



Centre Guide to Quality Assurance and Assessment

Pearson BTEC Level 3 and Level 4
Foundation Diploma in Art, Design & Media Practice

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Introduction

Welcome to the **Pearson BTEC Foundation Diploma in Art, Design & Media Practice Centre Guide to Quality Assurance and Assessment**.

Which qualifications does this guide cover?

This guide applies to centres in the UK and internationally and covers:

- BTEC Level 3 Foundation Diploma in Art, Design & Media Practice
- BTEC Level 4 Foundation Diploma in Art, Design & Media Practice

This guide is designed for Pearson BTEC Foundation Diploma programme teams and provides essential guidance on the planning and implementation of internal assessment.

The BTEC Foundation Diploma is assessed through internal assessment, which means that centres can deliver the programme in a way that suits individual students and relates to local needs. The way in which centres deliver the programme must ensure that assessment is fair and consistent as defined by the requirements for national standards and that these standards are consistent over time.

To achieve this, it is important that centres:

- make sure that there is a Programme Leader in place, who can support the whole programme team in understanding BTEC Level 3 and 4 assessment standards
- make full use of materials provided by us which define and exemplify assessment requirements such as specifications, published assignments, other support materials and guidance
- plan delivery to ensure that students are able to produce evidence to meet all the assessment criteria
- write suitable formative assignments, projects or case studies or select assignments from available resources, adapting them as necessary
- ensure each formative assignment is fit for purpose, valid, will deliver reliable outcomes, and is internally verified before use

- provide preparation and support for students before the start of the final summative assessment
- make careful and consistent assessment decisions based only on using the defined assessment criteria and the overarching approach to grading
- ensure that all student evidence submitted for assessment is valid and authentic
- validate and record assessment decisions carefully and completely
- work closely with us to ensure that implementation, delivery, and assessment are consistent with national standards.

Any questions regarding the assessment and internal verification of Foundation Diploma qualifications can be answered by centres' External Examiners or Pearson's Assessment team via the [Customer Portal](#).

Qualification approval

Centres that are new to the delivery of Pearson programmes will be required to seek approval initially through the existing approval process and then through the programme approval process. Programme approval for new centres is considered through a 'Review and Approval' visit to the centre.

Prior to approval being given, centres will be required to submit evidence to demonstrate that they:

- have the human and physical resources required for effective delivery and assessment
- understand the implications for external examination and agree to abide by these
- have a robust internal assessment system supported by 'fit for purpose' assessment
- documentation
- have a system to internally quality assure assessment decisions, to ensure standardised assessment decisions are made across all Assessors and sites.

Applications for approval must be supported by the head of the organisation, (Principal or Chief Executive, etc.) and include a declaration that the centre will operate the programmes strictly as approved, and in line with Pearson requirements.

The process for existing centres seeking to renew their approval is called Programme Review and Approval. Further detailed information about guidelines and processes can be found here.

This document sets out the different processes for approval depending on whether a centre:

- is actively delivering Pearson BTEC qualifications
- is approved, but not actively delivering Pearson BTEC qualifications
- is in the process of seeking approval to deliver Pearson BTEC qualifications
- has not yet started an application seeking to deliver Pearson BTEC qualifications.

Approval to deliver the BTEC Foundation Diploma at additional sites

Some centres may wish to deliver the Pearson BTEC Foundation Diploma at additional sites. Approval is required to do this, to ensure centres understand the requirements and allow Pearson to control any regulating and reputational risk when establishing relationships with external bodies. Further guidance on this can be obtained via the Pearson Support Portal.

Collaborative arrangements

Some centres may wish to work in collaboration with other centres to deliver the Pearson BTEC Foundation Diploma. The Collaborative Arrangements Policy provides further information on this. The policy defines collaborative arrangements in the UK and internationally and describes the different models of collaborative arrangements and their associated principles.

A collaborative arrangement is an agreement where an approved centre (the lead centre) works collaboratively to deliver a vocational qualification(s) with other organisation(s) that will normally be an approved Pearson centre(s).

The three models of collaborative arrangements are:

Informal collaboration	This is when two or more approved centres work together to share information, assignments, staff and physical resources. There is no shared assessment, and each has total ownership of its own quality assurance. No Pearson approval is required.
Consortium collaborative arrangement	Two or more approved centres gain permission from Pearson to work together to deliver specific Pearson qualifications. They are jointly responsible for the assessment and quality assurance of the qualification: each centre has equal responsibility for the registration and certification of students. Pearson approval is required for this type of arrangement.
Exceptional collaborative arrangements	Other collaborative arrangements may be allowable. Such arrangements must always be agreed beforehand with Pearson's Responsible Officer on a case-by-case basis. Approval and written agreement between all participating centres are required.

If a centre delivers a Foundation Diploma programme via an exceptional collaborative arrangement, the External Examiner will be provided with a copy of the approval documentation by Pearson and will be required to visit each site within the arrangement.

Distance learning

Foundation Diploma is designed to be delivered through practical workshops and face-to-face teaching and support. Therefore, it is not appropriate for the qualification to be delivered via distance learning.

Removal of centre approval

Regardless of the type of centre, Pearson reserves the right to withdraw either qualification or centre approval when it deems there is an irreversible breakdown in the centre's ability either to quality assure its programme delivery or its assessment standards as outlined in the Policy of the removal of centre and programme approval.

The decision to remove centre or programme approval may arise because:

- The Pearson Malpractice Committee determines this is an appropriate sanction to impose, following a malpractice investigation
- The centre has breached the terms and conditions of its centre or programme approval

- There are significant and/or repeated quality issues identified through Pearson's quality assurance processes
- There are long-standing financial issues which have not been resolved by the centre
- The centre has approval for programmes but is no longer active
- Pearson no longer has confidence in the centre's senior management team.

There is a process of appeal against the decision which is also outlined in this policy.

Essential guidance

BTEC qualification specification

The specification for each BTEC qualification is the document that Programme Leaders and teams must use as a first point of reference for all planning and assessment. Specifications are accompanied by important assessment and delivery guidance which provide instructions and advice for the qualification. The BTEC specifications are freely available on our website.

BTEC Centre Guide to Quality Assurance and Assessment

We use quality assurance to check that all centres are working to national standards. It gives us the opportunity to identify and provide support where it is needed in order to safeguard certification. It also allows us to recognise and support good practice. Every year we publish this updated BTEC Centre Guide to Quality Assurance and Assessment to explain our quality assurance processes for the coming academic year.

Pearson support materials

A range of support materials and templates have been produced by Pearson to support centres with the implementation, delivery and assessment of Foundation Diploma programmes. These are freely available for centres to access on the [qualification page](#) for Foundation Diploma.

Pearson also continues to offer training events for centres, both online and face-to-face, at multiple venues throughout the year for the new BTEC Foundation Diploma. A schedule of events, and a form to book onto national events, can be found on our [website](#).

If no national events are currently scheduled or available for a specific training course, or if a centre would prefer a training course be delivered just for them, we can arrange for one of our specialised trainers to come and deliver centre-based (in house) training. Any training courses from our national programme can be delivered within the centre and more information, including a form to request centre-based training, can be found on our [website](#). In accordance with Ofqual guidance, we cannot customise the content of our training, but our trainers may be able to pitch the training at the delegates' level of knowledge and experience.

Edexcel Online

Edexcel Online is a multifunctional system for centres. Access is password protected and is managed by the centre's examinations officer(s). Screens show programmes and students within a centre and allow for new registrations or withdrawals. External Examiner allocations and consequent external examination reports can be viewed here. Edexcel Online can be accessed at www.edexcelonline.com.

BTEC forms and templates

In addition to the standard BTEC forms and templates, we publish a range of useful BTEC Foundation Diploma specific forms and templates on the qualification page for centres to use. These forms are not mandatory but using them will help to ensure that centres are meeting requirements.

The forms and templates provided include:

- Assignment brief
- Internal verification of Assignment Brief
- Formative Feedback Form
- Project Proposal (Final Major Project)
- Summative Assessment Record
- Internal Standardisation Record
- Internal verification of Assessment Decisions

Regulation and oversight

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education

As well as meeting the quality requirements for the delivery of Pearson BTEC Foundation Diploma, centres also need to meet the quality and standards requirements of the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA). This is the independent body responsible for monitoring and advising on standards and quality in UK higher education, and this includes UK qualifications delivered outside the UK. As such, Pearson BTEC Foundation Diploma must also be delivered by centres in a way that satisfies the quality standards prescribed by the QAA. The [QAA Quality Code](#) sets out the Expectations that all providers of UK higher education are required to meet.

The purpose of the Quality Code is to:

- safeguard the academic standards of UK higher education
- assure the quality of the learning opportunities that UK higher education offers to students
- promote continuous and systematic improvement in UK higher education
- ensure that information about UK higher education is publicly available.

The Quality Code comprises three elements that work together to provide a reference for effective quality assurance.

1. Expectations that state how providers of higher education set and maintain standards and manage the quality of provision.
2. Practices that enhance the student experience and underpin the delivery of the expectations.
 - a. Core practices that must be demonstrated by all providers of higher education within the UK.
 - b. Common practices that are demonstrated by providers of higher education in line with their missions, regulatory requirements and students' needs. These practices underpin quality and are common across providers of higher education in the UK but are not regulatory requirements in England.
3. Advice and guidance that helps all providers of higher education to develop and maintain effective quality assurance.

The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation

The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) regulates qualifications, examinations and assessments in England and is a non-ministerial department. The Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) is the regulator for all qualifications in Northern Ireland.

Pearson BTEC Foundation Diploma qualifications have been aligned to the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and have been accredited to the Ofqual Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF). The RQF was launched in October 2015 and it is now a requirement for Awarding Bodies to describe the size of their qualifications by using Total Qualification Time (TQT) as a descriptor. This provides an indication of how long a typical learner will take to study for a qualification. It is also necessary to indicate the number of Guided Learning Hours (GLH) and this represents the number of hours tutors are available to give guidance to students for learning. The TQT needed for each qualification is given in each Foundation Diploma qualification specification.

The Competition and Markets Authority

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) work to promote competition for the benefit of consumers, both within and outside the UK. Their aim is to make markets work well for consumers, businesses and the economy. In terms of the delivery of Higher Education, it has an important function for students and providers of Higher Education.

‘Higher Education Providers Consumer Law’ applies to Higher Education through the relationship between providers of Higher Education and their students. Providers are required to provide information about courses, costs, terms and conditions and complaint handling prior to students starting courses. Information must be clear and transparent. If these obligations are not met, then providers could be in breach of consumer law and students may have the right to take legal action. Therefore, it is essential for providers to comply with these requirements. Further information can be found [here](#).

Office of the Independent Adjudicator

The Higher Education Act 2004 required the appointment of an independent body to oversee a student complaints scheme in England and Wales and the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) was designated to operate this scheme in 2005. From the outset, all universities in England and Wales were required to subscribe to the Scheme.

On 1 September 2015, the relevant section of the Consumer Rights Act 2015 came into force on extending the range of higher education providers that are required to participate in the Scheme. Subscribers now include providers offering higher education courses that are designated for student support funding, as well as institutions with degree awarding powers.

Examples of complaints that the OIA deal with relate to teaching provision and facilities, accommodation, bullying and harassment, disciplinary matters, unfair practice, discrimination, procedural irregularities and academic appeals. The OIA does not deal with academic or professional judgements. More information can be found at Office of the Independent Adjudicator. Through induction and the student handbook, subscribers to the OIA need to ensure that students in England and Wales are made aware of the services offered by OIA.

Office for Students

Under the Higher Education & Research Act 2017, the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) ceased to operate on 31 March 2018. On 1 April 2018, the majority of

HEFCE's functions, combined with the work of the Office of Fair Access, combined to form the Office for Students (OfS).

The new public body, the Office for Students, is the government-approved regulator and competition authority for higher education in England. The Office for Students' mandate is to ensure that students:

- Can access, succeed in, and progress from higher education
- Receive a high-quality academic experience
- Have their interests protected during study
- Can progress to employment or further study
- Receive value for money.

The Office for Students will also be responsible for administering the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) and Register of Higher Education Providers and will allocate public funds from the Government to higher education providers in England each year. More information can be found at the Office for Students.

Teaching Excellence Framework

The Government has introduced the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) to recognise and reward excellent teaching in UK higher education institutions by rating them as gold, silver or bronze. The ratings are judged by an independent panel of students, academics and other experts. Participation in TEF is voluntary, although English providers of higher education with more than 500 students are required to take part in TEF assessments.

Rating	Description
Gold	The centre consistently delivers outstanding teaching, learning and outcomes for its students that is of the highest quality found in the UK.
Silver	The centre delivers high quality teaching, learning and outcomes for its students. It consistently exceeds rigorous national quality requirements for UK higher education.
Bronze	The centre delivers teaching, learning and outcomes for its students that meet rigorous national quality requirements for UK higher education.

The TEF uses quantitative and qualitative data to assess the quality of teaching and learning including:

- Results from the National Student Survey
- Progression data
- Evidence of teaching quality, for example rigour and stretch, assessment feedback
- Evidence of a high-quality learning environment, for example scholarship, research and professional practice and personalised learning.

Providers of higher education in England with a TEF award can increase their tuition fees in line with inflation. For providers of higher education in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, participation in TEF has no impact on tuition fees.

Detailed guidance about the Teaching Excellence Framework and the implications for funding can be found [here](#).

Quality assurance

This section outlines the quality assurance process for Pearson BTEC Foundation Diploma.

What is quality assurance?

Quality assurance underpins all vocational qualifications:

- Quality assurance is used to ensure that managers, Internal Verifiers and Assessors are standardised and supported
- Pearson uses quality assurance to check that all centres are working to national standards. It provides the opportunity to identify and provide support where it is needed in order to safeguard certification. It also enables the recognition of good practice
- It ensures that the standards and requirements for the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) are met
- It facilitates a high-quality learning experience for students to enable high achievement.

Pearson's quality assurance system for all Pearson BTEC Foundation Diploma programmes is benchmarked to the Quality Assurance Agency's (QAA) Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ). This will ensure that centres have effective quality assurance processes to review programme delivery. It will also ensure that the outcomes of assessment are to national standards. As it includes additional elements that are not required for other Pearson qualifications, we term this 'enhanced' quality assurance.

The enhanced quality assurance process for centres offering Pearson BTEC Foundation Diploma programmes comprises of three key components:

1. The approval process
2. Monitoring of internal centre systems
3. External examination.

External examination

What is external examination?

External examination is how we check that centres are operating appropriate quality assurance and maintaining national standards for our Foundation Diploma programmes.

All centres delivering BTEC Foundation Diploma programmes will receive an allocation to a Pearson- appointed External Examiner each year. The outcome of external examination will be to:

- confirm that internal assessment is to national standards and allow certification, or
- make recommendations to improve the quality of internal assessment before certification can be released.

Centres must give full and serious consideration to the comments and recommendations contained in external examination reports. The actions taken as a result of reports, or the reasons for not following recommendations, should be formally recorded and circulated to those concerned.

Centres must ensure that student representatives are given the opportunity to be fully involved in the external examination process, enabling them to understand all the issues raised and the centre's response. At centre-level, the general issues and themes arising from the reports should be reviewed whilst maintaining the confidentiality of the students whose work has been sampled.

External examination guidance

UK centres

In the UK, the BTEC Foundation Diploma in Art, Design and Media Practice follows the same external examination process as BTEC Higher Nationals. For full guidance on the process, please refer to the [BTEC Higher Nationals Centre Guide to External Examination](#).

International centres

Internationally, the BTEC Foundation Diploma in Art, Design and Media Practice follows the same International Standards Verification process as all other BTEC qualifications. For full guidance on the process, please refer to the [BTEC Centre Guide to Quality Assurance and International Standards Verification](#).

The programme team

The programme team consists of all the staff responsible for the delivery, assessment and verification of a BTEC qualification. It is extremely important that sufficient systems and procedures are in place prior to delivering a BTEC programme. As BTECs are vocational qualifications, it is very important that the programme team includes individuals with up to date and relevant vocational experience or knowledge, in order to get the best out of the qualifications.

The roles undertaken by the programme team include the following:

Role	Responsibilities
Quality Nominee	BTEC centres have a Quality Nominee who takes responsibility for the effective delivery of BTEC qualifications from Entry Level to Level 7. The Quality Nominee is responsible for establishing and maintaining centre policies and procedures related to BTEC qualification approval.
Programme Leader	A Programme Leader is a person designated by a centre to take overall responsibility for the effective delivery and assessment of BTECs in their subject. The Programme Leader may also act as an Assessor and/or Internal Verifier.
Assessor	An Assessor is anyone responsible for the assessment of students and acts under the guidance of the Programme Leader, who will direct Assessors to appropriate training, support and standardisation. Typically, Assessors will devise assignment briefs, deliver the programme of study and assess the evidence produced by students against the assessment criteria in the programme specification.
Internal Verifier	Internal Verifiers conduct quality checks on assessment processes and practice to ensure that they meet national standards and that all students have been judged fairly and consistently. An Internal Verifier can be anyone involved in the delivery and assessment of the programme that is able to give an expert 'second opinion'. Where there is a team of Assessors, it is good practice for all Assessors to be involved in internally verifying each other. Please note that Internal Verifiers cannot internally verify their own assignments or assessment decisions. There is no requirement for a Lead Internal Verifier to be registered for BTEC higher level programmes.

Staff qualifications

Pearson does not currently explicitly stipulate any qualification or experience requirements for staff involved in the delivery, assessment and internal verification of BTEC qualifications. This is because it would not be practical to impose such stipulations to cover the very wide range of subject areas and field of experience that the BTEC qualifications encompass.

However, it is expected that centres recruit all delivery, assessment and internal verification staff with integrity; and have robust staff recruitment processes in place. It is expected that staff hold a nationally recognised qualification at or above the level of the qualification being delivered and/or equivalent relevant experience. Pearson's staffing requirements state that:

- the centre is committed to employ, train and support a sufficient number of appropriately qualified staff to ensure appropriate management, delivery, assessment and quality assurance
- authenticated qualification certificates and CVs for staff involved in delivery are available upon request
- systems are in place to ensure ongoing staff development and updating, including a research and scholarly activity policy for staff involved in the delivery of Pearson qualifications
- the trainers, tutors and Internal Verifiers hold relevant qualifications to deliver qualifications, as started by either the qualification specification or standards setting body
- the staff involved in the assessment process fully understand internal verification and how to apply the internal verification process.

Staff handbook

A handbook for the teaching and delivery team will give key messages and clarify the major differences between BTECs and other qualifications that they manage. A staff handbook is recommended to help support full and part-time members of a delivery team.

A handbook for staff to support their delivery of BTEC Foundation Diploma should provide essential information. Indicative content could be:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Programme title• Programme structure• Progression opportunities• Assessment plans, including dates, terms, semesters, assessment timings• Student complaints and appeals procedure (including the role of Pearson and the Office of the Independent Adjudicator)• Plagiarism policy and other types of malpractice• Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)• QAA Expectations• Assessment Boards and how to process results• Academic regulations | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Internal verification plans and timings, responsibilities, etc.• Role of External Examiners and Pearson quality assurance visits• Staff roles and responsibilities• Conflict of Interest policy• Continuing Professional Development (CPD)/Staff Development policy• Internal verification policy• How to conduct a mitigating circumstances claim• Learning and Teaching policy• Equality Diversity and Equal Opportunities policy• Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations policy. |
|--|---|

All staff should be made aware of how to report suspected staff malpractice or maladministration to Pearson. Staff should complete a Notification of suspected malpractice or maladministration involving staff (JCQ M2(a) form) and send it to pqsmalpractice@pearson.com. More information regarding malpractice and plagiarism can be found [here](#).

Student handbook

A student handbook is essential in terms of guiding students through the course so that they are aware of course requirements, know what is expected of them and understand their rights as students.

Content could include:

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- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• General information about the centre• Course-specific information (for example pathways available, mode of study, course dates)• Progression opportunities• Student rights• Available resources• Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)• Assessment and feedback• Plagiarism and other types of malpractice | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Referencing• Collusion and cheating• Student complaint and appeal procedure (including the role of Pearson and the Office of the Independent Adjudicator)• Student participation and feedback• Annual Student Survey• Progression opportunities |
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Planning

Good planning is the first step to successful programmes. It is the best way of making sure everything is in place to ensure coverage is robust and achievable.

Stage	Planning	Implementation	Internal verification
Programme Team	• Discusses the qualification specification to ensure a shared understanding and awareness of relationships between criteria • Creates assessment plan • Plans assessment activities and timescales. • Agrees entry requirements for the programme • Develops external links with employers and other sources of relevant vocational input • Identifies staff development needs and opportunities • Selects appropriate units relevant to students' needs and the local context • Considers resource needs for the programme including published, digital, staff, external inputs • Develops programme handbooks.	• Delivers programme according to agreed assessment plan • Ensures timescales are met	• Adheres to agreed process for internal verification • Ensures understanding of the documentation used, keeps it up to date, and makes use of electronic and paper versions as agreed.

Stage	Planning	Implementation	Internal verification
Assessor	- Undertakes standardisation with team - Applies assessment arrangements to deliver national standards - Designs, adapts and uses assessment instruments - Identifies formative and summative assessment opportunities for the student.	- Delivers content using effective approaches and takes account of support materials - Checks that all student work is authenticated and that any evidence accepted for assessment is the students' own work - Assesses student work according to the agreed assessment plan and against national standards - Provides constructive formative feedback to student - Provides guidance for the student to enhance assessment achieved on formative assessment - Provides summative assessment decisions - Tracks student achievement and maintains accurate records - Plans next steps with the student - Oversees any permitted resubmissions..	Completes any remedial action identified by the Internal Verifier

Stage	Planning	Implementation	Internal verification
Internal Verifier	• Works with assessment team to ensure standardisation • Ensures that an assessment and internal verification plan is in place and operational for all qualifications • Confirms the quality of assessment instruments as fit for purpose • Advises on the interpretation of national standards • Coordinates assessment arrangements including additional sites, if appropriate • Approves and signs the programme assessment plan.	• Ensures an effective system of recording • student achievement is in place • Advises on opportunities for evidence generation and collection • Keeps records of the verification process • Liaises with the External Examiner where appropriate • Monitors course files • Ensures appropriate corrective action is taken where necessary • Takes part in the formal stages of any appeal • Advises programme team on any training needs • Approves requested additional assessment opportunities for students • Provides feedback to the programme team, senior management and Pearson as required.	• Provides advice and support to Assessors on a regular basis • Undertakes internal verification, covering all Assessors and all criteria, in line with the internal verification plan • Checks the quality of assessment to ensure that it is consistent, valid, fair, and reliable • Confirms whether assessment decisions meet national standards • Provides feedback to the Assessor, including action to be taken if assessment decisions are judged to be incorrect • Arranges standardisation meetings across teams and additional sites • Ensures own assessment decisions are sampled if assessing on a programme.

Stage	Planning	Implementation
Student	• Completes induction to BTEC programme • Agrees to abide by the centre's policy on assessment including producing valid evidence for assessment.	• Produces work for assessment to meet national standards as set out in assignments • Meets deadlines for assessment • Responds to formative feedback • Confirms authenticity of own work • Receives assessment decisions and feedback from the Assessor • Plans next steps with the Assessor.
Pearson External Examiner	• Allocated by us, according to BTEC programme requirements • Contacts centre to negotiate arrangements for external examination visit and sampling of students' work.	• Prepares visit schedule covering allocated programmes • Checks management of the programmes is effective and meets our requirements and those of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education • Undertakes sampling in line with current requirements • Checks consistency of the interpretation of national standards by each Assessor • Identifies whether assessment decisions meet national standards • Confirms that student evidence meets the grading criteria awarded • Confirms student work has been accepted as authentic by the Assessor • Checks that timely and effective internal verification has been carried out on assignments, assessment decisions and feedback to students • Gives verbal feedback to the programme team or other centre-nominated person on decisions made • Completes online report clearly identifying whether national standards are being met • Where required, identifies any remedial action required for re-sampling and conducts re-sample.

Planning assessment

Plans should be developed jointly by the programme team and agreed by the Programme Leader.

The plan will allow centres to establish that all targeted criteria can be achieved.

Key areas to consider are:

- Assignments and projects
- Resource planning, such as when to deploy specialist staff
- Timetabling, events, shows and trips
- Schemes of work
- External resources available
- Planning assignment deadlines across the programme to ensure that students are not overwhelmed at key points
- Feedback from students and from external sources, such as progression providers
- How authenticity of student work can be assured.

As a minimum requirement, the assessment plan must include:

- Names of all Assessors and Internal Verifiers
- Dates for:
 - Assignment hand-out and hand-in
 - Formative feedback
 - Summative feedback
 - Internal verification and an opportunity for reassessment.

Planning internal verification

Internal verification is the quality assurance system centres use to monitor assessment practice and decisions.

It is essential that internal verification is planned for at the start of a programme.

It ensures that:

- Assessment plans and schemes of work are in place to ensure full coverage of the qualification
- Assessment instruments are fit for purpose
- Assessment decisions accurately match student evidence to the grading criteria and assessment guidance
- Assessors are standardised and assessment and grading is consistent across the programme.

An internal verification schedule must be agreed, to ensure that:

- All assignment briefs are internally verified before distribution to students
- A sample of assessment decisions is internally verified, covering every criterion, every Assessor and a range of student achievement (e.g., Ungraded, Pass, Merit, Distinction).

Full guidance on internal verification can be found on our website and in the [BTEC Centre Guide to Internal Verification](#).

Quality assurance stages

Delivery and assessment	Verification
Exploratory phase • Agree annual assessment plan • Develop formative assessment activities • Standardise Assessors • Design assignments • Review assignment deadlines • Produce programme specification • Formative assessment tracking for students • Continuous update and tracking of student progress	• Plan internal verification schedule • Check assignments to track coverage of criteria • Internal Verifier checks assignment briefs prior to issue to students • Programme Leader builds in team standardisation activities • Internal Verifier samples assessment decisions • Assessor undertakes action where required
Confirmatory phase • Summative assessment • Standardisation to agree assessment standards • Recording of grade achievement for each student • Summative assessment feedback for each student	Internal verifier checks: • Standardisation and assessment processes undertaken correctly • Grades achieved by students • Awards to be made to students • Referrals and deferrals
External examination • Ensures national standards are being met and management of the programme meets requirements • RELEASE, CERTIFICATION PENDING – CENTRE ACTION REQUIRED (limited certification for achieving students) or NOT YET FULLY SAMPLED (NYFS) • Second sample completed if any programme that is not released: • External Examiner RELEASES certification • External Examiner does not release certification and escalates to the Assessment Team for remedial action: CERTIFICATION PENDING – STANDARDS SUPPORT	
Student achievement and certification	

Programme structure

To simplify the qualification, it has been designed around six fundamental skills areas which connect the objectives, teaching content and assessment criteria. There are no discrete units.

The six assessment criteria

The assessment criteria are not a series of tasks that are done separately. A practitioner will use all of these six areas of skills repeatedly when developing their work. As such, criteria are equally weighted, meaning they should be given equal importance in a learners' development.

Investigation

Skills for using investigation processes that are applied through practical and theoretical approaches.

Experimentation

Skills for engaging in processes of experimentation with concepts, media, materials and techniques.

Evaluation and review

Skills for using review of processes and practice to inform creative choices.

Realisation

Skills for realising work using media, materials, techniques and processes.

Communication

Skills for communicating intentions through work with consideration for the audience.

Self-directed practice

Skills for applying professional behaviours within creative practice.

Guided learning hours

Guided Learning Hours are defined as the time when a tutor 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 provision and learning workshops. Guided Learning includes any supervised assessment activity; this includes invigilated examination and observed assessment and observed work-based practice.

Some examples of activities which can contribute to guided learning include:

- Classroom-based learning supervised by a tutor
- Work-based learning supervised by a tutor
- Live webinar or telephone tutorial with a tutor in real time
- E-learning supervised by a tutor in real time.

All forms of assessment which take place under the immediate guidance or supervision of a tutor or other appropriate provider of education or training, including where the assessment is competency-based and may be turned into a learning opportunity.

Students should be informed of the guided learning they should expect to receive in addition to the total number of additional study hours they will need to undertake independently to achieve the qualification.

Modes of study

Students can study for the Pearson BTEC Foundation Diploma, either as a part-time or full-time student. Whatever the mode of learning students should have access to a high-quality teaching and learning experience. This should include a qualified and experienced staff, an interactive and engaging curriculum, access to high quality learning material and a support system that caters for the pastoral as well as academic interests of students. Further guidance relating to teaching and learning can be found in the programme specification.

Engaging with employers/practitioners

Employers or creative practitioners engaging with the curriculum adds value to the student experience, particularly in transferring theory into practice.

Centres should consider a range of employer/practitioner engagement activities.

These could include:

- Field trips to local practitioners or creative businesses
- Inviting practitioners to present guest lectures
- Using employers/professionals to judge the quality of assessed presentations
- Professional advice on assessments
- Provision of 'live case book material'.

Engaging with students

The student voice is very important in providing valuable information to enhance quality improvement. This input should take into account their views on how teaching and learning will take place, their role in helping to design a curriculum, or on the assessment strategy that will test their knowledge and understanding.

The students' voice can be captured both formally and informally. For example, through formal representation at course team meetings, election of a student representative for each cohort and student forums could also take place periodically throughout the year. Students should be encouraged to complete the **Pearson Annual Student Survey**. Informal opinions could be captured through feedback on assessments and tutorials.

Resources

A criterion for centre approval is the need for material resources and suitable workspaces to deliver the Pearson BTEC Foundation Diploma.

Conflict of interest

Assessment staff may encounter a potential conflict of interest in their work. Examples of these may include:

- A close relation, spouse or partner within the centre who is either a student or another member of staff
- A close relation, spouse or partner acting as an External Examiner or other external quality assurance role.

A formal log of potential and actual conflicts of interest should be kept up to date within each centre, including actions taken to minimise risk. This record must be made available on request. Individuals must always disclose an activity if there is any doubt about whether it represents a conflict of interest.

Student recruitment and induction

Student recruitment

It is crucial that students are recruited with integrity onto the correct programme and level. There is a carefully designed progression route within the BTEC framework of qualifications. The appropriate levels are set against the equivalent expectations of achievement at Foundation Learning level, GCSE and GCE. Every BTEC specification has clear guidance on the level of the qualification.

Entry requirements and admissions

Although Pearson does not specify formal entry requirements, it is the centre's responsibility to ensure that the students recruited have a reasonable expectation of success on the programme.

Centres are required to recruit students to Foundation Diploma programmes with integrity. They will need to make sure that applicants have relevant information and advice about the qualification, to make sure it meets their needs. Centres should review the applicant's prior qualifications and/or experience to consider whether this profile shows that they have the potential to achieve the qualification.

For students who have recently been in education, the entry profile is likely to be a level 3 qualification or for those who have returned to learning, Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) could be considered.

Pearson's equality policy requires that all students should have an equal opportunity to access their qualifications and assessments, and that qualifications are awarded in a way that is fair to every student.

Pearson is committed to making ensuring that:

- Students with a protected characteristic (as defined by the Equality Act, 2010) are not, when they are undertaking one of our qualifications, disadvantaged in comparison to students who do not share that characteristic
- All students achieve the recognition they deserve for undertaking a qualification and that this achievement can be compared fairly to the achievement of their peers.

English language requirements

For BTEC Foundation Diploma programmes that are taught and assessed in English, centres must ensure that all students can demonstrate capability in English at the required standard. This is to ensure that students who are recruited have a reasonable expectation of success on the programme.

It is up to each centre to decide what proof will be necessary to evidence individual student proficiency.

Non-native English speakers and those students who have not had their final two years of schooling in English will need to demonstrate one of the following upon entry:

Acceptable evidence of capability in English includes certified achievement at CEFR B2 or above, including (but not limited to):

- IELTS (Academic or General Training): overall score 5.5 or above
- Pearson PTE Academic: overall score 51 or above
- TOEFL iBT: overall score 72 or above
- Cambridge English Qualifications: B2 First (FCE) – Pass (Cambridge English Scale 160+)

or another externally assessed recognised English language qualification explicitly benchmarked to CEFR B2.

Enrolment records

It is a Pearson requirement that each centre holds an enrolment record for every student.

As a minimum and enrolment record should include the following information:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Personal details (i.e., contact information)• Next of kin contact details• Residency status• Photographic ID• Equal opportunities information (i.e., any disabilities or learning difficulties that may require additional learning support)• Funding and finance information• Criminal convictions declaration | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Qualification and education history• Work and relevant experience history• English language ability, including testing information if the student is a not a native English speaker• Programme registration details• Expected date of completion• Mode of study (i.e., part-time, full-time, distance learning). |
|---|---|

Centres must retain enrolment records for **three years following certification** and they must be made available to External Examiners upon request.

Student induction

The induction the student receives is key to the success of the student on their chosen qualification.

Students must understand the programme specification, including:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Programme structure (how and when students are assessed)• Programme content• Assessment grading• Level of programme and equivalency• Purpose of the assignment briefs for learning and assessment• Relationship between the tasks given in an assignment and the grading criteria• Nature of vocational and work-related learning | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Responsibilities they have in the learning process (e.g., the importance of meeting assessment deadlines)• Importance of presenting authentic work and being clear on what constitutes as plagiarism• Rules relating to submission and resubmission of evidence• Appeals procedure• Arrangements for any units that have external assessment or other exceptional assessment (e.g., through performances, trips, exhibitions). |
|---|--|

Student attendance

Pearson BTECs currently carry a maximum registration period of five years. However, it is important, and expected, that students complete their studies in a timely manner, in line with both the advertised programme duration and the expected completion date set at the time of registration. Centres offering Pearson BTEC Foundation Diploma programmes are required to review student registration information annually to ensure that it is accurate and up to date. For students who are no longer active on a programme, their registration must be withdrawn from Edexcel Online at the earliest opportunity.

Whilst Pearson does not set a minimum percentage attendance requirement, for BTEC Foundation Diploma, centres must ensure that their attendance policy and processes are followed and that they enable and encourage their students to fully participate in the learning opportunities offered.

Learning strategies

Learning in the BTEC Foundation Diploma should be vocational, active, motivational and progressive. It will be closely linked to assessment, allowing development of skills, knowledge and attributes that will enable the student to complete assessments. From the start, it is important to consider the most effective way of delivering and assessing student performance. Learning strategies may include:

- Project work carried out as an individual or as part of a group
- Lectures and seminars
- Facilitated activities
- Visits to companies with a facilitator to structure the visit
- Visiting speakers from the vocational sector.

The emphasis should be placed on active learning. This will help students to develop the transferable skills necessary in a changing and dynamic working environment.

BTECs are practical in nature, giving students the opportunities to tackle 'real life' examples to apply their skills and knowledge to case studies or projects. As well as Assessors in the programme team having vocational experience, having someone currently working in the sector, providing an active role in an assignment, will increase the relevance of the assignment and further motivate the student.

When assessment has taken place, it is important that formative feedback informs students what they are able to do to improve the quality of the outcomes for a particular assignment. Feedback should be recorded to clarify this, and a further deadline agreed leading to the summative assessment decision.

External links

Where possible, work-related programmes will benefit from external links with those working in the vocational sector. These links could be provided in any of the following ways:

- Checking the vocational relevance of the assignments
- Provision of 'live' case study material that is company or organisation based
- Student visits to companies and other vocational settings
- Professional input from companies and vocational practitioners

- Tutor placements to enhance vocational expertise.

BTEC assessment procedures

Students are assessed summatively against each assessment criterion once, at the end of the programme. Each criterion is awarded Ungraded, Pass, Merit or Distinction. Therefore, there is built-in compensation, whereby a relatively poor performance against one criterion can be offset by a good performance against another criterion. The overall qualification grade is calculated based on the individual achievement against each criterion.

Please note, a student must achieve a Pass grade or higher for each criterion to be awarded the full qualification.

Assessment strategies

The assessment programme must be designed so that skills and knowledge can be developed in line with the assessment criteria. There is a range of assessment methods that can be utilised, such as:

- Presentations, written reports, accounts, surveys
- Log books, production diaries
- Role play
- Observations of practical tasks or performance
- Articles for journals, press releases
- Production of visual or audio materials, artefacts, products and specimens
- Peer and self-assessment
- Professional discussion.

Using a variety of assessment methods enhances learning and should improve the validity of assessment. They improve the knowledge of the assessment criteria and what is required to gain higher grade achievement.

Peer and self-assessment

While self-assessment is not sufficient on its own, it can provide valuable additional evidence of learning and formative assessment. Ask students to self-assess by providing them with self-assessment criteria or helping them to develop their own. Self-assessment has been shown to improve attainment if it is used consistently. It ensures students take responsibility for their own learning and focuses attention on criteria for success and increases effort and persistence.

Where appropriate, peer assessment impacts on self-assessment by enabling individuals to become self-critical and evaluative. It can provide a useful first and second stage prior to tutor assessment. It should generate action plans that are followed up prior to summative assessment.

Group work

The primary focus of Foundation Diploma is personal creative development. Therefore, group working is rare. However, in the early stages of the programme, there may be benefits in devising group tasks or activities. Working in groups is an accepted part of learning within higher education. There are widely recognised benefits of collaborative group work in terms of learning and skills development. When groups work well, students can produce quality outcomes and develop specific teamwork skills, as well as generic skills valued by employers.

Most students can benefit from learning in groups, provided the groups are well managed and there are clear and fair assessment requirements. In a group assignment, it is essential that each student provides their own individual contribution to meeting each of the assessment criteria.

It is important that Assessors clearly identify the purpose of using group work within an assessment:

- Generally, it is not the group work activities themselves that will form the basis of the assessment activity
- Group learning activities and skills, such as team building, leadership, etc. may be assessed towards gaining transferable skills and recorded as being achieved and feedback given, but they are not to form part of the assessment decisions for specific units.

Concerns about group assignments can be reduced by:

- Developing a suitable process for the selection of the team and having an interim appraisal and assessment process to check that each individual makes a sufficient contribution to the group work
- Helping students to understand the criteria to be assessed for the group product and process, where process is being assessed
- Informing them how individual contributions to the group will be measured and assessed against the specific assessment objectives, assessment and grading criteria
- Developing assignments with tasks that have multiple sub-tasks that students can select and allocate to one another within the project
- Reviewing and agreeing all assessment decisions and overall grading during standardisation and internal verification.

Guidelines on assessing group work

- Group projects should be included in the assessment schedule only where outcomes indicate that they might be appropriate. In other words, does the assessment objective naturally fit the device of a group assessment?
- QAA expects a variety of assessment methods and consequently where appropriate, group working skills should be developed
- Students should be informed, in detail and in advance, of the basis for assessment of group projects, including the methods to be used to measure the extent of individual contributions
- If the group project or its assessment places on students an obligation to exercise skills or judgements beyond those required for the subject (e.g. peer assessment), then adequate training should be provided to assist students to exercise that judgement
- If there is to be peer assessment of the contribution of the students to a group project, then the process for collecting feedback should be confidential between the individual student and the Assessor. If peer assessment includes the measurement of the contribution, the method should be clear and simple to use and self-assessment should also be included
- A common group grade should not be assigned to all members of the group; individual contributions should be measured and graded against the assessment and grading criteria

- Evidence of observation of presentations and discussions (with peers, Assessors etc.) should be detailed and mapped to criteria in order to provide evidence of achievement of individual contributions
- It is good practice to encourage students to reflect on what they have learnt from the group work experience and produce a written evaluation
- In some cases, presentations may provide evidence only sufficient for Pass criteria, for example where a presentation contained no corroborated detail of individual tasks undertaken by members of the group. In such cases, evidence for higher grades may be achieved through formalised questioning of individual students mapped to the assessment criteria, or having the students produce a supplementary report of their activities
- Feedback can be directed to the group with reference to individual contributions and achievement
- For summative assessment, the achievement of the Merit and Distinction criteria should be measured against individual contributions and the evidence of this must be clear in portfolios submitted for assessment.

Authenticity and authentication

Only evidence for assessment that is authentic should be accepted, i.e. that is the student's own and that can be judged fully to see whether it meets the assessment criteria.

Centres should ensure that authenticity is considered when setting assignments. For example, ensuring that each student has a different focus for research will reduce opportunities for copying or collaboration. On some occasions, it will be useful to include supervised production of evidence. Where appropriate, practical activities or performance observed by the Assessor should be included.

Students must authenticate the evidence that they provide for assessment. They do this by signing a declaration stating that it is their own work when they submit it. For practical or performance tasks observed by the Assessor, this is not necessary.

Assessors should only assess student evidence that is authentic. If they find through the assessment process that some or all of the evidence is not authentic, they need to take appropriate action, including invoking malpractice policies as required.

It is important that all evidence can be validated through verification. This means that it must be capable of being reassessed in full by another person. When practical and performance evidence are used, centres need to think about how supporting evidence can be captured through using, for example, videos, recordings, photographs, handouts, task sheets etc.

The authentication of student evidence is the responsibility of each centre. If during external examination, an External Examiner raises concerns about the authenticity of evidence, or student declarations of authenticity are not available, a set timeframe will be given to produce these. If any concerns are not resolved, or declarations are not produced, within the timeframe given, the External Examiner will not release certification for the programme.

Plagiarism, including the use of AI

There are many definitions of what constitutes as plagiarism. All of them agree that plagiarism is a form of academic misconduct or, put more simply, a form of cheating. Plagiarism is much more than simple copying from another student, or from books or the Internet, and can be taken to include paraphrasing, sub-contracting the work to someone else, submitting the same piece of work for two different purposes, etc. Ultimately, plagiarism is attempting to pass off other people's work and ideas as your own.

Additionally, artificial intelligence (AI) technology is rapidly evolving, it is essential we all understand how it can be used and misused within non-examination assessments or portfolio work. Pearson has published guidance for centres [here](#).

Plagiarism is fundamentally wrong and provides students with an unfair advantage.

Assessment procedures are compromised if the work submitted is not the student's own and the External Examiner will set the programme's status to **Certification Pending – Centre Action Required** if they find evidence of student plagiarism that has not been detected by the centre.

It is a strong Pearson recommendation that all student work is checked for plagiarism by staff and by anti-plagiarism software. Please note that some anti-plagiarism software is unable to read text that has been placed inside text boxes. Therefore, Assessors should not accept student work that makes use of text boxes; this should be returned to the student, so the textboxes can be removed and resubmitted in the correct format. Pearson will consider assignments assessed in this format as an incorrect assessment decision and the External Examiner will not release certification for a programme if they find use of text boxes within students' work. If centres are unsure, prior to assessment, as to whether student work has been submitted in the correct format, they should contact the [Pearson Customer Portal](#).

It is also extremely important that centres have policies and procedures in place to address contract cheating, the use of third-party services and essay mills. QAA has produced a guidance document providing further information which can be found [here](#).

In the event of malpractice being suspected or proven, Pearson will be required to complete additional quality assurance checks before certification can take place.

Observation records and witness statements

We strongly recommend the use of witness statements, Assessor observation records or other paperwork. However, in order for these to be useful, they must record achievement at criterion level against the activity that is being observed. Checklists prepared against grading criteria are one way of doing this.

Tutor observations and witness statements are very useful supplementary evidence of achievement. However, an observation sheet or witness statement on its own may not be considered sufficient evidence for verification. It is important that it is supported by other evidence, such as audio/visual records of the activity, production reports, notes, self-evaluation by the student, etc. that can substantiate that the activity took place as described.

Observation records

An observation record is used to provide a formal record of an Assessor's judgement of student performance (process evidence e.g., during presentations, practical activities) against the target grading criteria. The record will:

- relate directly to the evidence requirements in the grading grid of the specification
- may confirm achievement or provide specific feedback of performance against national standards for the student
- provide primary evidence of performance
- be sufficiently detailed to enable others to make a judgement about quality and whether there is sufficient evidence of performance
- confirm that national standards have been achieved.

Observation records should:

- be accompanied by supporting/additional evidence. This may take the form of visual aids, video/audio tapes, CDs, photographs, handouts, preparation notes, cue cards, diary record or log book and/or peer assessments records, etc.

- note how effectively these were used to meet the grading criteria
- record the Assessor's comments
- be evidenced in student's portfolios when assessment is carried out through
- observation along with relevant supporting evidence
- be completed by the Assessor who must have direct knowledge of the specification to enable an assessment decision to be made
- be signed and dated by the Assessor and the student
- include students' comments.

Witness statements

A witness statement is used to provide a written record of student performance (process evidence) against grading criteria. Someone other than the Assessor of the qualification may complete it. This may be an Assessor of a different qualification, a work placement supervisor, a technician, a learning resources manager, or anyone else who has witnessed the performance of the student against a given grading criterion. It can be someone who does not have direct knowledge of the qualification or evidence requirements as a whole but who is able to make a professional judgment about the performance of the student in the given situation.

The quality of witness statements is greatly improved, and enables the Assessor to judge the standard and validity of performance against the grading criteria, if the:

- witness is provided with clear guidance on the desirable characteristics required for successful performance
- evidence requirements are present on the witness testimony, but this may need further amplification for a non-Assessor
- student or witness also provides a statement of the context within which the evidence is set
- The witness statement does not confer an assessment decision.

The Assessor must:

- consider all the information in the witness statement
- note the relevant professional skills of the witness to make a judgment of performance

- review supporting evidence when making an assessment decision
- review the statement with the student to enable a greater degree of confidence in the evidence
- be convinced that the evidence presented by the witness statement is valid, sufficient and authentic.

When multiple witnesses are providing testimonies:

- it may be helpful to collect specimen signatures
- all witness testimonies should be signed and dated by the witness
- the job role/relationship of the witness with the student should also be recorded.

These details add to the validity and authenticity of the testimony and the statements made in it. Centres should note that witness testimonies can form a vital part of the evidence, but they should not form the main or majority assessment of a criterion.

Assignment design

Assessment instruments designed by centres should collectively ensure coverage of all assessment criteria and should provide opportunities for students to generate evidence across all grades of achievement. When assessment instruments are being designed, centres need to ensure that they are valid, reliable and fit for purpose, building on the application of the assessment criteria.

Centres are encouraged to place emphasis on practical application of the assessment criteria, providing a realistic scenario for students to adopt, making maximum use of work-related practical experience and reflecting typical practice in the sector concerned. The creation of assessment instruments that are fit for purpose is vital to achievement.

Programme planning at the beginning of the year must include assignment planning. This will ensure that the content of the assessment objectives are fully met during delivery and that students are able to provide evidence for assessment that demonstrates full achievement of all the assessment criteria.

Assignments tasks should be challenging rather than easily achievable, differentiated by outcome so that they stretch the most able but are open to lower achieving students.

Assignment planning will allow centres to monitor:

- that all assessment criteria will be assessed
- arrangements for staffing and resourcing of assessment activities
- the planning of the internal verification of formative and summative assessment during the programme.

A good assignment brief will:	An assignment brief must not
• Make clear what evidence the student must submit and the format and scope of the individual elements • Present a vocational scenario that provides a professional context in which the student will produce work • Use language that is clear and precise both in defining the vocational scenario and in describing the evidence required • Make clear the range of levels of achievement (Pass, Merit, Distinction, where available) through the use of the same or similar command verbs found in the assessment criteria • Clearly indicate the assessment objectives that are covered by the assignment • Allow a student to achieve an assessment objective at any of the levels defined by the assessment criteria.	• Change the wording of assessment criteria • Add any additional assessment criteria • Use ‘multiple-choice’ or ‘fill-in the missing word’ activities (these are not appropriate for Level 3 or Level 4 qualifications) • Use numerical marking or percentage weighting • Penalise students for exceeding word counts or limits • Associate the assignment with a single grade level.

When writing assignments, the work a student is required to produce should be described using the same (or similar) grade descriptors as those used in the assessment criteria. Different words can be used, but they must be either of the same demand or include the action implied by the assessment criteria.

Assignment briefs

Clear assignment briefs will:

- inform the student of the tasks set
- inform the student of the methods of assessment
- set clear deadlines for submission of work.

Centres can receive feedback on assignment briefs from the External Examiner during their initial correspondence, prior to the External Examination visit which follows summative assessment.

We provide assignment templates for centres to use under 'Teaching and Learning Materials' on the [subject pages of our website](#). However, centres are free to design their own, providing it contains the required information.

An assignment brief must contain the following information:

Key information	• Assignment title • Assessor • Date issued • Deadline (for assessment and grading) • Title and level of qualification (as published in the specification)
Purpose / scenario	• Overview and aims • Vocational scenario (if appropriate, giving the opportunity to place the assignment within a vocational context)
Tasks/ activities	• A task is a detailed description of specific activities the student will undertake in order to produce assessment evidence to address the criteria targeted • Tasks must be referenced to the assessment objective and criteria • It is good practice that the stating of tasks is clear, specific, time-bound, stepped, relevant and realistic • Tasks should be written in appropriate language for students at the level of the qualification • Include details about any specific preparation students will need to make
Assessment criteria	• The brief must state exactly which criteria are being addressed • No aspect of the published criteria may be rewritten

Forms of evidence	• A clear statement of what the student is expected to produce as evidence • Guidance on how the evidence will be assessed
Other information may include	• Resources and reference materials • Wider assessment opportunities built into the assignment or mapped within the specification • Word count: a word count may help direct the student on the volume of evidence required. Students cannot be downgraded if they do not achieve or exceed the word count.

Internal verification of assignment briefs

All assignment briefs, even those provided by published sources, must be internally verified every year, prior to issue to the student.

Internal verification of the assignments should be carried out by a staff member who is familiar with BTEC assessment at the appropriate level and has subject knowledge within the programme area. Internal verification should always be reported and recorded. If further actions are identified by the Internal Verifier, the Assessor is required to complete all actions and return it to the Internal Verifier for review and sign off.

Once the assignment has been signed off as being fit for purpose by the Internal Verifier, it may be issued to the students.

The purpose of internal verification is to confirm that the brief is fit for purpose, by ensuring:

- The tasks and evidence will allow the student to address the targeted criteria
- The brief is written in clear and accessible language
- Students' roles and tasks are vocationally relevant and appropriate to the level of the qualification
- Timescales and deadlines are appropriate
- Equal opportunities are incorporated.

Further guidance on internal verification is provided in the [BTEC Centre Guide to Internal Verification](#) on our website.

Assessment and grading

Assessment tracking and recording

It is essential to track and record student progression throughout a BTEC programme. All assessment must be recorded in such a way that:

- Assessment evidence is clearly measured against national standards
- Student progress can be accurately tracked
- The assessment process can be reliably verified
- There is clear evidence of the safety of certification.

Centres should plan a timetable of assessment activities with clearly identified evidence requirements and target completion dates. Include internal verification of:

- Assessment plans
- Assignment briefs prior to distribution to students
- Formative feedback
- Summative assessment decisions.

This enables a holistic approach to assessment of the programme and organises the sequence of delivery and formative assessment, leading to final summative assessment.

Record all formative assessment activities for the qualification. Incorporate time for regular formative feedback. This helps to motivate students and provide learning targets and goals, recording individual strengths and areas for development.

Formative assessment

Students working at higher levels should be capable of undertaking independent study and research, developing strategies to improve their own performance, supported by teaching staff.

Formative assessment is an integral part of the BTEC assessment process, involving both the Assessor and the student in a two-way conversation about their progress. It takes place prior to summative assessment and does not confirm achievement of grades but focuses on helping the student to reflect on their learning and improve their performance. The main function of formative assessment is to provide feedback to enable the student to make improvements to consolidate a Pass or attain a higher grade. This feedback should be prompt so it has meaning and context for the student and time must be given following the feedback for actions to be complete. Students should be provided with formative feedback during the process of assessment and be empowered to act to improve their performance. Feedback on formative assessment must be constructive and provide clear guidance and actions for improvement.

Though we do not prescribe any hard and fast rules for higher level BTECs relating to the nature of formative assessment, the role of feedback in motivating students must not be underestimated. We recognise that informal verbal feedback is an ongoing process and is an important part of the Assessor/student relationship. However, it is recommended practice to plan for at least two formal opportunities to provide written formative assessment feedback, at points when students will have had the opportunity to provide evidence towards all the assessment criteria targeted. This should be built into the Assessment Plan and be formally recorded.

Usually, further formal opportunities for formative feedback should not be necessary. However, if it is clear at the formative assessment stage that students have misinterpreted or have been misdirected by assignments or programme guidance, there may be the need for another formative assessment once issues have been addressed.

Professional judgment should be used to determine when this is appropriate and should ensure that an advantageous situation is not created for one student. All assessment procedures should be operated in line with the responsibility of being a member of a Pearson-approved centre.

Following formative assessment and feedback, students are able to:

- Revisit work to add to the original evidence produced, and refine and develop their ideas in future projects, to consolidate a Pass grade or to enhance their work to achieve a higher grade
- Prepare and submit a portfolio of evidence for summative assessment and final qualification grade.

All records should be available for auditing purposes, as we may choose to interrogate records of formative assessment as part of our ongoing quality assurance.

Summative assessment

Summative assessment is the final consideration by an Assessor of a student's assignment, agreeing which assessment criteria the student has met in the assignment and recording those decisions. However, students should be aware that summative assessment is subject to confirmation by the Internal Verifier and External Examiner, and thus is provisional and can be overridden.

Assessors may annotate on the student work where the evidence supports their decisions against the assessment criteria.

Students will need to be familiar with the assessment criteria so that they can understand the quality of what is required. Where relevant, they should be informed of the differences between grading criteria so that higher skills can be achieved.

Marking spelling, punctuation and grammar

It is good practice for Assessors to "mark" spelling and grammar, i.e., correct mistakes on student work and expect the student to either correct them (at the formative feedback stage) or note them (at the summative feedback stage).

If student work has consistently poor spelling, grammar or language it should not be accepted for marking but should be returned to the student to be corrected. The student must be given a deadline by which to correct the work.

Mistakes in spelling and grammar should not influence assessment decisions unless:

- The mistakes are so problematic that they undermine the evidence of student understanding, or
- Specific assessment criteria require good communication, spelling and grammar and/or correct use of technical language.

Grading Foundation Diplomas

The grading of BTEC Foundation Diploma qualifications applies to all assessment criteria and this determines the overall qualification grade:

- Each achieved assessment criterion will be awarded a Pass, Merit or Distinction, or if there is insufficient evidence to achieve the level required, given an Ungraded outcome
- Each grade carries a point score (Pass = 1, Merit = 2, Distinction = 3). These are added together to calculate an overall qualification grade
- Each assessment criterion must be achieved at Pass or higher in order to be awarded the full qualification
- Students successfully achieving the Foundation Diploma will be awarded an overall qualification grade of Pass, Merit or Distinction.

Assessment decisions for Pearson BTEC Foundation Diploma are based on the specific criteria published in the specification and set at each level of attainment at the qualification level. The criteria have been defined according to a framework to ensure that standards are consistent in the qualification and across the suite as a whole. The way in which assessment criteria are written provides a balance of assessment of understanding, practical skills and behavioural attributes appropriate to the purpose of the qualifications. Assessors must show how they have reached their decisions using the criteria in the assessment records.

The award of a Pass is a defined level of performance and cannot be given solely on the basis of a student completing assignments. Students who do not satisfy the Pass criteria should be reported as Ungraded.

Submission of late work

Centres will need to develop and publish its own assessment regulations relating to BTEC higher level programmes, that is aligned with expectation B6 of the QAA Quality code. The regulations should include a code of practice on how late submission of student work is dealt with.

Meeting assessment deadlines and mitigating circumstances

Centres must have a policy for dealing with mitigating circumstances if students are affected by adverse circumstances, such as illness, which result in non-submission or late submission of an assessment.

Students need to be aware of the importance of meeting assessment deadlines. Centres need to have a policy on assessment regulations which includes completing assignments by the deadlines given to them. Students may be given authorised extensions for legitimate reasons, such as illness, at the time of submission, in accordance with the centre's policies.

This means that students are all assessed according to the same conditions and that some are not advantaged by having additional time or opportunity to learn from others.

It is good practice for assessment regulations to be:

- Made available to students as well as the programme team and for key regulations to be included in the programme specification; and
- Presented in an accessible and easy-to-understand format.

In accordance with a centre's own policy, they may apply a grading cap to work that has been submitted late. However, the submitted work should be assessed 'without penalty' in the first instance, the late submission should be recorded, and the student should be made aware that the lateness of submission may have an impact on their grade. In addition, the student should be informed that they may wish to submit 'mitigating circumstances'; if there are circumstances that have related to the late submission. A decision can then be made (following the centre's own policy) as to whether any exceptional/mitigating circumstances are accepted. Decisions will be ratified by the centre's Assessment Board or some form of Exceptional/Mitigating Circumstances Panel.

Further guidance concerning reasonable adjustments and special consideration in Pearson vocational internally assessed units is available on our [website](#).

Extensions

Students should only be given authorised extensions for legitimate reasons and extenuating circumstances, such as illness at the time of submission. It is best practice to have a clear, published assessment procedure (e.g., in the code of practice and student handbook) for a student to formally apply for an extension if they have genuine reasons for not meeting a deadline. If an extension is granted, the new deadline must be recorded and adhered to.

Extension requests should be made prior to the assessment deadline and should be formally approved by the Programme Leader. The duration of extensions should be consistent across all students and should not be after summative feedback has been issued to the other students on the programme. All extensions granted by the Programme Leader must be recorded and made available at the Assessment Board and to the External Examiner.

Recording details of extensions enables the Assessment Board and the External Examiner to confirm that the programme is operating consistently in accordance with the centre's and Pearson's policies and guidance.

Alternatively, it can be considered good practice to convene an 'Exceptional Circumstances Panel' that would be responsible for reviewing and accepting or rejecting extension requests from students. While there are no formal guidelines regarding the membership of such a panel, the Programme Leader must be present for the panel to be quorate. Minutes of Extenuating Circumstances Panels (if held) must be retained and made available to the Assessment Board and the External Examiner.

Resubmissions

Students are required to select, prepare and submit a portfolio of evidence for final summative assessment. This evidence may come from across their entire programme of study. Therefore, if formative feedback and guidance has been duly considered, a resubmission opportunity should not normally be required.

- A student may request or be offered a resubmission if they have not met all of the assessment criteria at a minimum Pass level
- Only one opportunity for resubmission will be permitted towards the criteria that have not achieved a Pass
- Resubmissions are capped at Pass for the assessment objective affected
- A student will not be entitled to resubmit evidence for an assessment objective that has already achieved a Pass grade or higher.

Please note that the rules and procedures regarding resubmissions in this guide must be adhered to at all times. Contravention of resubmission rules will result in the programme's status being set to **Certification Pending – Centre Action Required** due to incorrect assessment decisions being made.

Resubmissions can be authorised by the Programme Leader or the Assessment Board and should only be authorised if all of the following submission conditions are met:

- The student has met the initial deadlines set for submission of evidence, has met an agreed deadline extension, or has submitted work late that has been accepted
- The Assessor judges that the student has fully attempted to achieve all targeted assessment criteria in their original submission
- The Assessor judges that the student will be able to provide improved evidence without further guidance
- The Assessor has authenticated the evidence submitted for assessment.

If a student has not met the conditions listed above, the Programme Leader must not authorise a resubmission.

A list of all resubmissions authorised by the Programme Leader must be made available to the External Examiner for review and discussion to ensure that the External Examiner has oversight of all authorised resubmissions.

Procedure for resubmissions

If the Programme Leader or Assessment Board does authorise a resubmission, the following conditions apply:

- The resubmission must be recorded in the relevant assessment documentation
- The student must be given a clear and realistic deadline for resubmission that is consistent across all students granted a resubmission. We recommend that students be required to resubmit work within 15 working days of the student being notified that a resubmission has been authorised
- The resubmission must be undertaken by the student with no further guidance
- Only one opportunity for reassessment of each assessment objective will be permitted
- The original evidence submitted for the assessment can remain valid and be extended, or may need to be replaced partially or in full
- Arrangements should be made for resubmitting the assessment in such a way that does not adversely affect other assessments and does not give the student an unfair advantage over others.

The External Examiner is likely to want to include assessments that have been resubmitted as part of the sample they will review.

Internal verification of assessment decisions

Internal Verifiers must sample assessed work for each assignment to check the accuracy of assessment decisions. Internal verification of assessment decisions should be carried out by a staff member who is familiar with BTEC assessment at the appropriate level and has subject knowledge of the programme area.

More sampling should be undertaken with new or inexperienced Assessors and/or with new BTEC qualifications.

During the course of the programme, internal verification sampling should cover the following:

- Every Assessor
- Every assessment criterion
- Work from every assignment
- Every assessment site (for multi- site centres)
- Pass, Merit and Distinction achievement (a student who has not yet achieved or a referred student is also a valid selection).

Feedback from the Internal Verifier to the Assessor should comment on the quality of their feedback to the student and the effective completion of documentation. The Internal Verifier should also give developmental feedback to the Assessor telling them what could be improved. Internal verification of assessed work should be clearly recorded. If the Internal Verifier requires action, the Assessor should complete this and return it to the Internal Verifier for their review and sign off. It is important that it is undertaken as soon as possible after assessment as this will improve the quality of assessment practice and not disadvantage students. Internal Verification must be undertaken before work is returned to the students.

Further guidance on internal verification is provided in the [BTEC Centre Guide to Internal Verification](#) on our website.

Student appeals

A student appeal is a request to review decisions made by a centre on their progression, assessment and awards. Centres should have in place a means for ensuring all students and staff are aware of:

- What constitutes an academic appeal and what is considered assessment malpractice
- The related processes for instigating an appeal or investigating malpractice
- The possible outcomes that may be reached
- The consequences of both internal and external outcomes
- The process that exists to enable students to make an appeal with Pearson relating to external or internally awarded assessment outcomes.

Procedures should be known and understood by students and staff. Malpractice issues can be minimised by ensuring students and staff are aware of the issues: plagiarism, collusion, fabrication of results, falsifying grades, fraudulent certification claims; referencing skills; promoting a zero-tolerance approach. Centres do not need to inform Pearson of student malpractice for internally assessed units and the centre's malpractice policy should be followed in resolving the matter. If an External Examiner discovers plagiarism that has not been identified and/or dealt with by a centre, they will set the status of the relevant programme(s) to **Certification Pending – Centre Action Required**.

The appeals process must be understood by students and staff. It should be transparent and enable formal challenges to assessment grades. A thorough student induction programme could cover this. The student handbook is also a useful way to ensure the key information about assessment and appeals policies are communicated.

Students have a final right of appeal to Pearson, but only if the procedures in place at the centre have been fully utilised or if the student is dissatisfied with the outcome.

If students are not satisfied with the result of their appeal after following their centre's processes, they can also request that the Office of the Independent Adjudicator review their complaint. The OIA will not deal with complaints about academic judgment but will look at academic appeals. Centres can check if they are a member of the OIA scheme in the list of providers covered in the OIA scheme. Following the OIA process does not prevent students from pursuing a complaint or appeal with Pearson and they may choose whichever route they feel is the most appropriate.

Student complaints

A student complaint is the expression of a specific concern about matters that affect the quality of their learning opportunities.

Centres must have procedures in place to enable students to constructively complain about their learning opportunities, to enable provision to be enhanced in a timely way. Making a complaint should not disadvantage the student. Centres must publish their complaints procedure to student the External Examiner will ask to meet with students annually when they visit the centre. They will ask the students directly about their experiences of teaching and learning on the programme and report appropriately in their report.

Students can also raise their complaint with the Office of the Independent Adjudicator and this can be done simultaneously with any complaint submitted to Pearson.

Recognition of prior learning

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a method of assessment that considers whether students can demonstrate that they can meet the assessment requirements through knowledge, understanding or skills they already possess and so do not need to develop through a course of learning. It is used sparingly and can be applicable to adult students returning to education.

Pearson encourages centres to recognise students' previous achievements and experiences whether at work, home or 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 qualification have been met (through evidence that the relevant assessment objectives have been met by a students' prior learning), the use of RPL is acceptable for accrediting an assessment criterion a whole qualification. Evidence of learning must be valid and reliable.

Centres are expected to develop their own RPL policy in line with Pearson policy. Further guidance can be found in Pearson's [Recognition of Prior Learning Policy](#).

Retention of student evidence and assessment records

Student evidence and assessment records must be kept safely and securely to ensure that they are available for verification. Up to date, securely stored assessment records also help to minimise the risk of assessment malpractice, or potential issues if an Assessor leaves during a BTEC programme.

Centres will need to:

- Store all assessment records securely and safely relating to assessments
- Maintain records of student achievements that are up to date, regularly reviewed and tracked accurately against national standards
- Retain internal assessment records for centre and awarding body scrutiny for a minimum of three years following certification
- Have all current student evidence available for verification purposes.
- Retain all student work for a minimum of 12 weeks after certification has taken place. In certain cases, it may be more feasible to retain photographic evidence of three-dimensional pieces or large-scale work rather than retaining the work itself.

All assessment records (including internal verification records) must be secure against hazards like theft and fire, etc. The records must be of sufficient detail to show exactly how assessment decisions were made (i.e., to assessment criterion level). Data should only be accessible by relevant staff. Records must be securely kept for Pearson audit and in case of student appeals, certification issues, etc.

Up to date and accurate student progress information regarding registration, student feedback and progress, and achievement (at assessment criterion level) must be recorded. Staff must check the accuracy of the information recorded. Student records and monitoring information should be kept in an appropriate and accessible format. This may be electronic. Records must be available to Pearson for audit on request. This is particularly important when there are changes to assessment staff. Experience tells us that this is a common cause of quality issues.

Student work must be made available to Pearson as required. On occasion, the regulator may also request portfolios of student work and assessment records. The format and storage of evidence must allow for this: security needs to be maintained. This is usually at programme team level. It is a risk to allow students to keep work long-term while on programme.

Wherever possible, evidence produced by students still on programme should be kept at the centre. Electronic archiving is acceptable, providing it is sufficient and accessible on request.

Calculation of the final qualification grade

The table below shows the number of points available. Points are allocated depending on the grade awarded for each assessment criterion.

Assessment criteria	Points per assessment criterion at Level 3 and 4
U	0
Pass	1
Merit	2
Distinction	3

Pearson will automatically calculate the qualification grade for students when the internal assessment grades are submitted for each assessment objective and the qualification claim is made.

In order to be awarded a qualification, a student must complete all criteria at Pass or above. Students will be awarded qualification grades for achieving the sufficient number of points within the ranges shown below:

Qualification grade	Qualification points threshold at Level 3 and 4
U	0
Pass	6
Merit	10
Distinction	16

The table, along with the process for points allocation, is subject to review over the lifetime of the qualification. The most up-to-date table will be issued on our website.

Example materials

For Foundation Diplomas, there are qualification specific templates available on the [qualification page](#) of the Pearson website. Centres can use these documents as a template for their own delivery, contextualising them to meet their students' needs:

- Assignment brief
- Internal verification of assignment brief
- Formative Feedback Form
- Project Proposal (Final Major Project)
- Summative Assessment Record
- Internal Standardisation Record
- Internal verification of assessment decisions.

Glossary of BTEC terminology

Assignments and Assessments	Assessment refers to the process of measuring the level of a student's achievement of required learning. As assignment is the articulation of the work that a student will be required to undertake, in order to provide evidence that can be evaluated in the assessment. Effectively, the assignment enables assessment to take place.
Centre Quality Manager	Centre Quality Managers (CQMs) are an important part of our partnership and are full-time managers who work in Centre Management. They support Vocational Quality Standards to maintain effective quality assurance within Pearson vocational centres. CQMs provide support to maintain regulatory requirements and the integrity of centre assessment, delivery, and quality assurance. They also monitor the Academic Management Review (AMR) process, including 'block recommended' centres. The CQMs can be contacted at qualitymanagement@pearson.com .
Edexcel Online	This is a multifunctional system for centres. Access is password protected and is managed by the centre's examinations officer(s). Screens show programmes and students within a centre, allow for new registrations or withdrawals. Lead Internal Verifier registrations and withdrawals will be done through this portal. External Examiner and Centre Quality Reviewer allocations and consequent standards and Quality Management Review status can be viewed here. EOL can be accessed at www.edexcelonline.com .
Exams Officers	Our Exams Officers team provides support to the Exams Officers at centres with a range of queries and issues, such as those relating to administration. The team also sends weekly communications to Exams Officers and conducts face-to-face and online training sessions to help Exams Officers navigate through Pearson's systems. They can be reached at examsofficers@pearson.com .
External Examiner	The External Examiner is a subject assessment specialist appointed by the awarding body to conduct external examination. This verifies that centre management of programmes and

	assessment decisions meet national standards. External examination is conducted by an annual visit.
Guided Learning Hours	Guided Learning Hours are defined as the time when a tutor is present to give specific guidance towards the learning aim being studied on a programme. This definition includes lectures, tutorials and supervised study in open learning provision and learning workshops. Guided Learning includes any supervised assessment activity, this includes invigilated examination and observed assessment and observed work-based practice.
Internal Verification	This is a centre-based process. Internal Verifiers check the quality of assignments before delivery to students and verify the accuracy of assessment decisions to meet national standards. Centres should have an internal verification plan to manage the process.
Office for Students	A regulatory and competition authority for England that is responsible for distributing funding to institutions delivering higher education programmes, promoting fair access to higher education, administering the Teaching Excellence Framework and the Register of Higher Education Providers
Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual)	The regulator of qualifications, exams and tests in England. Qualifications Wales has responsibility for education in Wales, and the Department for Education (Northern Ireland) has responsibility for education in Northern Ireland.
Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education	This is the independent body responsible for monitoring and advising on standards and quality in UK higher education, this includes UK qualifications delivered outside the UK. As such Pearson BTEC Foundation Diploma must meet the quality standards prescribed by the QAA.
QAA Quality Code	The QAA has developed a Quality Code in liaison with the higher education sector and it is maintained and published on the sector's behalf, by the QAA. It sets out the Expectations that all providers of UK higher education are required to meet.
RQF	Regulated Qualification Framework
Quality Nominee	This is the person nominated by the centre who acts as main contact for BTEC.

PQS Malpractice

This team manages incidences of student and staff malpractice within Pearson qualifications. For internally assessed units, centres do not need to inform us of student malpractice. If a staff member is suspected of malpractice, centres must complete a form and send this to pqsmalpractice@pearson.com, so that our Investigations team can review the situation and advise.

Pearson Vocational Quality Assurance Managers

The Vocational Quality Assurance Managers (VQAMs) are a team of specialists in vocational quality assurance. They provide support to Quality Nominees, Internal Verifiers and Assessors regarding a range of topics including:

- Vocational quality assurance models
- internal assessment / verification
- standards verification / external examinations

In addition, they provide support, communication and development for Quality Nominees both online and face-to-face. They can be contacted via the [Pearson Customer Portal](#).