learning aims set out for each unit in the specification. BTEC assignments should always be industry related.

Writing assignments in myBTEC
The myBTEC Assignments service gives you access to authorised assignment briefs; step-by-step templates so you can build your own; and a convenient way of submitting your assignment for approval and receiving feedback.

Find out if myBTEC is live for your BTEC First qualifications.

Assignment Checking Service
This free service is for centres who are relatively new to BTEC, and feel they need extra support with internally verifying their assignments. You can submit 2 assignments per subject area, per academic year. They’ll be reviewed by a subject expert who will provide you with feedback.

Assignments that have been submitted to this service must also be Internally Verified.

Authorised Assignment briefs
For all next generation BTEC Firsts, we have created Authorised Assignment Briefs. These are briefs that you can use ‘off the shelf’ and set direct to your learners, or adapt them to suit your needs. They are available in myBTEC, or you can download Authorised Assignment Briefs from the subject areas of the BTEC Firsts from 2012 pages. These Authorised Assignment Briefs must go through the Internal Verification process.
Registering learners

The right learner on the right qualification

Next generation BTEC Firsts are equivalent in standard to GCSEs at level 2 (A*-C) and are designed for level 2 learners. Level 1 learners should take a BTEC level 1 qualification which is tailored to their needs.

Learn more

Registering learners

All BTEC learners must be formally registered so that their achievement can be tracked and the correct award made at the end of their course.

How to register learners

Learners are registered by centres using Edexcel Online. This is usually carried out by the centre Exams Officer.

Learn more.

When to register learners

You can register your learners on BTEC courses between 1st September and 31st October 2013. It is possible to register learners after this date, but you may incur late fees.

Learn more.

Amending registrations

If, during the course of delivering a qualification, you want to move a learner on to a different size of qualification, then this is again done through Edexcel Online. These changes may be subject to a transfer fee.

Learn more.
Assessment for BTEC Firsts

All units are assessed against the assessment criteria set out in the specification. Once each unit grade is finalised, it will count towards the overall qualification grade (see Results and Grading). Units are graded at:

- Level 2 Distinction
- Level 2 Merit
- Level 2 Pass
- Level 1
- Unclassified.

All next generation BTEC Firsts include both internal and external assessment. At least 75% is teacher-led internal assessment and up to 25% is external assessment (depending on qualification size).

Internal assessment

Internal assessment is carried out through assignment briefs that are set and assessed by teachers and tutors. Assessment instruments and assessment decisions are subject to Internal and Standards Verification.

Learn more about the next generation Quality Assurance process for BTEC Firsts
External assessment means that Pearson sets and marks or moderates the assessment. There are three methods of external assessment. Different methods are used for different sectors in order to assess learners in a way that is appropriate for the sector.

**Paper-based, timetabled tests**
- Pearson sets and marks the examination question paper.
- The examination materials will be sent to you in advance of the test and must be kept securely.
- The test must be conducted at the time set by Pearson.

Learn more

**Set task**
- Frequently used in some creative sectors like Art & Design.
- New task issued each assessment opportunity and either sent to you or accessed via the qualification pages on the website.
- Moderated or externally marked by Pearson.

Learn more

**On-demand, onscreen tests**
- Learners complete an online test under controlled conditions.
- ‘On demand’ means you can enter your learners when they are ready – there are no fixed dates for test bookings.
- Marked by Pearson with the same rigour as set tasks and paper-based methods.

Learn more
**Assessment for BTEC Firsts**

**How and when to book external assessments**
Your Exams Officer will make test bookings via Edexcel Online for paper-based tests and set tasks; the test must be booked approximately six weeks before the test date.

For onscreen tests, bookings should be made in advance of the test date, and ideally no later than 48 hours before the test.

To make a test booking, learners must be registered on their specified programme of study and the relevant testing software must be installed.

Learn more about timetabled assessments for relevant sectors

**Re-sits**
A learner can re-sit an external assessment. Onscreen test re-sits can only take place once a result for the previous sitting has been issued.

**Assessment support**
We’ve developed a range of resources to support you to deliver and assess BTEC, including:

- Sample Assessment Materials (SAMs)
- Assignment Checking Service
- Delivery guides
- Authorised Assignment Briefs
- Sample marked learner work

Learn more
Results and Grading

How does grading work?

Next generation BTEC Firsts are designed for level 2 learners. The qualifications can be awarded at the following grades:

- Level 2 Distinction*
- Level 2 Distinction
- Level 2 Merit
- Level 2 Pass
- Level 1
- Unclassified.

Unit grades

- The overall grade of a unit is made up of the achievement of the learning aims within that unit. Each unit is graded Distinction, Merit, or Pass, Level 1 or Unclassified. Distinction* is not available at unit level.

Qualification grade

- The final qualification grade reflects a learner's achievement across the whole course.
- We automatically calculate the qualification grade when you make a claim for certification (see certification)

Learn more about grading in your sector specification
Results and Grading

Reporting results
Final results for qualifications with paper-based and set-task external assessments are released to coincide with the relevant GCSE results dates each year.

Reporting results for internal assessment
- **Formative assessment:** before final (summative) assessment of a learning aim, you should identify one formal point where you give formative (interim) feedback to each learner which needs to be formally recorded and collated. After this point, the learner must work independently until they submit their work for summative assessment.
- **Summative assessment:** Learners can make one submission per learning aim for summative (final) assessment. They are allowed one re-submission, which would need to be authorised by the Lead IV.

Learn more in your Delivery Guide

A unit grade can only be awarded once all the activities and assignments for that unit are complete, and is subject to Quality Assurance.

Learn more in your Delivery Guide

Reporting results for external assessment

**For paper-based tests and set tasks**
After each external assessment opportunity, we will make the exam paper, mark scheme and lead examiner report available on the results pages, on the BTEC website.

Learn more

**For onscreen tests**
Due to the nature of onscreen, on-demand testing, tests will remain ‘live’ in the test bank for a period of time. Once an onscreen test has been ‘retired’ from the test bank, we can make the test, mark scheme and lead examiner report available.

Learn more

Results dates and feedback
Learn more about key results dates
Learn more about results and post-results services
Certification

How to claim certification

Certification only happens once results for all units are released, including internally and externally assessed units. Your Exams officer will need to make claims for certification via Edexcel Online.

When to claim certification

For sectors with a paper-based, timetabled tests, we issue final results to coincide with the relevant GCSE results dates each year.

Certificates and Notifications of Performance are issued after the relevant post results services ‘window’.

To guarantee certification in October, you need to make your claim in July.

Learn more
Training

What kind of training is available and when?

We offer a range of training and events that are designed to help BTEC practitioners successfully plan, deliver and assess BTEC qualifications.

Face to Face
Our face-to-face events allow delegates to learn about BTEC in a classroom format. You will have the opportunity to take part in workshop-style activities, ask questions and meet colleagues from other centres.

Online
You will be able to hear your trainer, watch presentations and ask questions through an onscreen chat window. You can train by yourself or share the event with your department.

Centre-based
High quality training in your centre, for up to 20 members of staff, at a time convenient to you and a flexible and cost-effective alternative to our national programme.

Learn more

You can book training events by visiting our Training webpage or by contacting our Training team trainingbookings@pearson.com
Training

Training for teachers

- Our training for next generation BTEC Firsts is tailored and designed for teachers who are new to BTEC Firsts or are currently delivering a BTEC Level 2 First QCF qualification and are moving to next generation.

Learn more

Training for quality and administration

We have a range of training courses designed for key members of your BTEC team to support in the planning, quality assurance and administration of BTEC qualifications.

- Quality Nominees: regional quality networks to share best practice with QN's in your area.
- Exams Officers: events that are specifically designed to support new exams officers who seek training or additional support with the administration of our qualifications.

You can book training events by visiting our Training webpage or by contacting our Training team trainingbookings@pearson.com
Stay up to date

**Subject Advisor and Ask the Expert**

Whatever support you need with the new BTECs for 2012, we're here to help. Email or call your dedicated subject teams who will help with any qualification queries. Learn more

You can also use our online enquiry service, Ask the Expert.

**Sign up for eAlerts**

Stay up to date with developments to the next generation BTECs as well as all the training and support available by signing up to our eNewsletters.

**BTEC Update**

The BTEC Update is a regular e-newsletter which provides the latest BTEC news including updates on policy, new qualifications, training events and more. There are different updates for senior managers and teachers in both schools and colleges so you can be sure you're getting the information that's most relevant to you. Sign Up

**Follow @teachBTEC on Twitter** for the latest curriculum updates and news, information and advice on BTEC qualifications.
If you’d like any more information on any aspect of getting started with BTEC Firsts, please, get in touch

For general queries about any aspect of delivering your course btecdelivery@pearson.com

For subject specific queries, contact our Teaching services teams