Pearson
Higher Nationals in

Public Services

Pearson-set Theme and Topic Release

Unit: 4 Public Services in Contemporary Society

For use with the following qualifications:

Pearson BTEC Level 4 Higher National Certificate in Public Services

Pearson BTEC Level 5 Higher National Diploma in Public Services

Applied to the delivery of the unit:

1st September 2018 to 31st August 2019

Issue   1

Edexcel, BTEC and LCCI qualifications

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Introduction to the Theme

Pearson-set theme, for use with **Level 4, Unit 4: Public Services in Contemporary Society:**

The impact of digital technology on public services in contemporary society.

Digital technology has revolutionised the way public service organisations operate. Over the past decade digital technology has dramatically changed traditional public service models and transformed the methods used by our public service organisations to provide services within contemporary society. Some of the methods used have included, for example;

- Smarter and more productive ways of working
- Collaborative working
- Workforce development
- Public engagement – approaches and methods used
- Responding to challenges of austerity
- Transformation and delivering a vision through the use of digital technology

However, the introduction of digital technology is not without its challenges as public sector organisations have to adapt and deal with the management of change, attract, develop and retain the right people with the right skills and adopt smarter and more productive ways of working. In addition, the public services sector is highly scrutinised and must remain accountable and responsible for the services provided and the appropriate use of available resources.

This assessment will enable students to examine the impact of digital technology on public services. Students may select a specific area of public services on which to focus their research. The assessment will provide an opportunity for students to contextualise the implications of digital technology for contemporary public sector organisations. It will also enable students to explore the challenges and opportunities presented by rapid technological advances in the public sector.

Topic Selection

Tutors must **choose one topic** from the list provided below and decide which type of assignment is most suitable for small-scale research. All students must complete an assignment brief for **the same topic**, as chosen by the tutor. However, if delivering to different cohorts of students, tutors may select a different topic for each cohort.

The Assignment Guidance document for Unit 4: Public Services in Contemporary Society provides additional support and guidance for both tutors and students.

Topics:

1. How digital technology influences the successful delivery of public services operations.
2. The key challenges that face public sector organisations as digital technology evolves.
3. How public sector organisations respond to the challenges of digital disruption and transformation in the public sector.
4. How the increased use of technology in traditionally people-facing and people focused public sector organisations may result a change of strategy, structure and the traditional role of public sector organisations.

Assignment Evidence/Outcomes

The assignment brief must set the context and scenario within the parameters of the theme and topic. Students are required to produce evidence for an assignment activity that has been constructed around a theme and selected topic. The brief must provide full guidance, focusing on content matter which specifically relates to the topic, so students are in a position to fulfil the requirements of the assessment criteria. The assignment must address all learning outcomes and be contextualised through investigation and research into a public sector organisation.

It is important to recognise that there are many different formats that a student could use to present their work and it is important that tutors think carefully about the suitability of the format in relation to the target audience. Verbal and written forms of communication should be appropriate to the audience, in terms of the nature and level of material used and also in terms of length. Students should be guided to produce research that gives a succinct account of the main arguments or developments from the assignment brief. If a verbal presentation is the chosen format, the question and answer session should address issues raised by the presentation, but also give student an opportunity to reflect on their work. Centres will need to robustly assess and evidence verbal presentations.

Employer Engagement

It is advisable that centres consider the Pearson-set assignment as an appropriate unit to embed employer engagement; although this is not a mandatory requirement. Developing and establishing links with employers enhances the teaching and learning experience and improve students' employability. Where possible, identifying links with employers as part of the delivery of the Pearson-set assignment could lead to enhancing and supporting student learning. Application to real life contexts provides students with the opportunity to develop and acquire appropriate skills, knowledge and expertise required by employers.

Sharing of Good Practice

An appointed External Examiner (EE) for the centre will ask to sample the assignment briefs for review as part of the remote sampling request. Although this is not a mandatory requirement for centres we strongly advise that centres seek guidance and support from their EE on the Pearson-set assignment. The EE may also include the Pearson-set units in the centre visit sample of student work. Good practice will focus on current themes that align to QAA Reviews:

- Innovation
- Digital literacy
- Student employability and entrepreneurial skills
- Employer engagement
- Quality of assessment feedback.

Resources and Useful Links

Suggested resources and links that centres may find useful are shown below. Centres should choose those resources that are relevant for localised use and complement these with additional resources to support independent research into the chosen topic. Resources should range from reports, website articles, theoretical and academic texts, journal articles.

Type of Resource	Resource Title	Links
Published Report	One Met Digital Policing Strategy	Metropolitan Police
Published Report	The Future of Public Service Communications	HM Government
Published Report	Transforming local public services using technology and digital tools and approaches	Local Government Association
Published Report	Transforming local services through digital	Local Government Association
Published Report	Integrated Risk Management Plan	Cumbria County Council
Published Report	Local Public Services 2040	Social Market Foundation

Type of Resource	Resource Title	Links
Published Report	Policy Paper: UK Digital Strategy 2017	GOV.UK
Published Report	The Future of Joined-up Public Services	London School of Economics and Political Science
Website Article	Tech on the beat: Digital cops	Accenture
Website Article	Politics of Public Services	The RSA
Website Article	Scaling digital change for better public services	Medium
Website Article	The life-saving potential of technology: using new and emergent data to improve ambulance response	Kings College London
Website Article	MoD pledges to 'put science and technology at the core of our Armed Forces	PublicTechnology.net
Website Article	Delivering safer and more secure prisons: the roots to rehabilitation	Reform
Website Article	Despite public outrage, web access for prisoners isn't a luxury item – here's why	Phys.Org
Website	UK's independent authority set up to uphold information rights in the public interest, promoting openness by public bodies and data privacy for individuals	ico.org.uk
Website	Public Sector Executive	publicsectorexecutive.com
Journal	International Journal of Public Sector Management	Emerald Insight
Journal	Government and Public Sector Journal	gpsj.co.uk
Journal	International Journal of Applied Public Sector Management	managementjournals.com

The Assignment Guidance document for Unit 4: Public Services in Contemporary Society should be read in conjunction with the theme and topic release. It provides advice and guidance for both tutors and students.

For any further additional support or queries regarding this document, please email btecdelivery@pearson.com.