

# Higher Nationals

## Directing

### Specification

For use with the Higher National Certificate and Higher National Diploma in Directing

First teaching from September 2025

First Certification from 2026

**Higher National Certificate Level 4**

**Higher National Diploma Level 5**

Undergraduate Level Qualifications



**Pearson**  
**BTEC**

## **About Pearson**

We are the world's leading learning company operating in countries all around the world. We provide content, assessment and digital services to learners, educational institutions, employers, governments and other partners globally. We are committed to helping equip learners with the skills they need to enhance their employability prospects and to succeed in the changing world of work. We believe that wherever learning flourishes so do people.

*References to third party materials made in this specification are made in good faith. Pearson does not endorse, approve or accept responsibility for the content of materials, which may be subject to change, or any opinions expressed therein. (Materials may include textbooks, journals, magazines and other publications and websites.)*

*All information in this specification is correct at time of publication.*

BTEC Higher Nationals in Directing – original image by © Shutterstock – Fer Gregory

HN000010

All the material in this publication is copyright

© Pearson Education Limited 2025

# Contents

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1	The student voice	1
1.2	Why choose the Pearson BTEC Higher Nationals?	1
1.3	HN Global	2
1.4	Qualification titles	2
1.4.1	Pearson BTEC Higher National Certificate in Directing	2
1.4.2	Pearson BTEC Higher National Diploma in Directing	2
1.5	Qualification codes	2
1.6	Awarding organisation	3
1.7	Key features	3
1.8	Qualification frameworks	3
1.9	Collaborative development	4
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Programming purpose and objectives</b>	<b>6</b>
2.1	Purpose	6
2.2	Objectives	6
2.2.1	Health and safety in the Pearson BTEC Higher Nationals in Directing	6
2.3	Aims of the Level 4 Higher National Certificate in Directing	7
2.4	Aims of the Level 5 Higher National Diploma in Directing	7
2.5	Developing students' employability skills and academic study skills	8
2.5.1	Use of maths and English within the curriculum	9
2.6	What could these qualifications lead to?	10
2.6.1	Progression to university	10
2.6.2	University recognition and articulations	10
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Preparing students for employment</b>	<b>12</b>
3.1	Designing with employers, for employers	12
3.1.1	Employability skills and competencies for student career success	13
3.1.2	Developing competencies for the workplace	13
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Centre support</b>	<b>14</b>
4.1	Specification	14
4.2	HN Global	14
4.3	Assessment and assignment guidance	14
4.5	Pearson English	15
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Planning your programme</b>	<b>16</b>
5.1	Delivering Higher Nationals	16
5.1.1	Centre approval	16

5.1.2	Tutor knowledge	16
5.1.3	Resources	17
5.1.4	Delivering learning	17
5.1.5	Support from Pearson	17
5.2	Entry requirements and admissions	17
5.2.1	English language requirements	18
5.3	Access to study	19
5.4	Student registration and entry	19
5.5	Access to assessments	20
5.6	Administrative arrangements for internal assessment	20
5.6.1	Records	20
5.6.2	Reasonable adjustments to assessment	20
5.6.3	Special consideration	21
5.6.4	Appeals against assessment	21
5.7	Dealing with malpractice in assessment	22
5.7.1	Student malpractice	22
5.7.2	Tutor and centre malpractice	23
5.7.3	Sanctions and appeals	23
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Programme structure</b>	<b>24</b>
6.1	Modules, assessment units, credits and total qualification time	24
6.1.1	Guided learning hours	25
6.1.2	Independent learning hours	25
6.2	Programme structures	27
6.2.1	Pearson BTEC Level 4 Higher National Certificate in Directing	27
6.2.2	Pearson BTEC Level 5 Higher National Diploma in Directing	27
<b>7.0</b>	<b>Assessment</b>	<b>28</b>
7.1	Principles of internal assessment	28
7.1.1	Assessment through assignments	28
7.1.2	The assessment team	29
7.1.3	Effective organisation	30
7.1.4	Preparing students	30
7.2	Assessment using standard criteria	31
7.2.1	Standard assessment criteria	31
7.2.2	Standard criteria for Level 4	32
7.2.3	Standard criteria for Level 5	33
7.3	Formative assessment	34
7.3.1	Frequency and timing of formative assessment	34

7.3.2	Formative feedback	35
7.4	Making valid assessment decisions	36
7.4.1	Authentic student work	36
7.4.2	Use of artificial intelligence (AI)	37
7.4.3	Use of artificial intelligence (AI) in creative subjects	37
7.4.4	Making assessment decisions using criteria	38
7.4.5	Dealing with late assignments	38
7.4.6	Providing assessment decisions and feedback	39
7.4.7	The opportunity to resubmit an assignment	39
7.4.8	Repeat modules	39
7.4.9	Assessment Boards	40
7.5	Planning and record-keeping	40
7.6	Calculating the final qualification grade	42
7.6.1	Conditions for the award	42
7.6.2	Compensation	42
7.6.3	Calculating the overall qualification grade	43
7.6.4	Modelled student outcomes	44
<b>8.0</b>	<b>Quality assurance</b>	<b>50</b>
8.1	The approval process	50
8.2	Centre and qualification approval	51
8.3	Monitoring internal systems	51
8.4	Independent review of assessments	52
8.5	Annual programme monitoring report (APMR)	52
8.6	Annual student survey	52
8.7	Continuing quality assurance and standards verification	52
8.7.1	Our key principles of quality assurance	52
<b>9.0</b>	<b>Recognition of prior learning and attainment</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>10.0</b>	<b>Equality, diversity and inclusion</b>	<b>55</b>
10.1	Access to qualifications for students with disabilities or specific needs	56
<b>11.0</b>	<b>Modules in the BTEC Higher Nationals Certificate in Directing</b>	<b>57</b>
Module A:	Process and Practice	57
<b>12.0</b>	<b>Modules in the BTEC Higher Nationals Diploma in Directing</b>	<b>74</b>
Module B:	Professional Creative Practice	74
<b>13.0</b>	<b>Recommended Resources</b>	<b>88</b>



# 1.0 Introduction

BTEC is one of the world's most recognised applied learning brands, engaging students in applied, practical, interpersonal and thinking skills for more than three decades. The Pearson BTEC Higher National (HN) qualifications are widely supported by higher education and industry as the principal vocational qualifications at Levels 4 and 5.

When developing our BTEC Higher National qualifications, we worked with a wide range of students, employers, higher education providers, colleges and subject experts to make sure that the qualifications meet their needs and expectations. We also work closely with professional organisations to make sure that the qualifications are in line with recognised professional standards.

Pearson BTEC Higher National qualifications are designed to reflect the increasing need for high-quality professional and technical education at Levels 4 and 5. They provide students with a clear line of sight to employment and to a degree at Level 6 if they choose.

## 1.1 The student voice

Students are at the heart of what we do. That is why, from the outset, we consulted with students in the development of these qualifications. We involved them in writing groups, sought their feedback and added their voices and views to those of other stakeholders.

The result, we believe, are qualifications that will meet the needs and expectations of students worldwide.

## 1.2 Why choose the Pearson BTEC Higher Nationals?

Pearson BTEC Higher Nationals are designed to help students secure the knowledge, skills and behaviours needed to succeed in the workplace. They represent the latest in professional standards and provide opportunities for students to develop behaviours for work, for example, by undertaking a group project or responding to a client brief. A student may even achieve exemption from professional or vendor qualifications, or student membership of selected professional bodies, to help them on their journey to professional competence.

At the same time, the Pearson BTEC Higher Nationals are intended to keep doors open for future study should a student wish to progress further in their education after their Level 5 study. They do this by allowing space for the development of higher education study skills, such as the ability to research. Clear alignment of level of demand with the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education's Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) descriptors at Levels 4 and 5 means that students wishing to progress to Level 6 study should feel better prepared. The Pearson BTEC Higher Nationals address these various requirements by providing:

- a range of modules, each with a clear purpose, so there is something to suit each student's choice of programme and future progression plans
- fully revised content that is closely aligned with the needs of employers, professional bodies, vendors and higher education for a skilled future workforce
- the opportunity to develop transferable skills, useful for work and for higher education, including research skills, the ability to meet deadlines and communication skills
- learning outcomes mapped against professional body standards and vendor accreditation requirements, where appropriate
- assessments and projects chosen to help students progress to the next stage (this means that some are set by the centre to meet local needs, while others are set by Pearson). Students are required to apply their knowledge to a variety of assignments and activities, with a focus on the holistic development of practical, interpersonal and higher-level thinking skills
- an approach to demand at Levels 4 and 5 that is aligned with the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)
- support for students and tutors, including example assessment briefs.

### **1.3 HN Global**

Our HN Global website provides a specially designed range of digital resources to give tutors and students the best possible experience during the BTEC Higher Nationals course. More information is available at at: <https://hnglobal.highernationals.com/>.

### **1.4 Qualification titles**

#### **1.4.1 Pearson BTEC Higher National Certificate in Directing**

#### **1.4.2 Pearson BTEC Higher National Diploma in Directing**

### **1.5 Qualification codes**

Ofqual Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) qualification codes:

- Pearson BTEC Level 4 Higher National Certificate in Directing: **610/5758/7**
- Pearson BTEC Level 5 Higher National Diploma in Directing: **610/5759/9**

## **1.6 Awarding organisation**

Pearson Education Ltd.

## **1.7 Key features**

Pearson BTEC Higher National qualifications in Directing offer the following:

- an exciting and informative study programme that stimulates and challenges students
- a simple and flexible structure that enables students to take the Higher National Certificate and then build on it in the Higher National Diploma, with optional units linked to their specialist area of study
- an opportunity for students to follow specialist routes of interest at Level 5, gaining the knowledge and skills they need to progress to higher education or employment in their specialist area
- core competencies developed throughout the curriculum, to support lifelong learning skills for personal and professional development
- the opportunity for centres to offer assessments that consider cognitive skills (what students know) along with effective and applied skills (how they behave and what they can do) to support a practical and dynamic approach to learning
- a curriculum designed to encourage thorough and analytical learning, challenge students and develop skills in critical thinking, personal responsibility and decision-making
- a flexible approach to assessment that supports progression to higher education or work and allows for different learning styles
- quality assurance measures that assure professional organisations, universities, businesses, colleges and students of the integrity and value of the qualifications, and
- a programme of learning designed to meet skills gaps in the current workforce and build today's talent to meet tomorrow's needs in an international environment.

## **1.8 Qualification frameworks**

Pearson BTEC Higher National qualifications are recognised higher education qualifications in the UK. They are in line with the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Subject Benchmark Statements, where applicable. These qualifications are part of the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF).

## 1.9 Collaborative development

We are very grateful to the university and further education tutors, employers, professional bodies and others who have generously shared their time and expertise to help us develop these new Pearson BTEC Higher National qualifications. Our thanks go to:

- AD Education
- Amanda Hockley
- Andy Reynolds
- Arlette Hovinga
- Ashaine White
- Ballyfermot College of Further Education
- Bray Institute of Further Education
- Cardiff and Vale College( CAVC)
- Colin Waterson
- Creative Hub Academy
- Dan Armstrong
- Djp Music School
- Elliot Richardson
- ETIC
- Garth Twa
- Germana Stella la Sorsa
- Gibbi Bettini
- Hannah Horton
- Hertford College
- Highfield Studio
- Janet Devenish
- Josh Farrell
- Julian Kerridge
- Kirstie Stanway
- Leonardo Colturi
- London Music Artist Academy
- Lorenzo Bonfante
- Marco Piccioni
- Marin Van Osch
- Martin Hummel
- Martyn Hall
- Migdalia Van Der Hoven

- Raindance Film Festival
- Stephanie Farmer
- Ubuntu Music
- Ufuk Gky
- Warren Woodcraft
- Wendy Kirkland
- Women in Jazz Media

## 2.0 Programming purpose and objectives

### 2.1 Purpose

The purpose of these qualifications is to develop students as professional, self-reflecting individuals able to meet the demands of employers and adapt to a constantly changing world. The qualifications aim to widen access to higher education and enhance the career prospects of those who undertake them.

### 2.2 Objectives

The objectives of these qualifications are:

- To give students the skills, knowledge and understanding they need to achieve high performance in the international Directing environment
- to develop students with enquiring minds, who have the abilities and confidence to work across different business functions and to lead, manage, respond to change, and tackle a range of complex Directing situations
- to provide the core skills required for a range of careers in Directing
- to offer a balance between employability skills and the knowledge essential for students with entrepreneurial, employment or academic ambitions
- to develop students' understanding of the major impact that new digital technologies have on the Directing environment
- to provide insight into performing arts operations and the opportunities and challenges presented by a global marketplace
- to equip students with knowledge and understanding of culturally diverse organisations, cross-cultural issues, diversity and values, and to allow flexible study to meet local and specialist needs.

#### 2.2.1 Health and safety in the Pearson BTEC Higher Nationals in Directing

Health and safety in Directing is both a regulatory responsibility and a matter of ethical practice. It is important that everyone working in the industry, including those in education and training, is aware of the legislation, regulation and practice of ensuring the safety of those working in Directing.

Pearson has taken the approach that health and safety be integrated throughout the qualifications where appropriate. This is to ensure that students do not see health and safety matters as being separate or 'standalone' activities. Rather, health and safety should be understood as a standard feature of typical practices.

The content within these qualifications includes curriculum related to health and safety, regulations and statutory requirements. Where such topics are included in the Essential Content it is a requirement that they are taught in sufficient depth to ensure that students understand the importance of the topic. Where there are assessment criteria that call specifically for students to evidence aspects of health and safety, risk assessment, legislation or regulation, it is required that this be designed in the assessment.

### **2.3 Aims of the Level 4 Higher National Certificate in Directing**

The Level 4 modules lay the foundation of learning by providing a broad introduction to Directing and different creative and development functions. This develops and strengthens core skills while preparing students for specialist subjects at Level 5 or to enter employment with the qualities necessary for job roles that require some personal responsibility.

Students will gain a wide range of performing arts knowledge linked to practical skills gained through research, independent study, directed study and workplace scenarios. Students are involved in vocational activities that help them to develop behaviours (the attitudes and approaches required for a competence) and transferable skills. Transferable skills are those such as communication, team work, research and analysis, which are highly valued in higher education and in the workplace.

By the end of Level 4, students will have sound knowledge of the basic concepts of Directing. They will be competent in a range of subject-specific skills as well as in general skills and qualities relevant to key areas of performing arts.

### **2.4 Aims of the Level 5 Higher National Diploma in Directing**

The Level 5 modules prepare students to move on to specific areas of Directing at Level 6 or to enter employment with the qualities and abilities necessary for roles that require personal responsibility and decision-making.

Students will be able to develop and apply their own ideas to their studies, to deal with uncertainty and complexity, to explore solutions, demonstrate critical evaluation and use both theory and practice in a wide range of Directing situations.

By the end of Level 5, students will have a sound understanding of the principles in their area of specialist study and will know how to apply those principles more widely in the business world. They will be able to perform effectively in their specialist area.

## **2.5 Developing students' employability skills and academic study skills**

Employability skills (sometimes referred to as transferable skills) are vital to increase students' career prospects and contribute to their personal and professional development. Our BTEC Higher Nationals in Directing support students in developing the key skills, qualities and strengths that employers are looking for.

We divide employability skills into five main categories.

### **Problem-solving skills**

These include:

- critical thinking
- using expert and creative solutions to solve non-routine problems
- using systems and digital technology, and
- generating and communicating ideas creatively.

### **Independent skills**

These include:

- self-management
- adaptability and resilience
- self-monitoring and self-development
- self-analysis, and
- reflection, planning and prioritising.

### **Interpersonal skills**

These include:

- leadership skills
- communicating effectively
- working with others
- negotiating and influencing, and
- presentation skills.

### **Commercial skills**

These include:

- awareness of the performing arts sector
- understanding client needs
- managing and monitoring budgets.

### **Business skills**

These include:

- awareness of types of companies and company formations
- legal and statutory responsibilities
- business management.

Students also benefit from opportunities for deeper learning, where they can make connections between different study modules and select areas of interest for detailed study. In this way, BTEC Higher Nationals in Directing provide a vocational context in which students can develop the knowledge and academic study skills they need to progress to university degree courses.

These academic study skills include:

- active research
- effective writing
- analytical skills
- critical thinking
- creative problem-solving
- decision-making
- preparing for exams, and
- using digital technology.

### **2.5.1 Use of maths and English within the curriculum**

A career in performing arts requires both technical skills and broader employability skills. For example, appropriate communication with clients and colleagues is an essential skill, so the ability to use maths and English in a professional context is a key area for student development.

This type of development is embedded throughout the BTEC Higher Nationals, in line with industry requirements. Students may encounter some of the examples given below in the course of their study:

- preparing written reports
- giving formal presentations
- taking part in informal conversations
- using professional, sector-specific language.

Some aspects of performing arts require maths skills and we strongly recommend that all students complete diagnostic maths assessments before beginning a Higher National course, as well as having a grade 9 to 4 or A\* to C in GCSE Maths. (See *Section 5.2* for more information.)

## 2.6 What could these qualifications lead to?

The Level 4 Higher National Certificate provides a solid grounding in Directing, which students can build on should they decide to continue their studies beyond the certificate stage. The Level 5 Higher National Diploma allows students to specialise by committing to specific career paths and progression routes to degree-level study.

On successful completion of the Level 5 Higher National Diploma, students can develop their careers in the sector through:

- entering employment
- continuing existing employment
- linking with the appropriate professional body
- committing to continuing professional development (CPD)
- progressing to university.

### 2.6.1 Progression to university

The Level 5 Higher National Diploma is recognised by higher education providers as meeting admission requirements to many relevant performing arts-related courses, for example:

- BA(Hons) Film Production
- BSc (Hons) Film Production
- BA (Hons) Film Directing
- BA(Hons) Theatre Arts
- BA (Hons) Fine Arts in Theatre Arts (Directing and Playwriting)

### 2.6.2 University recognition and articulations

We work with a range of higher education institutions around the world that recognise and accept Pearson BTEC Higher Nationals as qualifications for entry to an undergraduate degree. Many universities allow advanced entry to the second or third year of a degree, and agreements can include credit transfer, articulation and case-by-case admission. A full list is available on our Degree Finder tool but some of our current articulations include:

- City of Liverpool College, University Centre
- ETIC
- Bedford College
- Birmingham City University
- University of Portsmouth
- London Metropolitan University
- Linfield University
- Coventry University
- Solent University

- Massey University, New Zealand
- The Open University
- University of East London
- Royal Roads University.

Students should be aware that university admission criteria are always subject to change and remain at the discretion of the institution. Students should take time to understand the course entry requirements for the subject, year and grade before applying. For more information on entry requirements, including 2+1 articulations, please visit: <https://hnglobal.highernationals.com/degree-finder>.

## 3.0 Preparing students for employment

### 3.1 Designing with employers, for employers

As a large employer and qualification-awarding organisation, Pearson understands the value of developing the skills and talent of the future workforce. We believe in, and champion, higher technical education that is relevant to employers.

We work with employers, students, professional bodies, education providers and other experts to design qualifications with the future workforce in mind. Higher National qualifications blend employability skills with academic, business and technical knowledge. They support trainees and apprentices in their higher apprenticeship and other technical education programmes, as well as students working towards a degree. We update our programmes regularly to maintain their high quality and meet the changing needs of the workforce.

Employers contribute to our Higher Nationals in several ways.

- They are involved in every stage of designing our qualifications, from developing the structure and pathways to selecting subjects, developing content and approving qualifications.
- They help us deliver qualifications, for example, through vendor accreditation, letters of support and co-badging. Our qualifications actively encourage training providers to work with employers. Work placements and work through learning are key features of BTEC Higher Nationals.
- They help us review and update our qualifications to meet occupational standards and provide supporting material such as case studies to reflect the real world of work.

We are committed to equipping apprentices, trainees and organisations with the tools and resources they need to support high-quality, innovative technical education and higher apprenticeship programmes that work.

Including a Higher National qualification as part of a higher apprenticeship or technical education programme gives students:

- an internationally recognised higher-level qualification in line with the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, and
- a stepping-stone to continue their education or training and gain a recognised degree or professional qualification.

To find out more, and to access detailed mapping to higher apprenticeships and occupational standards for your qualification, please visit the following pages:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/apprenticeships.html> and <https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/btec-higher-nationals/higher-nationals/higher-technical-qualifications.html> on our website.

### 3.1.1 Employability skills and competencies for student career success

Pearson is committed to delivering learning that is rooted in the real world and to developing work-ready graduates with the professional skills and behaviours that employers need. The Pearson BTEC Higher National curriculum provides a clear pathway to employment, depending on which specialist areas students complete. The aim is to produce students who are equipped to thrive in the changing world of work, whether they leave with an HNC or an HND qualification.

The table below shows the type of position in which a student graduating at each educational level might expect to start, and gives some examples of the competencies expected.

Levels of competency			
Employability level at learning level	Level 4 Operational	Level 5 Managerial	Level 6 Professional
General employment outcomes for graduates at each level	Graduates can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>perform key performing arts tasks</li> <li>understand processes and operations, and</li> <li>work effectively.</li> </ul>	Graduates can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>increase performance through strategic planning to meet performing arts aims, and</li> <li>manage performing arts functions to work effectively in lower- or middle-management positions.</li> </ul>	Graduates can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>take the lead and direct others, and</li> <li>manage change effectively in middle-management positions.</li> </ul>

Table 1: Levels of competency at employability level

### 3.1.2 Developing competencies for the workplace

Core competencies developed on the specialist pathways of the programme will support students in preparing for a range of employment opportunities in their chosen sector. These core competencies collectively summarise the key capabilities that are important across the sector, covering areas of relevant expertise and technical skills that would be required within the sector to successfully perform a job, as defined in current advertised job vacancies.

Core competencies are developed on the programme within a balanced framework of cognitive (knowledge), affective (behaviours) and psychomotor (practical) learning outcomes to encourage a more vocational and practical approach to learning.

## 4.0 Centre support

You can access a wide range of resources and support to help you set up and deliver our Pearson BTEC Higher Nationals in Directing with confidence.

### 4.1 Specification

This specification gives you details of the administration of the qualifications and information on the units included in them.

### 4.2 HN Global

HN Global is a dedicated online learning platform for all Pearson BTEC Higher National students and delivery centres. You can find various free resources to support staff in delivering a Pearson BTEC Higher National programme and to guide students on their learning journey. The HN Global Forum connects students and tutors, and provides the opportunity to discuss common themes and to share good practice. HN Global also provides access to the following:

**The Learning Zone** includes student study materials such as core textbooks, study skills modules, a 'Progression hub' featuring opportunities to develop employability skills, an e-library and subject materials.

**The Tutor Resources** section hosts a wealth of delivery materials, reading lists, blended learning resources, video guidance on assessment and professional development opportunities. Staff can also access the Quality Assurance (QA) Hub for templates and more centre support.

**Short Courses** provides support for curriculum planning, developing schemes of work and developing students' academic skills.

These are available from the HN Global website at:

<https://hnglobal.ighernationals.com/>.

### 4.3 Assessment and assignment guidance

We provide an *Assessment and Assignment Guidance Booklet* that includes example assessment briefs. These briefs have been developed to support centres with their assessment strategy for the delivery of a sample of modules, as well as providing guidance and inspiration for effective planning and design of future assignment briefs. The briefs have been written to assess students' knowledge, understanding and skills specifically relevant to the module Learning Outcomes, but they have not been contextualised to meet local need and international diversity. Therefore, they cannot be used as authorised assignments and would need to be modified and customised to meet localisation. The briefs offer a range of real and simulated assessment activities, for example, group work to encourage cooperation and social skills or a solution-focused case study to develop cognitive skills.

All assignments must be moderated in line with the internal verification process.

The Tutor Resources section on HN Global offers a wide range of resources and guidance documents to help you plan and design assessments effectively. Please see the *Assessment and Assignment Guidance Booklet* for more information.

## **4.5 Pearson English**

Pearson provides a full range of support for English learning, including diagnostics, qualifications and learning resources. Please see: [www.pearson.com/languages](http://www.pearson.com/languages).

The Pearson Languages portal also offers a variety of digital resources. The portal encourages users to get involved, improves teaching and results, and enhances the learning experience.

## 5.0 Planning your programme

### 5.1 Delivering Higher Nationals

As a large employer and qualification-awarding organisation, Pearson understands the value of developing the skills and talent of the future workforce. We believe in, and champion, higher technical education that is relevant to employers.

**You play a central role in helping your students choose the right Pearson BTEC Higher National qualification.**

Assess your students very carefully to make sure they take the right qualification. This will allow them to progress to the next stage in their learning or employment journey. You should also check the qualification structures and modules carefully when giving students advice.

Make sure your students have access to a full range of information and advice to help them choose the right qualification. When students are recruited, you need to give them accurate information on the title and focus of the qualification they are studying for. Centres must provide a programme specification for approvals but it is also essential that centres produce:

- a staff handbook to support full- and part-time members of your team, and
- a student handbook to guide students through the course requirements so they know what is expected of them and understand their rights.

You can find more information in the *BTEC Higher Nationals Centre Guide to Quality Assurance and Assessment* available on our website:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/btec-higher-nationals/about/quality-assurance-process.html>.

#### 5.1.1 Centre approval

We need to approve all centres before they can offer our qualifications. This is to make sure that centres are ready to assess students and that we can provide the support you need.

For more information about becoming a centre and gaining approval to run our qualifications, please see 'Centre/Qualification approvals' in the support section of our website at: <https://support.pearson.com/uk/s/article/Centre-Qualification-Approvals>.

#### 5.1.2 Tutor knowledge

We do not set any requirements for tutors, but we do recommend that centres assess the overall skills and knowledge of the teaching team to make sure they are relevant, up to date and at the correct level.

### 5.1.3 Resources

As part of your centre approval, you will need to show that the right resources and workspaces are available to deliver Pearson BTEC Higher Nationals. Some modules need specific resources. This is clearly explained in the module descriptions.

### 5.1.4 Delivering learning

With our approval, you can deliver our Pearson BTEC Higher Nationals using a mixture of learning options that meet your students' needs. We recommend you offer full-time, part-time, blended learning and distance learning modes of delivery.

If you are delivering distance learning, please see the *Pearson distance learning and assessment policy* at: <https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/support-topics/understanding-our-qualifications/policies-for-centres-learners-and-employees.html>.

### 5.1.5 Support from Pearson

For each programme with active registrations, we will provide an external examiner to help you plan and review assessments. You will also be able to access training events and support from a dedicated team of Pearson Higher National subject leads. Please see: <https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/training-from-pearson-uk.html>.

## 5.2 Entry requirements and admissions

Pearson does not set formal entry requirements for our qualifications but, as a centre, you are responsible for making sure that the students you recruit have a reasonable chance of success on the programme.

Students who have recently been in education are likely to need:

- a BTEC Level 3 qualification in Performing Arts
- a GCE Advanced Level profile that demonstrates strong performance in a relevant subject or adequate performance in more than one GCE subject. This profile is likely to be supported by GCSE grades at 9 to 4 or A\* to C (or equivalent) in subjects such as maths and English
- other related Level 3 qualifications
- an Access to Higher Education Diploma from an approved further education institution
- relevant work experience, or
- an international equivalent to the above qualifications.

Our recognition of prior learning policy means that students' previous learning and experience can be taken into account and they may be awarded certain qualifications or modules/units of a qualification based on that learning or experience. Please see *Section 9* for more information.

## 5.2.1 English language requirements

Pearson's mission is to help people make more of their lives through learning.

In order for students to be successful on Pearson BTEC Higher National qualifications that are **both** taught and assessed in English, it is critical that they have an appropriate level of English language skills.

The following clarifies the requirements for all centres when recruiting applicants on to new Pearson BTEC Higher National qualifications.

All centres delivering the new Pearson BTEC Higher National qualifications must ensure that all students who are non-native English speakers and who have not undertaken their final two years of schooling in English can demonstrate capability in English at a standard equivalent to the levels identified below, before being recruited to the programme **where the programme is both taught and assessed in English:**

- Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) Level **B2**
- Pearson Test of English (PTE) Academic **51**
- International English Language Testing System (IELTS) **5.5**; reading and writing must be at **5.5**
- or equivalent.

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

The following clarifies the requirements for all centres when recruiting applicants on to new Pearson BTEC Higher National qualifications that are **taught in a language other than English, but are assessed in English.**

All centres delivering the new Pearson BTEC Higher National qualifications **wholly or partially in a language other than English**, but that are assessed in English, must ensure that all students can demonstrate capability in English at a standard equivalent to the levels identified below, on completion of the programme:

- Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) Level **B2**
- PTE Academic **51**
- IELTS **5.5**; reading and writing must be at **5.5**
- or equivalent.

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

### 5.3 Access to study

This section focuses on the administration you will need to carry out when delivering our Pearson BTEC Higher National qualifications. It will be most relevant to quality controllers, Programme Leaders and examinations officers.

Our qualifications should:

- be available to everyone able to reach the required standards
- be free from any barriers that restrict access and progress, and
- provide equal opportunities for all those who want to access the qualifications.

For more information, please see our *Equity, diversity and inclusion in Pearson qualifications and related services policy*, available at:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/support-topics/understanding-our-qualifications/policies-for-centres-learners-and-employees.html>.

Please recruit with integrity when registering students to our Pearson BTEC Higher National programmes. You should:

- make sure that students applying have the information and advice they need about the qualification to be sure it meets their needs
- check each student's qualifications and experience to make sure they have the potential to achieve the qualification, and
- for students with disabilities and specific needs, consider the support available to them during teaching and assessment. For more guidance, please see *Section 5.6.2* on reasonable adjustments.

### 5.4 Student registration and entry

All students should be registered on the qualification they are studying and suitable arrangements need to be made for internal and external verification. For information on making registrations, please see the information manual available in the support section of our website at: <https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/support-for-you/exam-officers-administrators/entries-information-manual.html?view=manual>.

Students can only be formally assessed for a qualification they are registered on. If a student changes the qualification they want to study for (for example, if they decide to choose a different specialist pathway), you must transfer their registration to the new pathway. We cannot sample a student's work unless they are registered on the correct pathway.

## 5.5 Access to assessments

Assessments need to be managed carefully so that all students are treated fairly and results and certificates are published without delay.

Our equity, diversity and inclusion policy requires that:

- all students have an equal opportunity to access our qualifications and assessments, and
- our qualifications are awarded in a way that is fair to every student.

We are committed to making sure that:

- students with a protected characteristic as defined by law (for example, race, sexuality or religious belief) are not disadvantaged in comparison to students who do not share that characteristic
- all students achieve the recognition they deserve for taking a qualification, and
- this achievement can be compared fairly to the achievement of their peers.

For more information on access arrangements, please visit the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) website at: <https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/>.

## 5.6 Administrative arrangements for internal assessment

### 5.6.1 Records

You are required to retain records of assessment for each student. Records should include assessments taken, decisions reached and any adjustments or appeals.

Further information on quality and assessment can be found in our UK and international guides available in the support section on our website:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/btec-higher-nationals/about/quality-assurance-process.html>. We may ask to audit your records, so they must be retained as specified. All student work must be retained for **a minimum of 12 weeks** after certification has taken place.

### 5.6.2 Reasonable adjustments to assessment

A reasonable adjustment is one that is made before a student takes an assessment, to ensure that they have fair access to demonstrate the requirements of the assessments.

You are able to make adjustments to internal assessments to take account of the needs of individual students. In most cases, this can be achieved through a defined time extension or by adjusting the format of evidence. We can advise you if you are uncertain as to whether an adjustment is fair and reasonable. You need to plan for time to make adjustments, if necessary.

Further details on how to make adjustments for students with protected characteristics are available on the support section of our website: <https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/support-topics/understanding-our-qualifications/policies-for-centres-learners-and-employees.html>.

### **5.6.3 Special consideration**

Special consideration is given after an assessment has taken place for students who have been affected by adverse circumstances, such as illness, and require an adjustment of grade to reflect normal level of attainment. You must operate special consideration in line with Pearson policy (see previous paragraph). You can provide special consideration related to the period of time given for evidence to be provided, or for the format of the assessment (if it is equally valid). You may not substitute alternative forms of evidence to that required in a module, or omit the application of any assessment criteria to judge attainment. Pearson can consider applications for special consideration in line with the JCQ guide to the special consideration process, which can be downloaded from the JCQ website at:

<https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance/>.

Please note that your centre 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 assessment.

### **5.6.4 Appeals against assessment**

Your centre must have a policy for dealing with appeals from students. These appeals may relate to assessment decisions being incorrect or assessment not being conducted fairly. The first step in such a policy could be a consideration of the evidence by a Programme Leader or other member of the programme team. The assessment plan should allow time for potential appeals after assessment decisions have been given to students. If there is an appeal by a student, you must document the appeal and its resolution. Students have a final right of appeal to Pearson, but only if the procedures that you have put in place have been followed. Further details of our policy on enquiries and appeals are available on the support section of our website at: <https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/support-topics/understanding-our-qualifications/policies-for-centres-learners-and-employees.html>.

If your centre is located in England or Wales and the student is still dissatisfied with the final outcome of their appeal, they can make a further appeal to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) by emailing: [enquiries@oiahe.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@oiahe.org.uk). In Northern Ireland a further appeal may be lodged with the Northern Ireland Public Service Ombudsman (NIPSO) by emailing: [nipso@nipso.org.uk](mailto:nipso@nipso.org.uk).

## 5.7 Dealing with malpractice in assessment

'Malpractice' refers to acts that undermine the integrity and validity of assessment, the certification of qualifications and/or may damage the authority of those responsible for delivering the assessment and certification.

Pearson does not tolerate actual or attempted actions of malpractice by learners, centre staff or centres in connection with Pearson qualifications. Pearson may impose penalties and/or sanctions on learners, centre staff or centres where malpractice or attempted malpractice has been proven.

Malpractice may occur or be suspected in relation to any module/unit or type of assessment within a qualification. For further details on malpractice and advice on preventing malpractice by learners, please see Pearson's *Centre guide for dealing with malpractice and maladministration*, available to download on our website:

[www.qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/support-topics/understanding-our-qualifications/policies-for-centres-learners-and-employees.html](http://www.qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/support-topics/understanding-our-qualifications/policies-for-centres-learners-and-employees.html).

Centres are required to take steps to prevent malpractice and to investigate instances of suspected malpractice. Learners must be given information that explains what malpractice is for internal assessment and how suspected incidents will be dealt with by the centre. The *Centre guide for dealing with malpractice and maladministration* document gives full information on the actions we expect you to take.

Pearson may conduct investigations if we believe a centre is failing to conduct internal assessment according to our policies. The malpractice guidance document gives further information and examples, and details the penalties and sanctions that may be imposed.

In the interests of learners and centre staff, centres need to respond effectively and openly to all requests relating to an investigation into an incident of suspected malpractice.

### 5.7.1 Student malpractice

The Heads of Centres are required to report incidents of suspected student malpractice that occur during Pearson qualifications. We ask centres to complete a *JCQ Form M1* available to download at: [www.jcq.org.uk/malpractice](http://www.jcq.org.uk/malpractice) and email it with any accompanying documents (signed statements from the student and invigilator, copies of evidence etc.) to the Investigations Processing team at: [candidatemalpractice@pearson.com](mailto:candidatemalpractice@pearson.com). The responsibility for determining appropriate sanctions or penalties to be imposed on students lies with Pearson.

Students must be informed at the earliest opportunity of the specific allegation and the centre's malpractice policy, including the right of appeal. Students found guilty of malpractice may be disqualified from the qualification for which they have been entered with Pearson.

Failure to report malpractice constitutes staff or centre malpractice.

## 5.7.2 Tutor and centre malpractice

Heads of Centres are required to inform Pearson's Investigations Processing team of any incident of suspected malpractice (which includes maladministration) by centre staff, before any investigation is undertaken. The Heads of Centres are requested to inform the investigations team by submitting a *JCQ Form M2* (downloadable from: [www.jcq.org.uk/malpractice](http://www.jcq.org.uk/malpractice)) with supporting documentation to: [pqsmalpractice@pearson.com](mailto:pqsmalpractice@pearson.com). Where Pearson receives allegations of malpractice from other sources (for example Pearson staff, anonymous informants), the investigations team will conduct the investigation directly or may ask the Head of Centre to assist.

Pearson reserves the right in cases of suspected malpractice to withhold the issuing of results/certificates while an investigation is in progress. Depending on the outcome of the investigation, results and/or certificates may not be released or they may be withheld.

We reserve the right to withhold certification when undertaking investigations, audits and quality assurance processes. You will be notified within a reasonable period of time if this occurs.

## 5.7.3 Sanctions and appeals

Where malpractice is proven, we may impose sanctions or penalties, such as:

- mark reduction for affected external assessments
- disqualification from the qualification, or
- debarment from registration for Pearson qualifications for a period of time.

If we are concerned about your centre's quality procedures, we may impose sanctions such as:

- working with centres to create an improvement action plan
- requiring staff members to receive further training
- placing temporary suspensions on certification of learners
- placing temporary suspensions on registration of learners
- debarring staff members or the centre from delivering Pearson qualifications, or
- suspending or withdrawing centre approval status.

The centre will be notified if any of these apply.

Pearson has established procedures for considering appeals against penalties and sanctions arising from malpractice. Appeals against a decision made by Pearson will normally be accepted only from the Head of Centre (on behalf of learners and/or members or staff) and from individual members (in respect of a decision taken against them personally). Further information on appeals can be found in the JCQ Appeals booklet available to download at: [www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/appeals](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/appeals)

## 6.0 Programme structure

### 6.1 Modules, assessment units, credits and total qualification time

The Higher National Certificate (HNC) is a Level 4 qualification made up of 120 credits. It is usually studied full time over one year, or part time over two years.

The Higher National Diploma (HND) is a Level 4 and Level 5 qualification made up of 240 credits. It is usually studied full time over two years, or part time over four years.

Pearson would expect an HND student to have achieved a Pass grade for *Assessment Unit A1: Concept and Development* (340 GLH – 85 credits) before beginning the Level 5 curriculum. This allows the student to complete the assessment of *Assessment Unit A2: Creative Project* (140 GLH – 35 credits). This allows for the student to complete the remaining Level 4 assessment while continuing with Level 5 study. Centres must ensure that such situations do not place the student in a position where the increased workload in Level 5 puts the student's overall achievement at risk. Therefore, where such a plan is in place, the assessment of the remaining Level 4 assessment unit should be undertaken early in the student's Level 5 experience.

If an HND student does not complete the full qualification, they may be awarded an HNC if they have gained enough credits.

The Pearson BTEC Higher Nationals in Directing use modules to define the overall structure of the qualification. Each module includes one, or more, assessment units, which provide the definition of Learning Outcomes and Essential Content for delivery.

Modules are designed around the amount of time it will take for a student to complete them and receive a qualification. This is known as the total qualification time (TQT). TQT includes guided learning activities, directed learning activities and assessment.

**The total qualification time for Higher National Certificate (HNC) = 1,200 hours.**

**The total qualification time for Higher National Diploma (HND) = 2,400 hours.**

Examples of activities that can contribute to TQT include:

- guided learning
- independent and unsupervised research and learning
- unsupervised creation of a portfolio of work experience
- unsupervised e-learning
- unsupervised e-assessments
- unsupervised coursework
- watching a recorded podcast or webinar, and
- unsupervised work-based learning.

### 6.1.1 Guided learning hours

These are the hours when a student is engaged with a member of staff who provides specific guidance towards the learning aim being studied. Guided learning hours include lectures, tutorials and supervised study in, for example, open learning centres and learning workshops. They also include supervised assessment activities such as invigilated exams, observed assessments and observed work-based practice.

**The total guided learning hours for Higher National Certificate (HNC) = 480 hours.**

**The total guided learning hours for Higher National Diploma (HND) = 960 hours.**

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

- classroom-based learning supervised by a tutor
- work-based learning supervised by a tutor
- working under supervision in a workshop or library
- a live webinar or telephone tutorial with a tutor
- live e-learning supervised by a tutor, and
- all forms of assessment guided or supervised at the time by a tutor or other education or training provider. This includes times where the assessment is competence-based and turned into a learning opportunity.

### 6.1.2 Independent learning hours

These are the hours where a student is learning without the direct guidance of a member of centre staff. They are critical to the student's ability to develop knowledge and skills, as well as providing them with the opportunity to develop key transferable skills such as self-discipline, time management and self-motivation.

**The total independent learning hours for Higher National Certificate (HNC) = 720 hours.**

**The total independent learning hours for Higher National Diploma (HND) = 1,440 hours.**

Some examples of activities that can contribute to independent learning include:

- self-directed research and investigation
- reading set texts or other sources of information
- watching subject-related videos as part of investigation and research
- reviewing recordings of scheduled sessions or notes from those sessions
- peer activities, such as group meetings and online discussions, where students explore their learning together, and
- reviewing and recording thoughts on their own learning.

## Modules

Each module defines:

- A broad area of creative practice where the student will learn, develop work and be assessed.
- The *Introduction*, which provides an overview of the module, highlighting what students will learn and how this fits within their overall development of creative practice.
- The *Assessment Summary*, which provides a brief overview of the approach to assessment and the Learning Outcomes, defined within the assessment units (see below).
- The *Essential Content* that must be taught, to support the student to achieve the Learning Outcomes:
  - Essential Content is divided into key areas that correspond to the standard assessment criteria.
  - Essential Content *may* be further divided to include specific *Subject Domain* content, where there are differences between what may be necessary for different domains.
- *Essential Information for Assessment*, which provides support for teaching and assessment teams:
  - Recommended Evidence provides an overview of the strategy for assessment and types of evidence that may be appropriate for the assessment unit. These are provided for guidance, and teaching assessment teams are encouraged to explore other forms of evidence that may be appropriate to the module, assessment unit and subject.

## Assessment units

Each assessment unit defines:

- The Level of the assessment unit
- The required number of guided learning hours
- Learning Outcomes that articulate what the student should be able to evidence at the end of the learning period:
  - each Learning Outcome corresponds to one of the standard assessment criteria for the level
  - the number of Learning Outcomes will match the number of standard assessment criteria.

## 6.2 Programme structures

Programme structures specify:

- the total credit value of the qualification, and
- the minimum credit to be achieved at the level of the qualification.

When combining units for our Pearson BTEC Higher National qualifications, it is up to the centre to make sure that the correct combinations are followed.

### 6.2.1 Pearson BTEC Level 4 Higher National Certificate in Directing

- Requires at least 120 credits
- Total qualification time = 1,200 hours
- Total guided learning hours = 480 hours

	Guided learning hours
<b>Module A: Process and Practice</b>	<b>480</b>
A1: Concept and Development	340
A2: Creative Project	140

Table 2: Guided learning hours in Module A: Process and Practice

### 6.2.2 Pearson BTEC Level 5 Higher National Diploma in Directing

- Requires 240 credits, of which 120 credits are at Level 5 and 120 credits are at Level 4
- Total qualification time = 2,400 hours
- Total guided learning hours = 960 hours

	Guided learning hours
<b>Module B: Professional Creative Practice</b>	<b>480</b>
B1: Personal Professional Development	170
B2: Professional Project	310

Table 3: Guided learning hours in Module B: Professional Creative Practice

## 7.0 Assessment

This Pearson BTEC Higher National is assessed using centre-developed internal assignments that are set and assessed by the centre.

### 7.1 Principles of internal assessment

This section summarises the main features of internal assessment and explains how you can offer it effectively. Full details are given in the *BTEC Higher Nationals Centre Guide to Quality Assurance and Assessment* handbook, downloadable in the enhanced quality assurance section of our website:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/btec-higher-nationals/about/quality-assurance-process.html>. All of your assessment team will need to refer to this document.

For Pearson BTEC Higher Nationals, you must meet the expectations of stakeholders and the needs of students by providing a programme that is practical and applied. You can tailor programmes to meet local needs and should use links with local employers and the wider business sector.

Effective internal assessment is challenging, engaging, practical and up to date. It must also be fair to all students and meet national standards.

#### 7.1.1 Assessment through assignments

For internally assessed modules/units, assessment takes the form of an assignment carried out after the module/unit (or part of the module/unit if several assignments are used) has been delivered. An assignment may take a variety of forms, including practical and written. It is a distinct activity completed independently by students (alone or in a team). It is separate from teaching, practice, exploration and other activities that students complete with direction from tutors.

Students should receive each assignment as an assignment brief with a hand-out date, a completion date and clear requirements for the evidence they must provide. There may also be specific practical activities that the student must complete under tutor observation as part of the assignment. Assignments can be divided into separate parts and may require several forms of evidence. A valid assignment will enable a clear and formal assessment grade based on the assessment criteria.

## 7.1.2 The assessment team

You will need an effective team for internal assessment. There are three key roles involved, each with different responsibilities. These roles are listed below.

- The **Programme Leader** is responsible for the programme, its assessment and internal monitoring to meet Pearson's requirements. They must register with us each year. They are also responsible for:
  - record-keeping
  - liaising with the standards verifier
  - acting as an Assessor
  - supporting the rest of the assessment team
  - making sure that the team has the information it needs about our assessment requirements
  - organising training, and
  - using our guidance and support materials.
- **Internal Verifiers** oversee all assessment activity with the Programme Leader. They check that assignments and assessment decisions are valid and meet our requirements. All Internal Verifiers will follow the same standards and procedures as instructed by your Programme Leader. Internal Verifiers are usually also Assessors, but they do not verify their own assessments.
- **Assessors** set assignments or use assignments to assess students to national standards. Before taking any assessment decisions, Assessors are trained by the Programme Leader to all work to the same standards and procedures. They also work with the Programme Leader and Internal Verifiers to make sure the assessment is planned and carried out in line with our requirements.

Our external examiner will sample student work across your Assessors. They will also want to see evidence of how you have verified assignments and assess your decisions.

Full information is provided in the *BTEC Higher Nationals Centre Guide to Quality Assurance and Assessment* available in the enhanced quality assurance section of our website: [www.qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/btec-higher-nationals/about/quality-assurance-process.html](http://www.qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/btec-higher-nationals/about/quality-assurance-process.html)

### 7.1.3 Effective organisation

Internal assessment needs to be well organised so that you can track student progress and so that we can make sure your assessments are in line with national standards. It is particularly important that you manage the overall assignment programme and deadlines to make sure that all your students can complete their assignments on time.

When developing an overall plan for delivering and assessing your programme, you will need to consider:

- the order in which you deliver modules/units
- whether delivery will take place over short or long periods of time, and
- when assessment can take place.

We support you in this through:

- assessment and feedback guidance documents available on HN Global, and
- training materials and sample templates for curriculum planning.

Please also see the *BTEC Higher Nationals Centre Guide to Quality Assurance and Assessment*, available in the Enhanced quality assurance section of our website:

[www.qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/btec-higher-nationals/about/quality-assurance-process.html](http://www.qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/btec-higher-nationals/about/quality-assurance-process.html)

### 7.1.4 Preparing students

You need to make sure that your students understand their responsibilities for assessment and the centre's arrangements. From induction onwards, you will want to make sure that students are motivated to work consistently and independently to achieve their qualifications. They need to understand:

- how assignments are used
- the importance of meeting assignment submission deadlines, and
- that all the work submitted for assessment must be their own.

To support them, you should provide a guide that explains:

- how you use assignments for assessment
- how assignments relate to the teaching programme
- how to use and reference source materials, including how to avoid plagiarism, and
- your centre's approach to assessments – for example, how students must submit assignments, what happens if they submit late work and how they can request an extended deadline in special circumstances.

## 7.2 Assessment using standard criteria

### 7.2.1 Standard assessment criteria

Assessment criteria are not a series of tasks to be done separately. Rather, they are a means to allow the assessment team to determine the level of achievement of Learning Outcomes.

A creative practitioner will use the knowledge, skills and behaviours that are included within assessment criteria as they develop their body of work. As such, each criterion is equally weighted, meaning they should be given equal importance in students' development.

The standard criteria for the BTEC Higher Nationals in Directing are as follows.

Criterion	Description
<b>Contextual knowledge</b>	The knowledge and understanding of the underlying concepts and practices associated with the subject, based on historic and contemporary precedent.
<b>Ideas generation and development</b>	The development of propositions based on research and analysis. The ability to evaluate solutions based on research and analysis.
<b>Technical knowledge and skill</b>	The use of existing skills, and development of new skills, that enable the production of creative outcomes. The ability to determine the appropriate skills to complete creative work.
<b>Professional practice</b>	Awareness of contemporary professional practice in the subject and the behaviours appropriate for employment in the sector.
<b>Communication</b>	The ability to share ideas and processes accurately and reliably to diverse audiences and recognise the appropriate forms of output to address different audiences.

Table 4: The standard assessment criteria for the BTEC Higher Nationals in Directing

## 7.2.2 Standard criteria for Level 4

Criterion	Ungraded Limited/insufficient/superficial/generic	Pass Competent/appropriate/adequate	Merit Effective/considered/clear/consistent/ secure	Distinction Confident/perceptive/proficient/ highly skilled/comprehensive
Contextual knowledge	Insufficient evidence of an understanding of the underlying concepts and principles within the area of practice. Superficial interpretation of the impact of relevant contextual factors within the area of practice.	Competent understanding of relevant concepts and principles within the area of practice. Appropriate interpretation of the impact of relevant historical, social and cultural contexts within the area of practice.	Clear understanding of relevant concepts and principles within the area of practice. Considered interpretation of the impact of relevant historical, social and cultural contexts within the area of practice.	Comprehensive understanding of relevant concepts and principles within the area of practice. Perceptive interpretation of the impact of relevant historical, social and cultural contexts within the area of practice.
Ideas generation and development	Insufficient use of research and analysis to develop ideas and solve creative problems. Limited application of iterative development processes.	Competent use of research and analysis to develop ideas and solve creative problems. Appropriate application of iterative development processes incorporating adequate exploration, testing and review.	Considered use of research and analysis to develop ideas and solve creative problems. Effective application of iterative development processes incorporating considered exploration, testing and review.	Perceptive use of research and analysis to develop ideas and solve creative problems. Confident application of iterative development processes incorporating comprehensive exploration, testing and review.
Technical knowledge and skill	Insufficient development and application of technical practices to undertake creative work. Work demonstrates limited understanding of how tools, materials, techniques and processes are used within the area of practice.	Appropriate development and application of technical practices to undertake creative work and produce appropriate outcomes. Work demonstrates competent understanding of how tools, materials, techniques and processes are used within the area of practice.	Effective development and application of technical practices to undertake creative work and produce consistent outcomes. Work demonstrates secure understanding of how tools, materials, techniques and processes are used within the area of practice.	Highly skilled development and application of technical practices to undertake creative work and produce high-quality outcomes. Work demonstrates perceptive understanding of how tools, materials, techniques and processes are used within the area of practice.
Professional practice	Limited understanding of contemporary professional practices used within the sector. Insufficient application of professional behaviours, processes and transferable skills.	Competent understanding of contemporary professional practices used within the sector. Appropriate application of professional behaviours, processes and transferable skills necessary for employment within the sector.	Clear understanding of contemporary professional practices used within the sector. Consistent application of professional behaviours, processes and transferable skills necessary for employment within the sector.	Comprehensive understanding of contemporary professional practices used within the sector. Confident application of professional behaviours, processes and transferable skills necessary for employment within the sector.
Communication	Superficial communication of development and outcomes of work and ability to convey ideas and concepts. Generic use of media and formats to convey intentions, with superficial understanding of the needs of the audience.	Competent communication of development and outcomes of work and ability to convey ideas and concepts. Appropriate use of media and formats to convey intentions, supported by adequate understanding of the needs of the audience.	Effective communication of development and outcomes of work and ability to convey ideas and concepts. Considered use of media and formats to convey intentions, supported by clear understanding of the needs of the audience.	Proficient communication of development and outcomes of work and ability to convey ideas and concepts. Confident use of media and formats to convey intentions, supported by perceptive understanding of the needs of the audience.

Table 5: The standard criteria for Pearson Higher Nationals Level 4

### 7.2.3 Standard criteria for Level 5

Criterion	Ungraded Limited/insufficient/superficial/generic	Pass Effective/considered/clear/through/secure	Merit Confident/perceptive/highly skilled/ proficient	Distinction Fluent/sophisticated/critical/strategic/ insightful
Contextual knowledge	Limited application of the concepts and principles within the area of practice in different contexts, making insufficient links to concepts beyond the area of practice. Superficial understanding of own work within the historical, social and cultural context of the area of practice.	Effective application of the concepts and principles within the area of practice in different contexts, making considered links to concepts beyond the area of practice. Clear understanding of own work within the historical, social and cultural context of the area of practice.	Confident application of the concepts and principles within the area of practice in different contexts, making perceptive links to concepts beyond the area of practice. Perceptive understanding of own work within the historical, social and cultural context of the area of practice.	Fluent application of the concepts and principles within the area of practice, making sophisticated links to concepts beyond the area of practice. Critical understanding of own work within the historical, social and cultural context of the area of practice.
Ideas generation and development	Limited use of methods of enquiry and analysis of information to support ideas generation and development. Superficial selection of solutions based on evaluation of approaches.	Effective use of methods of enquiry and considered critical analysis of information to support ideas generation and development. Considered selection of solutions based on thorough evaluation of diverse approaches.	Confident use of methods of enquiry and perceptive critical analysis of information to support ideas generation and development. Confident selection of solutions based on perceptive evaluation of diverse approaches.	Strategic use of methods of enquiry and insightful critical analysis of information to support ideas generation and development. Sophisticated selection of solutions based on critical evaluation of diverse approaches.
Technical knowledge and skill	Insufficient refinement of skills and limited use of industry-standard tools and techniques to undertake work and produce high-quality outcomes. Work demonstrates superficial understanding of technical practice and quality assurance in professional contexts.	Clear refinement of skills and secure use of industry standard tools and techniques to undertake work and produce effective outcomes. Work demonstrates thorough understanding of technical practice and quality assurance in professional contexts.	Confident refinement of skills and highly skilled use of industry-standard tools and techniques to undertake work and produce high-quality outcomes. Work demonstrates perceptive understanding of technical practice and quality assurance in professional contexts.	Strategic refinement of skills and fluent use of industry-standard tools and techniques to undertake work and produce sophisticated outcomes. Work demonstrates critical understanding of technical practice and quality assurance in professional contexts.
Professional practice	Superficial use of self-reflection to develop limited professional skills, knowledge and practices and support personal progression. Limited application of planning and management processes to deliver projects in professional contexts.	Thorough use of self-reflection to develop effective professional skills, knowledge and practices and support personal progression. Clear application of planning and management processes to deliver projects in professional contexts.	Perceptive use of self-reflection to develop confident professional skills, knowledge and practices and support personal progression. Confident application of planning and management processes to deliver projects in professional contexts.	Critical use of self-reflection to develop fluent professional skills, knowledge and practices and support personal progression. Strategic application of planning and management processes to deliver projects in professional contexts.
Communication	Limited use of communication to generically convey ideas, purpose and intentions through work. Insufficient use of communication techniques, demonstrating superficial understanding of context and audience needs.	Considered use of communication to effectively convey ideas, purpose and intentions through work. Effective use of communication techniques, demonstrating clear understanding of context and audience needs in order to maximise engagement.	Highly skilled use of communication to confidently convey ideas, purpose and intentions through work. Proficient use of communication techniques, demonstrating perceptive understanding of context and audience needs in order to maximise engagement.	Sophisticated use of communication to fluently convey ideas, purpose and intentions through work. Fluent use of communication techniques, demonstrating critical understanding of context and audience needs in order to maximise engagement.

Table 6: The standard criteria for Pearson Higher Nationals Level 5

## 7.3 Formative assessment

Not all assessment results in a final grade. Formative assessment is intended to provide students with a sense of their progress and support them to improve and develop their knowledge and skill as they work towards summative (final) assessment.

Formative assessment may be undertaken through many of the same types of activity that are used in summative assessment. An approach to formative assessment that supports students to build their knowledge and skill, through ungraded activities that 'model' aspects of what will be required in summative assessment, provides students with learning that is focused on their development.

The feedback associated with formative assessment is often the most challenging and critical element. Tutors must seek to provide students with a clear understanding of their progress and how to continue to improve, but must avoid coaching the student.

Formative assessment should:

- be aligned to the five common assessment criteria
- include formative feedback that is used to support the development of knowledge and skills, but not to provide an indicative grade or to direct students on what to do to achieve higher grades
- be recorded as evidence and be sampled by the external examiner, and
- allow students to submit the same work for formative assessment and summative assessment.

### 7.3.1 Frequency and timing of formative assessment

Students should receive formative assessment feedback while working towards the following assessment units:

- A1 and B2 – at least twice
- A2 and B1 – at least once.

Where assessment units are broken down into smaller assignments, students should have some formative assessment for each assignment provide them with an understanding of their progress and to identify areas for continued development.

Formative assessment that is too frequent can be detrimental to students' development. On the one hand, it will create an environment where students are working to produce *for* the formative assessment, rather than using the outcomes of formative assessment to support their learning and development towards the summative assessment. In addition, too much formative assessment risks becoming 'coaching', as students will only have time to respond to what has been indicated in formative feedback.

Therefore, the frequency of formative feedback should be considered carefully, as part of an overall curriculum plan, to occur at points where there is a clear benefit for the student in gaining further insight into their development and progress.

The timing of formative assessment should also be considered. Formative assessment that is too close to a summative assessment does not provide effective learning for the student. With limited time between formative and summative assessment, there is less opportunity for the student to make effective use of the feedback from formative assessment to address any issues in the work towards summative assessment. Again, there is also a risk that the feedback from formative assessment becomes simply instructions (coaching) for the student.

Care should be taken to ensure that formative assessment takes place with sufficient time for the student to reflect upon the feedback from the formative assessment and make whatever adjustments they deem necessary to improve their future work or performance towards summative assessment.

It is important to recognise that formative assessment can, in some cases, be continuous; depending on the learning and teaching strategy that has been adopted for a module/unit or programme. For example, where students may be undertaking a large project, which they are working on throughout the semester/term, you may have regular tutorials (either group or individual) to review work-in-progress and provide students with feedback that helps them to understand their progress and development. In this context, the tutorials are a form of continuous formative assessment. The feedback from these tutorials still needs to avoid coaching and tutors should plan for tutorials (formative assessment) to stop at a point where there is sufficient time, before the summative assessment, to make effective use of the feedback in the later tutorials.

Please also see the *BTEC Higher Nationals Centre Guide to Quality Assurance and Assessment*, which can be found on our website:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/btec-higher-nationals/about/quality-assurance-process.html>.

### **7.3.2 Formative feedback**

While assessment and feedback always constitute a part of the student's learning, the purpose of assessment will vary depending on when it is undertaken and the aim of the assessment activity.

Formative assessment feedback is given to students during the learning journey. This is to say that it relates to formative assessment that may be undertaken, at any point, prior to the summative assessment. Just as formative assessment is undertaken to support students to understand their progress, the associated feedback must be aimed at helping the student to recognise their current position and how to move forward.

Formative assessment should always result in qualitative feedback: not a grade. When giving formative assessment feedback it is important to avoid giving students advice that directly informs the work that they may do for summative assessment. This is referred to as 'coaching' and is inappropriate. Feedback should provide students

with general advice on how to progress in their studies, but should not tell them what to do.

For example, a tutor might say:

*"... your analysis of the research is not clear, you will need to look at the research more critically..."*

rather than

*"... what you should be writing is..."*

In the former, the tutor is supporting the student to understand their current progress and how to improve, while the latter is 'coaching' the student.

Formative assessment can be either formal or informal. We might schedule specific points where students present work for formative assessment. Such instances can be valuable opportunities for group discussion and peer assessment. In such cases, it is expected that students will receive written formative assessment feedback. In other instances, the formative assessment feedback may be during tutorials or classroom activities.

Please also see the *BTEC Higher Nationals Centre Guide to Quality Assurance and Assessment*, which can be found on our website:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/btec-higher-nationals/about/quality-assurance-process.html>.

## **7.4 Making valid assessment decisions**

### **7.4.1 Authentic student work**

An Assessor must assess only student work that is authentic – in other words, the student's own independent work. Students must sign a declaration for each assessment to confirm that it is their own work. This declaration must confirm that:

- any evidence submitted for the assignment is the student's own, and
- the student understands that, if this is not the case, they may face penalties for malpractice.

Assessors must make sure that evidence is authentic by setting valid assignments and supervising students during the assessment period. Assessors must also take care not to provide direct input, instructions or specific feedback that may influence the student's work and final grade.

You can use Pearson templates or your own templates to document authentication.

If your Assessor suspects that a student's evidence is not authentic, they must take action in line with our policies for malpractice. Please see *Section 5.7* for more information.

## 7.4.2 Use of artificial intelligence (AI)

The Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) guidance in relation to the use of AI can be found [here](#). While the principles above remain, centres may wish to consider additional assessment methods to address the potential use of AI.

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) has also provided updated guidance for providers in relation to the increase in use of artificial intelligence within higher education, and potential risks to academic integrity. The guidance can be found [here](#).

## 7.4.3 Use of artificial intelligence (AI) in creative subjects

The capabilities of AI are developing rapidly and are already having a deep impact on working practices and society. There is potential for positive and exciting impacts on the creative industries and on creative education when used in conjunction with genuine student ideas, technical skill and creativity that cannot be replicated by AI. As an awarding body we will continually review AI developments and their impact on learning and qualifications to ensure the benefits and potential are harnessed while mitigating risks to assessment.

We would like to provide some guidance and information on the use of AI by students in work that is produced for assessment.

Pearson understands that these powerful tools are being used as a valid part of creative work, but that there are also inherent risks to their use, particularly in an educational or assessment context. It is important that students understand the appropriate use of AI in creative contexts to be prepared for a future in the creative sectors, but also that they develop and demonstrate their own skills in generating ideas, research, use of technical and practical processes, and so on, independent of AI input.

The guidance published by JCQ on the use of AI states that “*all work submitted for qualification assessments must be the student’s own*”. This means ensuring that the final product/outcome is their own work, and is not copied, paraphrased or heavily derived from another source, including content generated by AI. Within a creative assessment, this means that students must independently develop work beyond any AI input to evidence their own skills and knowledge. If AI is being used by students to produce creative content without sufficient demonstration of their own independent input, they cannot be rewarded for it. JCQ guidance also notes that all Assessors must be trained on identifying and reporting suspected malpractice.

However, it is also noted that the use of AI may be appropriately incorporated into the research, ideas generation, development and production phases of creative work, in the same way that taking inspiration from the work of others can be. Bearing this in mind, when AI is used by students as part of the development of creative work, it is important for tutors and Assessors to consider the following:

- Ensure that you are familiar with the students’ styles and work so you can confidently authenticate their independent work.

- Supervise/check on the iteration and development phases of student work, ensuring that their independent demonstration of having met assessment criteria is clearly evidenced.
- Ensure any use of AI tools in the research, ideas generation, development and/or production of creative work is **properly referenced and annotated**. It should also contain details of how the tool was used and reflection on how the results impacted their own work.

Further support and guidance can be found in the *Assessment and Assignment Guidance Booklet*.

#### 7.4.4 Making assessment decisions using criteria

Assessors must use our criteria to make assessment decisions. They can judge the evidence from a student using all the relevant criteria at the same time, but they must be satisfied that there is enough detailed evidence for each criterion required. For example, including a concluding section may not be enough evidence to meet the criterion requiring 'evaluation'.

Assessors should use the information and support available to help them reach their decisions. This includes:

- examples of moderated assessed work, and
- their Programme Leader and assessment team's experience.

#### 7.4.5 Dealing with late assignments

For assessment to be fair, it is important that students are all assessed in the same way and that some students are not given an advantage by having extra time or the opportunity to learn from others. You should develop and publish your own regulations on late assignments and circumstances where you may agree to an extension.

Students must understand your policy on completing assignments by the deadlines you give them. You may agree to extend a deadline for a genuine reason such as illness in line with your centre policies. Please see *Section 5.6* for more information.

You can apply a penalty to assignments that are submitted late. To do this, you should:

- assess the assignment normally
- apply the penalty or cap to the grade awarded
- tell the student their uncapped grade to recognise the learning they have achieved and provide genuine assessment feedback
- record both the uncapped and capped grades, and
- have both grades verified by a suitable Assessment Board, taking into account any genuine reasons for the assignment being late.

Please also see the *BTEC Higher Nationals Centre Guide to Quality Assurance and Assessment*, which can be found on our website:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/btec-higher-nationals/about/quality-assurance-process.html>.

#### **7.4.6 Providing assessment decisions and feedback**

Once your assessment team has completed the assessment process for an assignment, they will provide a formal assessment decision. This should be recorded formally and reported to the student. The information given to the student:

- must show the formal decision and how it has been reached, including how assessment criteria have been met
- may show why they have not demonstrated achievement against assessment criteria
- must not provide feedback on how to improve evidence, and
- may provide feedback on how to improve in the future.

#### **7.4.7 The opportunity to resubmit an assignment**

If a student's assignment does not pass after the first assessment, they must have the opportunity to resubmit the assignment for reassessment. In this case:

- students can have the assignment reassessed once only
- if coursework and project-based or portfolio-based assignments need to be reassessed, this will usually involve carrying out the original activity again
- for examinations, reassessment will involve completing a new activity
- the grade for a reassessed assignment will be capped at a Pass, and
- assignments already graded at a Pass or higher cannot be reassessed.

#### **7.4.8 Repeat modules**

If a student fails to achieve a Pass for a module following reassessment, your Assessment Board may agree that they can repeat the module. In this case:

- the student must pay the module fee and study the module again, with full attendance, and
- the grade for the module (if successfully completed) will be capped at a Pass.

Students can repeat a module once only.

### 7.4.9 Assessment Boards

It is a formal Pearson requirement that centres hold an Assessment Board for all your Pearson BTEC Higher National programmes. The main purpose of an Assessment Board is to make recommendations on:

- the grades achieved by students on the modules and assessment units
- extenuating circumstances
- cases of cheating and plagiarism
- students progressing to the next stage of the programme
- the awards to be made to students, and
- students resubmitting assignments and repeating modules.

Assessment Boards may also monitor academic standards. The main board meetings normally take place at the end of the session, but if your centre operates on a semester system there may be meetings at the end of the first semester.

There may also be separate meetings to deal with referrals.

If you do not have an Assessment Board, our external examiner will discuss this with your quality nominee and Programme Leader. Assessment Board reports and minutes provide valuable evidence of your quality assurance processes.

## 7.5 Planning and record-keeping

For internal processes to be effective, your assessment team needs to be well organised and keep effective records. We will work closely with you to make sure you are meeting national standards. This process gives stakeholders confidence in your assessment approach.

Your Programme Leader must have an assessment plan, produced as a spreadsheet. This plan should include:

- the time required to train the assessment team and make sure they are working to the same standards and procedures
- the time available for teaching and carrying out assessments, including when students may complete assessments and when quality assurance will take place
- the completion dates for different assignments
- who is acting as Internal Verifier for each assignment and the date by which the assignment needs to be verified
- a procedure for Internal Verifiers to sample Assessors' decisions that covers all assignments, Assessors and a range of students
- a process to assess and verify students' work so that they receive formal decisions quickly, and
- a system for scheduling resubmissions.

The Programme Leader must also keep records of all assessments carried out.

The key records are:

- checking of assignment briefs

- student declarations
- Assessor decisions on assignments, with feedback given to students, and
- confirmation of assessment decisions.

Examples of records and more information are available in the *BTEC Higher Nationals Centre Guide to Quality Assurance and Assessment*, available on the enhanced quality assurance process section of our website:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/btec-higher-nationals/about/quality-assurance-process.html>.

## **7.6 Calculating the final qualification grade**

### **7.6.1 Conditions for the award**

#### **7.6.1.1 Conditions for awarding our HNC**

To achieve our Pearson BTEC Level 4 Higher National Certificate qualification, a student must have:

- completed modules equivalent to 120 credits at Level 4.

#### **7.6.1.2 Conditions for awarding our HND**

To achieve our Pearson BTEC Level 5 Higher National Diploma qualification, a student must have:

- completed modules equivalent to 120 credits at Level 5, and
- completed modules equivalent to 120 credits at Level 4.

### **7.6.2 Compensation**

#### **7.6.2.1 Compensation for the HNC**

Students who have attempted but not achieved a Pass in one of their Level 4 17-credit units can still be awarded an HNC as long as they have completed and passed the remaining units.

### 7.6.3 Calculating the overall qualification grade

A student's overall qualification grade is based on their performance in all modules. They are awarded a Pass, Merit or Distinction using the points gained through all 120 credits, at Level 4 for the HNC or Level 5 for the HND. The overall qualification grade is calculated in the same way for the HNC and the HND. For HND, the overall qualification grade is based on student performance in Level 5 modules only. Students must have attempted all modules and assessment units in a valid combination for each qualification. The conditions of award will apply as explained above.

#### 7.6.3.1 Points per assessment unit criteria

Grade	Points
Pass	1
Merit	2
Distinction	3

Table 7: Points per credit

#### 7.6.3.2 Point boundaries

Grade	Point boundaries
Pass	10
Merit	16
Distinction	23

Table 8: Grade point boundaries

## 7.6.4 Modelled student outcomes

### 7.6.4.1 Pearson BTEC Level 4 Higher National Certificate

Module A										
	Student 1		Student 2		Student 3		Student 4		Student 5	
	Grade	Grade points								
<b>Assessment Unit A1</b>										
<b>A1.AC1</b>	P	1	P	1	M	2	P	1	M	2
<b>A1.AC2</b>	P	1	M	2	M	2	M	2	M	2
<b>A1.AC3</b>	P	1	D	3	D	3	D	3	P	1
<b>A1.AC4</b>	P	1	M	2	D	3	D	3	P	1
<b>A1.AC5</b>	P	1	P	1	D	3	M	2	D	3
<b>Assessment Unit A1 total points</b>		5		9		13		11		9

Module A										
	Student 1		Student 2		Student 3		Student 4		Student 5	
	Grade	Grade points	Grade	Grade points	Grade	Grade points	Grade	Grade points	Grade	Grade points
<b>Assessment Unit A2</b>										
<b>A2.AC1</b>	P	1	P	1	M	2	P	1	M	2
<b>A2.AC2</b>	M	2	P	1	M	2	M	2	M	2
<b>A2.AC3</b>	P	1	D	3	D	3	D	3	P	1
<b>A2.AC4</b>	D	3	D	3	D	3	D	3	M	2
<b>A2.AC5</b>	P	1	D	3	M	2	M	2	M	2
<b>Assessment Unit A2 total points</b>		8		11		12		11		9
<b>Total qualification points</b>		<b>13</b>		<b>20</b>		<b>25</b>		<b>22</b>		<b>18</b>
<b>Overall Higher National Certificate grade</b>		<b>Pass</b>		<b>Merit</b>		<b>Distinction</b>		<b>Merit</b>		<b>Pass</b>

Table 9: Example HNC model outcomes

### 7.6.4.2 Pearson BTEC Level 5 Higher National Diploma

Module A										
	Student 1		Student 2		Student 3		Student 4		Student 5	
	Grade	Grade points								
<b>Assessment Unit A1</b>										
<b>A1.AC1</b>	P	1	P	1	M	2	P	1	M	2
<b>A1.AC2</b>	P	1	M	2	M	2	M	2	M	2
<b>A1.AC3</b>	P	1	D	3	D	3	D	3	P	1
<b>A1.AC4</b>	P	1	M	2	D	3	D	3	P	1
<b>A1.AC5</b>	P	1	P	1	D	3	M	2	D	3
<b>Assessment Unit A1 total points</b>		5		9		13		11		9

Module A										
	Student 1		Student 2		Student 3		Student 4		Student 5	
	Grade	Grade points	Grade	Grade points	Grade	Grade points	Grade	Grade points	Grade	Grade points
<b>Assessment Unit A2</b>										
<b>A2.AC1</b>	P	1	P	1	M	2	P	1	M	2
<b>A2.AC2</b>	M	2	P	1	M	2	M	2	M	2
<b>A2.AC3</b>	P	1	D	3	D	3	D	3	P	1
<b>A2.AC4</b>	D	3	D	3	D	3	D	3	M	2
<b>A2.AC5</b>	P	1	D	3	M	2	M	2	M	2
<b>Assessment Unit A2 total points</b>		8		11		12		11		9
<b>Total qualification points</b>		<b>13</b>		<b>20</b>		<b>25</b>		<b>22</b>		<b>18</b>
<b>Overall Higher National Diploma grade</b>		<b>Pass</b>		<b>Merit</b>		<b>Distinction</b>		<b>Merit</b>		<b>Pass</b>

Table 10: Example HND model outcomes

Module B										
	Student 1		Student 2		Student 3		Student 4		Student 5	
	Grade	Grade points								
<b>Assessment Unit B1</b>										
<b>B1.AC1</b>	P	1	P	1	M	2	P	1	P	1
<b>B1.AC2</b>	M	2	M	2	M	2	M	2	M	2
<b>B1.AC3</b>	M	2	D	3	P	1	D	3	P	1
<b>B1.AC4</b>	P	1	D	3	M	2	D	3	P	1
<b>B1.AC5</b>	P	1	P	1	D	3	M	2	P	1
<b>Assessment Unit B1 total points</b>		7		10		10		11		6

Module B										
	Student 1		Student 2		Student 3		Student 4		Student 5	
	Grade	Grade points	Grade	Grade points	Grade	Grade points	Grade	Grade points	Grade	Grade points
<b>Assessment Unit B2</b>										
<b>B2.AC1</b>	P	1	P	1	M	2	P	1	P	1
<b>B2.AC2</b>	M	2	P	1	M	2	M	2	M	2
<b>B2.AC3</b>	D	3	M	2	D	3	D	3	P	1
<b>B2.AC4</b>	M	2	D	3	D	3	D	3	M	2
<b>B2.AC5</b>	P	1	D	3	D	3	M	2	M	2
<b>Assessment Unit B2 total points</b>		9		10		13		11		8
<b>Total qualification points</b>		<b>16</b>		<b>20</b>		<b>23</b>		<b>22</b>		<b>14</b>
<b>Overall Higher National Diploma grade</b>		<b>Pass</b>		<b>Merit</b>		<b>Distinction</b>		<b>Merit</b>		<b>Pass</b>

Table 11: Example HND model outcomes

Notes:

1. The calculation of overall qualification grade for the Higher National Diploma is based only on achievement within the Level 5 elements of the qualification.
2. The tables above are provided as general examples of using assessment unit and module grades to calculate qualification grades. They may not reflect the specifics of this qualification.

## 8.0 Quality assurance

The quality assurance system for all Pearson BTEC Higher National programmes is linked to Level 4 and Level 5 of the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ). This means that centres must have effective quality assurance processes to review their programme delivery. It also means that assessment grades are in line with national standards.

The quality assurance process for centres offering our Pearson BTEC Higher National programmes has five main features:

1. The approval process.
2. Monitoring internal systems.
3. Independent review of assessments.
4. Annual programme monitoring report.
5. Annual student survey.

### 8.1 The approval process

If you want to deliver our programmes at your centre, you must apply first through the existing centre approval process and then through the programme approval process. We can consider your application by:

- carrying out a desk-based review, or
- visiting your centre.

You will need to provide evidence that your centre:

- has the human and physical resources needed to deliver and assess the programme effectively
- understands the rules of independent assessment and agrees to follow them
- has a strong internal assessment system supported by 'fit for purpose' assessment documentation, and
- has a system to internally verify assessment decisions so that they are consistent across all Assessors and sites.

Your application must be supported by the Head of the Centre (your principal or chief executive). It must include a declaration that you will operate the programmes strictly and in line with our requirements.

If your centre is already approved and you want to renew approval, you may be able to use our automatic approval process.

We may withdraw qualification or centre approval if we believe you can no longer quality assure your programme delivery or assessment standards.

## 8.2 Centre and qualification approval

As part of the approval process, your centre must meet the conditions listed below before offering the qualification.

- You must have suitable physical resources (for example, equipment, IT, learning materials, teaching rooms) to support delivery and assessment of the qualifications.
- You must provide the specific resources required for individual modules.
- Staff involved in the assessment process must have relevant skills or experience.
- You must have systems to provide continuing professional development for staff delivering the qualification.
- You must have suitable health and safety policies for students and staff using equipment.
- You must deliver the qualification in line with current equality legislation.

In this way, we can provide qualifications that meet the needs and expectations of students worldwide.

## 8.3 Monitoring internal systems

You will need to demonstrate that you continue to meet our centre approval criteria over time and across all Higher National programmes. This involves providing evidence to our external examiners for review.

Our examiners will check that:

- your systems and the way you use them remain suitable for supporting the programmes
- you apply student registration and appeals policies consistently, and
- you have effective internal examination and standardisation processes.

In some cases, you may present evidence of your operation within a recognised code of practice such as that of the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education. However, we may still want to confirm independently that these arrangements are operating to our standards.

If our examiners identify problems with your internal systems, we will take steps to help you correct them.

## 8.4 Independent review of assessments

The external examiner will review your internal assessments for all Pearson BTEC Higher National programmes benchmarked to Levels 4 and 5 of the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Framework for Higher Education Qualifications. They will either:

- confirm that your internal formative and summative assessments meet national standards and allow certification, or
- provide actions to improve the quality of your assessments before allowing certification.

## 8.5 Annual programme monitoring report (APMR)

This annual review form gives you the opportunity to analyse and reflect on the most recent teaching year. It also provides us with information to help us improve the quality assurance of the Pearson BTEC Higher National programmes. An overview report is produced to outline the findings of the APMR each year.

## 8.6 Annual student survey

Pearson will conduct an annual survey of Pearson BTEC Higher National students. This provides us with a snapshot of every Higher National student's experience as part of the quality assurance process. Each centre with enough students taking part in the survey will get its own report about their results. You can access the report on HN Global at [www.hnglobal.ighernationals.com/login](http://www.hnglobal.ighernationals.com/login).

## 8.7 Continuing quality assurance and standards verification

Each year we update our *BTEC Higher Nationals Centre Guide to Quality Assurance and Assessment*, available in the enhanced quality assurance section of our website: [www.qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/btec-higher-nationals/about/quality-assurance-process.html](http://www.qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/btec-higher-nationals/about/quality-assurance-process.html). The handbook contains detailed guidance on the quality processes you should follow.

### 8.7.1 Our key principles of quality assurance

- A centre delivering Pearson BTEC Higher National programmes must be approved by us and must have our approval for the programmes or groups of programmes it is delivering.
- As part of gaining our approval, the centre agrees to always follow our terms and conditions for delivering programmes effectively and to follow the assessment quality assurance policy.

- We provide approved centres with a range of materials and opportunities for reviewing internal materials through our assessment-checking service. This service demonstrates the processes required for effective assessment and provides examples of effective standards. You must use these materials and services to make sure all staff delivering Pearson BTEC Higher National qualifications keep up to date with the guidance on assessment.
- You must follow agreed processes for:
  - making sure Assessors and verifiers all work to the same standards and procedures
  - planning, monitoring and recording assessment processes, and
  - dealing with special circumstances, appeals and malpractice.
- We will work in partnership with you to help you achieve quality-assured assessment.
- We will help you follow best practice and use suitable technology to support quality assurance processes.
- We will try to make sure our quality assurance processes do not create unnecessary administrative work for you.
- We will monitor and support you in achieving effective assessment and quality assurance.

We will do this by:

- making sure that you complete a suitable declaration at the time of approval
- carrying out approval visits to your centre
- making sure you have a well-trained, effective team of Assessors and verifiers
- sampling and verifying your assessments, assessed student work and other relevant documents, and
- reviewing your strategy for assessing and quality-assuring your BTEC programmes.

As an approved centre, you must advertise your certification only with our permission and in line with our reporting requirements.

If you do not have and maintain a strong approach to quality assurance, you will not be able to apply for certification for any Pearson BTEC Higher National qualifications.

If you do not follow our recommendations for improving your quality assurance, we may withdraw approval for you to deliver our qualifications.

## 9.0 Recognition of prior learning and attainment

Recognition of prior learning (RPL) is a way of awarding credit if a student can demonstrate they meet the assessment requirements for a module/unit through knowledge, understanding or skills they already have. As long as the assessment requirements are met, RPL can be used to accredit an assessment unit, modules or a whole qualification.

RPL provides a route for recognising the achievements of continuous learning from a range of activities using any valid assessment procedure. We encourage you to recognise students' previous achievements and experiences at work, at home, in leisure and in the classroom. Evidence of learning must be valid and reliable.

For full guidance on RPL, please see *Recognition of prior learning policy and process* in the support section of our website:

[www.qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/support-topics/understanding-our-qualifications/policies-for-centres-learners-and-employees.html](http://www.qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/support-topics/understanding-our-qualifications/policies-for-centres-learners-and-employees.html)

## 10.0 Equality, diversity and inclusion

Equality, and inclusion and fairness are central to our work. The design of these qualifications embeds equality, diversity and inclusion as set out in the qualification regulators' general conditions of recognition.

Promoting equality and diversity involves:

- treating everyone with equal dignity and worth, and
- raising ambitions and supporting achievement for people with different needs and backgrounds.

Creating an inclusive learning environment means anticipating students' varying needs and trying to make sure all students have equal access to educational opportunities. This involves providing access for people who have differing individual needs and removing unnecessary barriers to learning. Qualification design must be inclusive so that students with and without disabilities have equal access to learning opportunities.

Our equality, diversity and inclusion policy requires that:

- all students have an equal opportunity to access our qualifications and assessments
- assessments should reflect the wide diversity of students, and
- our qualifications are designed and awarded in a way that is fair to every student.

We are committed to making sure that:

- students with a protected characteristic as defined by law (for example, race, sexuality or religious belief) are not disadvantaged in comparison with students who do not share that characteristic
- all students achieve the recognition they deserve for taking a qualification, and
- this achievement can be compared fairly to the achievement of their peers.

Our qualifications should:

- be available to everyone capable of reaching the required standards
- be free from any barriers that restrict access and progress, and
- offer equal opportunities for all those who want to access them.

Please see our *Equity, diversity and inclusion in Pearson qualifications and related services policy*, downloadable from the support section of our website:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/support-topics/understanding-our-qualifications/policies-for-centres-learners-and-employees.html>.

Please use your integrity when recruiting students to our Pearson BTEC Higher National programmes. You should:

- make sure they have the information and advice they need about the qualification to be sure it meets their needs
- check each student's qualifications and experience to make sure they have the potential to achieve the qualification, and
- for students with disabilities and specific needs, consider the support available to them and any other support they may need during teaching and assessment.

Please see our policy documents on students with particular needs.

## **10.1 Access to qualifications for students with disabilities or specific needs**

Students can be assessed in a recognised regional sign language.

Further information on access arrangements can be found in the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) document *Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration* at: [www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration](http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration). Details on how to make reasonable adjustments for students with protected characteristics are provided in our *Supplementary guidance for reasonable adjustments and special consideration in internal assessments*, available at: <https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/support-topics/understanding-our-qualifications/policies-for-centres-learners-and-employees.html>.

# 11.0 Modules in the BTEC Higher Nationals Certificate in Directing

## Module A: Process and Practice

Level: 4

Guided learning hours: 480

### Introduction

The role of a director is central to the creative industries, shaping the vision, tone and execution of storytelling across multiple mediums. Whether working in film, television, theatre or animation, directors are responsible for guiding performances, orchestrating visual composition and collaborating with a range of creative and technical professionals to bring a project to life. As the media landscape continues to evolve – through advancements in digital film-making, virtual production and immersive storytelling – directors must adapt to new technologies while maintaining a deep understanding of traditional storytelling techniques.

Directing is a discipline that requires a balance of artistic intuition, leadership and technical expertise. It demands an understanding of historical and contemporary directing styles, the ability to work with actors and crew, and the skills to manage a production from concept to final execution. Directors must also be able to navigate the logistical and business aspects of the industry, from budgeting and scheduling to working with producers and financiers.

This module provides students with the fundamental knowledge and practical skills required to develop their craft as directors. Through a combination of research, creative exploration and hands-on production work, students will engage with a range of directing approaches across different forms of media. They will refine their ability to communicate a vision, make informed creative choices and lead a team in the execution of complex projects.

The learning and teaching for this module integrate Essential Content across two assessment units.

## Learning Outcomes for assessment units

A1: Concept and Development (340 GLH – 85 credits)

Unit code: H/651/5490

A1.1 Explore the history, theories and developments related to the area of practice.

A1.2 Explore and develop ideas based on an iterative approach to problem-solving in creative practice.

A1.3 Explore technical knowledge and skills necessary to support creative practice.

A1.4 Explore professional knowledge, behaviours and practices within the sector.

A1.5 Explore techniques, media and formats to communicate ideas and concepts for diverse audiences.

A2 Creative Project (140 GLH – 35 credits)

Unit code: J/651/5491

A2.1 Apply relevant contextual knowledge to inform a creative project.

A2.2 Analyse a given brief to develop creative solutions, applying an iterative development process.

A2.3 Apply technical knowledge and skill in the production of a project outcome.

A2.4 Demonstrate professional knowledge, behaviours and practices in response to a given brief.

A2.5 Present the development process and outcomes of a creative project for a specified audience.

## Essential Content

Students must engage with the following content before they are assessed.

The content is designed to allow students to develop the knowledge and skills associated with practical vocational contexts related to the subject area.

Content may be delivered through a variety of different teaching and learning approaches that combine to provide a holistic learning journey.

Some aspects of the content are provided as generalised topics that allow teaching teams to develop detailed delivery to meet localised needs. In other cases, there are indications of the types of information that may be delivered in detail; these are indicated by (e.g. ...).

The content defined here is not intended to be exhaustive or exclusive and should be taught within the context of the focus that the centre has identified for its students within the subject area.

## Contextual knowledge

The knowledge and understanding of the underlying concepts and practices associated with the subject, based on historic and contemporary precedents.

### *Contextual influences:*

- Social:
  - Changing audience demographics
  - Media consumption trends
  - Cultural and artistic traditions
  - Representation and diversity in directing
- Technological:
  - Advancements in digital cinematography and virtual production
  - Motion capture and performance capture for animation and games
  - The impact of streaming services on directorial practices
  - Chromakey, visual effects (VFX), and real-time rendering in directing
- Economic:
  - Funding and budgeting in independent vs studio productions
  - The economic role of theatre and live performance
  - Impact of global box office and streaming revenue models
  - Commercial directing and branded content
- Political:
  - Government policies affecting film, TV, theatre and gaming industries (e.g. Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky's 'propaganda model')
  - Censorship and freedom of expression
  - Representation of political themes in media
  - Globalisation and cross-cultural collaboration in directing
- Geographic:
  - Film-making hubs and regional cinema movements
  - Directing in different cultural and environmental contexts
  - Site-specific directing for theatre and live performances
  - Location-based shooting vs studio productions.

### *Historical developments:*

- Creative subject areas
- Creative subject relationships:
  - Directing's role within interdisciplinary collaborations (writers, cinematographers, actors, designers)
  - Evolution of directing styles across mediums
- Historical and contemporary precedents

- Milestones, movements, styles and trends:
  - Early cinema (silent film, German Expressionism, Soviet Montage)
  - Classic Hollywood and the studio system
  - Auteur theory and New Hollywood
  - Theatre directing traditions (Stanislavski, Brecht, Grotowski)
  - Directing for television (live TV, multi-camera sitcoms, prestige drama)
  - Advances in animation directing (e.g. Disney, Pixar, anime, motion capture)
  - Video game direction (narrative-driven games, open-world storytelling)
  - Experimental and interactive media (e.g. virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) experiences)
  - The development of artificial intelligence (AI) in the creative industry.

### *Disciplines:*

- Film directing:
  - Narrative film
  - Documentary film-making
  - Commercial and music video directing
- Television directing:
  - Multi-camera studio directing
  - Episodic drama and comedy
  - Live broadcasting and news directing
- Theatre and live performance directing:
  - Stage productions (classical, contemporary, immersive theatre)
  - Directing actors for live performance
  - Musical theatre and opera
- Animation and game directing:
  - Directing performance capture and voice actors
  - Cinematic storytelling in games
  - Storyboarding and previsualisation
- New media and emerging technologies:
  - Directing for VR and AR experiences
  - Interactive and non-linear storytelling
  - The role of AI in directing.

### *Cultural theories and principles for interpreting the subject:*

- Audience reception and engagement (uses and gratification, reception theory)
- Narrative structures and character archetypes (e.g. Todorov, Propp, Campbell's Hero's Journey)
- Mise-en-scène and visual storytelling principles
- The impact of directorial choices on meaning and interpretation
- Ethical considerations in directing (representation, authenticity, cultural sensitivity).

## Ideas generation and development

The development of propositions based on research and analysis. The ability to evaluate solutions based on research and analysis.

### *The brief:*

- Aims and objectives: understanding the story's purpose (entertainment, education, social impact, commercial)
- Establishing a directorial vision
- Competitors and the market:
  - Analysing similar works and their directorial approaches
  - Identifying trends and innovations in directing
- Demographics and audience needs:
  - Understanding audience psychology and engagement strategies
  - Targeting specific demographics through storytelling and visual style
- Client types and expectations:
  - Working with producers, studios, networks and independent financiers
  - Adapting directing styles based on different production scales
- Constraints:
  - Budgetary and logistical restrictions
  - Working within the limitations of live performance, film sets and animation pipelines
- Timeline:
  - Scheduling from pre-production to post-production
  - Time constraints in live television, theatre and game development
- Budget: allocating resources effectively for set design, actors, technology and special effects (SFX)
- Deliverables: understanding different output formats (e.g. film, episodic, theatre production, interactive media)
- Context: cultural, historical and artistic influences on a production
- Regulations: industry standards for safety, copyright and ethical considerations in directing.

### *Research:*

- Research ethics:
  - Responsible storytelling and representation
  - Fair use of references and sources
- Research and analysis methodologies:
  - Primary research: direct interviews with industry professionals, case studies of directing styles
  - Secondary research: studying films, plays, TV episodes, game cinematics and critical analyses
  - Market research: understanding audience preferences and reception
  - Thematic research: identifying visual and narrative influences for a project
  - Audience segmentation: determining age groups, cultural backgrounds and media consumption habits
  - Data collection methods: focus groups, observational research, user testing for interactive media
- Validity and reliability:
  - Ensuring credibility and authenticity in directing choices
- Research bias:
  - Avoiding preconceived notions and embracing diverse perspectives
- Quantitative and qualitative data:
  - Box office figures, streaming data, audience reviews vs qualitative storytelling insights
- Reputable sources: academic film/theatre studies, interviews with directors, industry reports.

### *Ideas generation:*

- Informing ideas with research: drawing inspiration from real-world case studies and successful directing techniques
- Techniques for idea development:
  - Reverse thinking: what if the story were told from a different perspective?
  - SCAMPER: substituting, combining, adapting, modifying, putting to another use, eliminating or reversing directorial techniques
  - Brainstorming and mind mapping: collaborating with writers and production teams to refine vision
  - Simulation and role-playing: workshopping scenes with actors, improvisation in theatre directing
  - Forced relationships: combining unexpected visual and narrative elements
  - 'Six Thinking Hats' (de Bono): evaluating ideas from multiple perspectives (emotional, logical, creative)
  - Lateral thinking: breaking conventional patterns in directing and storytelling.

### *Solving problems through testing and reflection:*

- Concept: refining themes, narratives and directing style
- Materials: evaluating scripts, visual references and technological requirements
- Techniques: testing different directing approaches in rehearsals and previsualisation
- Processes: establishing workflows for film, theatre, animation and interactive media
- Form and function: ensuring coherence between the director's vision and execution
- Quality: balancing artistic and technical excellence
- Reliability: ensuring consistency in performances, visuals and pacing
- Iterative design development: the directorial process: research, analyse, plan, ideate, explore, test, present, review, repeat
- Testing: samples: early film tests, animation previsualisation, stage readings
- Prototypes: proof-of-concept short films, theatre workshop performances
- Model fittings: blocking and staging experiments, character animation tests
- Stakeholder input:
  - User/audience: previews, test screenings, game-user experience testing
  - Client: producer, studio or funding body feedback
  - Peer: collaborating with cinematographers, editors, designers and actors
- Social media: public engagement and reaction analysis
- Focus groups: evaluating audience reception before finalising production
- Review:
  - Evaluation: reflecting on artistic and commercial viability
  - Critique: constructive feedback from peers and mentors
  - Making changes in response to feedback: revisions in script, blocking, editing choices
  - The role of reflection for creative practitioners: continuous learning and adaptation
  - Reflective practice and lifelong learning: studying other directors, evolving one's style.

## Technical knowledge and skill

The use of existing skills and development of new skills that enable the production of creative outcomes. The ability to determine the appropriate skills to complete creative work.

### *Cinematography and visual storytelling:*

- Working with actors and spaces:
  - Blocking and staging for film, television, theatre and animation
  - Directing actors for emotional authenticity and physical presence
  - Utilising space dynamically for different mediums
- Art direction:
  - Collaborating with production designers, costume designers and set decorators
  - Defining the visual identity and mise-en-scène of a production
- Lighting:
  - Natural and artificial lighting techniques
  - Colour temperature and white balance
  - Light modification (gels, reflectors, diffusion)
  - Three-point lighting, practical lighting, chiaroscuro and stylised lighting for drama and mood
- Camera operation:
  - Understanding shot composition, framing and movement
  - Camera angles and their emotional impact
  - Depth of field and lens choices
  - Using Steadicams, drones, handheld and motion capture cameras
- Image manipulation:
  - Enhancing film and television visuals in post-production
  - Colour grading and correction techniques
  - Computer-generated imagery (CGI) and VFX integration in live action
- Set and stage design: collaborating on theatre sets, film sets and digital environments
- Spatial awareness for directing different formats (360° film, VR, theatre-in-the-round)
- Typography and graphics for media:
  - Using titles, subtitles and credits effectively in film and television
- Motion graphics for digital content, animation and advertising
- Web and social media content production: directing short-form content for social platforms
- Understanding algorithms and audience engagement
- Writing and structuring content for online media

- File types, storage and backup:
  - Understanding video, audio and image file formats
  - Data management and cloud storage solutions
  - Archiving raw footage and project files for future use.

*Materials and practical applications:*

- Film and digital formats:
  - Shooting on film vs digital (35mm, 16mm, ARRI ALEXA, RED)
  - Resolution, frame rate and aspect ratio considerations
- Theatre production materials: costumes, props, stage sets and rigging
- Animation and game directing tools:
  - Motion capture suits and virtual production techniques
  - 2D and 3D animation software (e.g. Toon Boom, Blender, Maya, Unreal Engine)
  - Character rigging and digital puppeteering
- SFX and practical FX:
  - Green screen techniques and compositing
  - Prosthetics, make-up effects, and animatronics
  - Miniatures and practical explosions.

*Measuring, staging and technical tools:*

- Set and stage measurements:
  - Ergonomics for camera set-ups and actor blocking
  - Marking actors' positions for consistency in film and live performances
- Storyboarding and animatics:
  - Hand-drawn vs digital storyboarding
  - Using animatics for previsualisation
- Sound recording and mixing:
  - Boom mic and lavalier placement for optimal audio
  - Foley sound and automated dialogue replacement (ADR) techniques
  - Sound mixing for film, television and theatre
- Editing software and techniques:
  - Non-linear editing (e.g. Adobe Premiere, Avid, DaVinci Resolve)
  - Scene transitions and pacing for narrative impact
  - Multicam editing for live broadcasts and performances.

### *Drawing, design and visualisation:*

- Illustration and visualisation:
  - Sketching concepts for staging and blocking
  - Digital and traditional concept art for animation and games
- Collage, mixed media and digital painting:
  - Creating mood boards for visual direction
  - Digital matte painting and environment design for VFX
- Technical drawing and specification drawing:
  - Creating set blueprints and stage layouts
  - Blocking diagrams for actor movement.

### *Virtual and augmented production:*

- Virtual production tools:
- LED walls and in-camera VFX (The Mandalorian-style film-making)
- Virtual location scouting and previsualisation techniques
- VR and AR directing techniques:
- Spatial storytelling in immersive environments
- Interaction design for VR narratives.

### *Quality assurance:*

- Documentation and version control:
  - Script versions, shooting schedules and call sheets
  - Maintaining continuity reports for film and theatre
- Technical and aesthetic evaluation:
  - Reviewing dailies for performance, lighting and camera work
  - Identifying issues in early-stage animations and VFX renders
- Testing and inspection:
  - Audience test screenings and feedback integration
  - Quality control for theatrical performances (dress rehearsals)
  - Debugging cinematic sequences in video games.

## Professional practice

Awareness of contemporary professional practice in directing and the behaviours appropriate for employment in the sector.

*Roles:*

- Creative roles:
  - Director (film, television, theatre, animation, games)
  - Assistant director (AD): 1st AD, 2nd AD, 3rd AD
  - Storyboard artist
  - Screenwriter
  - Casting director
  - Editor
  - Cinematographer (director of photography)
  - Production designer
  - Sound designer
  - VFX supervisor
  - Theatre stage director
  - Voice director (animation/games)
- Production roles:
  - Creative director (advertising, branding, digital media)
  - Film and TV producer
  - Production manager
  - Script supervisor
  - Location manager
  - Showrunner (TV series)
  - Live broadcast director (news, events, sports)
- Management roles:
  - Studio executive
  - Festival programmer
  - Distribution manager
  - Public relations manager
  - Marketing and promotion lead
  - Agent or talent manager
- Technical roles:
  - Lighting director
  - Camera operator
  - Sound mixer
  - Film editor
  - CGI/animation director
  - Motion capture director
  - Technical director (theatre, animation, games)

- Support roles:
  - Production assistant
  - Researcher
  - Runner
  - Health and safety supervisor
  - Set designer assistant
  - Script reader.

*Relationships:*

- Management and hierarchies:
  - Understanding the chain of command on set
  - Communicating effectively with producers, ADs and crew
- Workflow relationships:
  - Balancing creative vision with technical execution
  - Working with production teams across pre-production, production and post-production
  - Creative relationships: collaborating with writers, designers and performers
  - Support relationships: engaging with distributors, marketing teams and funding bodies
- Collaboration:
  - Online (remote directing, virtual production, global partnerships)
  - In person (on-set directing, theatre rehearsals, live events).

*Industry trends and audience consumption:*

- Streaming platforms and digital distribution:
  - Direct-to-streaming film and TV releases
  - Online premieres and digital film festivals
  - Interactive storytelling (e.g. Netflix's Bandersnatch-style narratives)
- Live performances and hybrid productions:
  - Theatre productions being filmed for streaming (e.g. Hamilton on Disney+)
  - Virtual reality theatre and immersive experiences
- Game and animation direction:
  - Increasing demand for cinematic storytelling in video games
- Real-time rendering for film and interactive media
- Short-form content:
  - The rise of social media platforms (e.g. TikTok, YouTube, Instagram) as platforms for storytelling
  - Directing branded content, music videos and viral campaigns.

### *Ethics:*

- Regulators and industry bodies:
  - British Board of Film Classification (BBFC), Motion Picture Association (MPA)
  - Ofcom (UK), Federal Communications Commission (FCC, USA)
  - Theatre and stage performance regulations (Equity, Screen Actors Guild – American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (SAG–AFTRA))
- Protecting vulnerable audiences and talent:
  - Ethical storytelling (representing cultures, gender and disability responsibly)
  - Safe environments for child actors and stunt performers
- Professional ethics:
  - On-set conduct and director responsibilities
  - Fair representation in casting and storytelling
  - Working with intimacy coordinators and mental health specialists
- Ownership and intellectual property:
  - Copyright laws for film, television and digital media
  - Fair use of music, scripts and footage
  - Licensing rights and distribution agreements
- Diversity and inclusion:
  - Gender representation in directing roles
  - Casting actors from under-represented communities
  - Accessibility in theatre and film (subtitles, sign language interpretation)
- Sustainability in film and media:
  - Reducing waste on set (eco-friendly productions)
  - Virtual production as an alternative to location shoots
  - The impact of digital vs physical media.

### *Project management:*

- Time management:
  - Creating shooting schedules, call sheets, and contingency plans
  - Coordinating with multiple departments (VFX, set design, lighting)
- Asset management:
  - Organising footage, scripts and post-production files
- Managing film archives and backups
- Resource management:
  - Budgeting for independent vs studio-backed projects
  - Equipment rental, location permits and crew contracts
- Contingency planning:
  - Adapting to unexpected delays (weather, technical issues, reshoots)
  - Alternative directing approaches (remote direction, virtual pre-production).

### *Health, safety and wellbeing:*

- On-set safety protocols:
  - Stunt coordination and risk assessment
  - Firearms and pyrotechnics safety in film production
  - Location safety for outdoor and extreme environment shoots
- Theatre and live performance safety:
  - Rigging and stage safety procedures
  - Safe handling of props and stage combat guidelines
- Posture and repetitive strain injury (RSI):
  - Ergonomic set-ups for editing and previsualisation work
  - Preventing long-term injury in motion capture work
- Mental health in the creative industries:
  - Dealing with high-pressure environments and tight deadlines
  - Support networks for cast and crew (mental health professionals on set)
- Managing creative burnout and industry rejection
- Building resilience in the industry:
  - Learning from critiques and reviews
  - Navigating rejection and career setbacks
  - Self-promotion and maintaining a professional reputation.

## **Communication**

The ability to share ideas and processes accurately and reliably with diverse audiences and recognise the appropriate forms of output to address different audiences.

### *Audiences:*

- Target market (e.g. viewers, theatre audiences, gamers, streaming subscribers)
- Age demographics, genre preferences, cultural considerations
- Clients (e.g. producers, network executives, theatre companies, studio heads, investors, distributors)
- Professionals (e.g. team, collaborators)
- Peers (e.g. fellow directors, screenwriters, theatre practitioners)
- Creative collaborators (e.g. co-directors, assistant directors)
- Stakeholders (e.g. financiers, co-producers, grant organisations, publishers, streamers, film festival programmers).

### *Communication purpose:*

- Collaboration and teamwork:
  - Establishing a unified vision with cast and crew
  - Communicating effectively on set and in rehearsals
- Pitches:
  - Presenting film concepts to producers and investors
  - Theatre production proposals for funding and venues
- Research:
  - Gathering insights for historical accuracy, cultural representation or genre conventions
  - Collaborating with experts (historians, scientists, consultants)
- Feedback:
  - Workshopping scripts, animatics and rehearsal footage
  - Receiving notes from producers, test audiences and focus groups
- Testing:
  - Screen tests for actors and performance styles
  - Animation and motion capture previews
- Outcomes:
  - Showcasing rough cuts, animatics and technical rehearsals
  - Reviewing final edits, sound mixing and VFX integration
- Ideas and progress:
  - Prototypes: previsualisation, storyboards, animatics
  - Models: set models, production design mock-ups
  - Mock-ups: costume and make-up tests, blocking plans
  - Samples: test footage, motion capture tests, sound mixing samples
  - Visualisations: concept art, CGI renders, previsualisation animations.

### *Presentation:*

- Presentation formats:
  - Written: scripts, treatments, pitch decks, production notes
  - Visual: mood boards, animatics, storyboards
  - Audiovisual: sizzle reels, trailers, test footage
  - Interactive: VR previews, 360° set walk-throughs
- Industry-standard presentation tools:
  - Scriptwriting (e.g. Final Draft)
  - Editing presentations (e.g. Adobe Premiere Pro, Avid Media Composer)
  - Pre-production revis software (e.g. ShotDeck, FrameForge, Unreal Engine)
  - Pitching (e.g. PowerPoint, Keynote)

- Industry conventions:
  - Film industry pitch formats (loglines, synopses, visual mood boards)
  - Theatre presentation structures (blocking diagrams, stage directions, dramaturgy reports)
  - Television show bibles and season outlines for episodic pitching
- Hierarchy of text-based and visual information:
  - Balancing dialogue, visuals and sound design in presentations
  - Using storyboards and concept art to communicate tone and cinematography
- Presentation timing, structure, and delivery:
  - Elevator pitches for producers and investors
- Full-length presentations for funding and development
- Table reads and test screenings for refining projects
- Selection and editing of content:
  - Refining the most compelling scenes for a pitch or trailer
- Choosing key visuals and sound design elements to convey tone
- Presentation skills:
  - Public speaking for pitching projects
  - Directing table reads and rehearsals with actors
  - Explaining creative decisions to non-technical stakeholders.

*Characteristics of outcomes:*

- Visual language:
  - Composition, framing, shot choices
  - Colour palettes and lighting moods for emotional impact
- Textual language:
  - Writing clear and concise screen directions
  - Using metaphor and subtext in storytelling
- Style:
  - Recognising and developing a directorial signature (auteur style, genre influences)
  - Adapting communication style for different mediums (film, theatre, games)
- Message and impact:
  - Ensuring clarity of storytelling for diverse audiences
  - Crafting narratives that resonate emotionally and intellectually
- Applying/subverting codes and conventions:
  - Understanding genre norms and audience expectations
  - Innovating through experimental storytelling and directing techniques
- References and relationship to wider culture:
  - Drawing inspiration from literature, history, art and global cinema

- Contextualising a project within social and political movements
- Evaluating communication in relation to a brief:
  - Clarity of concept and purpose: ensuring the director's vision is effectively conveyed
- Consistency and accuracy: maintaining visual and thematic cohesion
- Management of constraints: adapting creative ideas to budget, schedule and technical limitations
- Suitability for market: aligning projects with audience demand and industry trends
- Audience interpretation and relevance: testing whether the intended themes and emotions connect with viewers.

# 12.0 Modules in the BTEC Higher Nationals Diploma in Directing

## Module B: Professional Creative Practice

Level: 5

Guided learning hours: 480

### Introduction

The directing industry encompasses a wide array of career paths across film, television, theatre, animation and interactive media. Directors must navigate the intersection of creativity, technical expertise and leadership, balancing artistic vision with production realities. Whether working on independent films, major studio productions, live performances or game cinematics, directors need a deep understanding of storytelling, collaboration and industry workflows.

In Module B, students will build on the foundational knowledge and skills they acquired at Level 4, advancing to more complex, professionally oriented projects. This Level 5 module emphasises both creative and technical mastery, as well as the development of a directorial identity and professional practice. Students will refine their ability to interpret scripts, communicate vision and lead production teams while gaining deeper insight into the industry's expectations and career pathways.

Throughout the curriculum and assessment units, students will explore specialised areas of directing, applying their knowledge to real-world scenarios and professional challenges. They will develop projects that demonstrate their ability to direct performances, manage production logistics and make artistic choices that align with audience engagement and industry standards. In addition, students will begin to create professional portfolios, pitch materials and industry connections that will prepare them for employment or further study.

The learning and teaching for this module integrate Essential Content across two assessment units.

## Learning Outcomes for assessment units

B1: Personal Professional Development (170 GLH – 45 credits)

Unit code: K/651/5492

- B1.1 Develop and apply contextual knowledge to inform personal progression.
- B1.2 Develop and apply professional approaches to creative problem-solving to support personal progression.
- B1.3 Develop and apply technical knowledge and skill to support personal progression.
- B1.4 Develop and apply professional knowledge, behaviours and practices to support personal progression.
- B1.5 Develop and apply professional communication skills to support personal progression.

B2: Professional Project (310 GLH – 75 credits)

Unit code: L/651/5493

- B2.1 Apply contextual knowledge to inform a response to a professional brief.
- B2.2 Apply creative problem-solving skills to the development of ideas, proposals and final project outcomes.
- B2.3 Use technical knowledge and skills to produce professional outcomes.
- B2.4 Demonstrate professional knowledge, behaviours and project management skills.
- B2.5 Present project development and outcomes, demonstrating professional communication skills.

## Essential Content

Students must engage with the following content before they are assessed.

The content is designed to allow students to develop the knowledge and skills associated with practical vocational contexts related to the subject area.

Content may be delivered through a variety of different teaching and learning approaches that combine to provide a holistic learning journey.

Some aspects of the content are provided as generalised topics that allow teaching teams to develop detailed delivery to meet localised needs. In other cases, there are indications of the types of information that may be delivered in detail; these are indicated by (e.g. ...).

The content defined here is not intended to be exhaustive or exclusive and should be taught within the context of the focus that the centre has identified for its students within the subject area.

## Contextual knowledge

The knowledge and understanding of the underlying concepts and practices associated with directing, based on historic and contemporary precedents.

*The creative approaches of others in context:*

- Methods and processes of directing (e.g. auteur theory, improvisational directing, method directing)
- The evolution of directorial styles across different media (e.g. film, television, theatre, animation, video games)
- The role of the director in different production contexts (e.g. independent, studio, commercial, experimental)
- External influences on directing (e.g. political climate, social movements, technological advancements)
- The impact of directorial work on society (e.g. shaping public discourse, reflecting cultural shifts)
- Contextual links and relationships between directors, genres and movements
- Audience reception and interpretation of directorial choices across different periods
- What directorial work communicates about society at a given point in history.

*Cultural and critical concepts:*

- Philosophy (e.g. existentialism in cinema, phenomenology in theatre, postmodernism in storytelling)
- Political theories (e.g. representations of power in film, class struggle in theatre, propaganda in media)
- Psychology (e.g. psychoanalysis in character development, humanistic psychology in performance coaching)
- Gender and identity (e.g. gender representation in film and TV, queer cinema, 'decolonising the gaze' in directing)
- Media theories (e.g. auteur theory, spectatorship, semiotics in film, direct effect model)
- Technology/communication theories (e.g. transmedia storytelling, social media's impact on audience engagement).

*Directing economies:*

- The rise of streaming platforms and changes in content consumption
- Impact of globalisation on storytelling and directorial choices
- Commercialisation and the balance between artistic integrity and market demands

- Audience expectations and new storytelling formats (e.g. interactive cinema, immersive theatre, virtual reality (VR) experiences)
- Sustainability in directing: eco-conscious productions (e.g. green film-making, sustainable theatre practices)
- Ethical representation (e.g. inclusivity, avoiding exploitative storytelling)
- Industry labour conditions (e.g. fair treatment of cast and crew, diversity in hiring practices)
- Technical developments:
  - Virtual production and LED volume technology
  - Motion capture and performance-driven animation
  - The role of artificial intelligence (AI) in script analysis and previsualisation
  - VR and augmented reality (AR) in immersive storytelling
  - Cloud-based production management and remote collaboration tools.

#### *Critical contextualising of own work:*

- How one's directorial work is received by different audiences
- Positioning one's work within historical and contemporary directing practices
- Identifying a unique directing style or approach (unique selling point or USP)
- Examining potential social, cultural and artistic impacts of directorial choices.

## **Ideas generation and development**

The development of propositions based on research and analysis. The ability to evaluate solutions based on research and analysis.

#### *Developing a brief/proposal:*

- Client and stakeholder requirements/needs:
  - Understanding audience demographics and engagement strategies
  - Return on investment (ROI) in film, television, theatre and digital media
  - Tie-ins (e.g. merchandising, spin-offs, franchising, cross-media adaptations)
- Consultation:
  - Working with producers, writers, actors and technical teams to refine concepts
  - Engaging with industry professionals, cultural consultants and test audiences
- Obligations and deliverables:
  - Deliverables for different formats (e.g. film treatment, television pitch, interactive media framework)
  - Adhering to production schedules and distribution timelines
- Service level agreements:
  - Understanding contracts between directors, studios and distributors

- Key performance indicators (KPIs):
  - Audience reception, critical reviews and financial performance
  - Metrics for digital engagement (e.g. streaming views, social media interactions)
- Defining roles and responsibilities: establishing a director's role within pre-production, production and post-production
- Collaboration with cinematographers, editors and designers
- Legal and ethical constraints: copyright laws, intellectual property and fair use
- Ethical storytelling (e.g. accurate representation, avoiding harmful stereotypes)
- Feasibility: budgeting for independent and studio productions
- Technical and logistical constraints (e.g. location availability, special effects, talent scheduling)
- Strategy: multiplatform storytelling (e.g. cinematic universe, transmedia projects)
- Branding a directorial style or signature
- Longevity (e.g. maintaining relevance, potential for sequels/spin-offs)
- Audience engagement through immersive experiences (e.g. VR storytelling, interactive theatre).

#### *Trends:*

- Identifying current trends (e.g. emerging genres and audience preferences in different markets)
- Advances in storytelling methods (e.g. non-linear narratives, AI-assisted scripts)
- Industry networking:
  - Attending film festivals, theatre expos and digital media summits (e.g. Raindance, National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) Show, Cannes)
- Engaging with online forums and professional organisations
- Trend forecasting:
  - Identifying cycles in storytelling (e.g. nostalgia-driven reboots, post-pandemic film-making).
  - The impact of technology on directing (e.g. real-time virtual production).

#### *Ideas development:*

- Research:
  - Objectives: developing research goals to inform creative direction
  - Primary research: audience testing, ethnographic studies, observational research
  - Secondary research: case studies, market reports, academic analysis
  - Data collection: surveys, focus groups, interviews with industry professionals

- Problem-solving:
  - GROW (goal, reality, obstacles, options, way forward) model: goal setting for a directorial career, overcoming obstacles in production
  - Lateral thinking: innovative scene composition, experimental storytelling techniques.
  - 5 Ws and how: defining narrative direction and character development
  - Problem-based vs solution-based thinking: adjusting to production challenges, improvising on set
  - Means–ends analysis: evaluating how technical choices support artistic vision
  - Analogical reasoning: learning from past films and theatre productions to develop new ideas
- Approaches to the directing process:
- Design thinking: iterative development of scenes and sequences
- Four-stage process: exploration of concepts, generation of storyboards, evaluation of performances, communication of vision
- Design sprint: rapid prototyping of directorial ideas through test shoots and workshops
- Double diamond model: defining core story elements, diverging into creative solutions, refining the best options and executing the final vision
- Phased approach: planning, rehearsing, shooting, editing and distributing projects.

*Critical reflection:*

- Ongoing reflection: evaluating creative choices throughout the directing process
- Reflective models (e.g. Gibbs, Kolb, Schön, Brookfield):
  - Kolb’s learning cycle: experimenting with new approaches, analysing outcomes
  - Schön’s reflective practice: adapting in real time to unforeseen challenges
  - Brookfield’s critical reflection: considering multiple perspectives to enhance storytelling
- Personal intentions: refining artistic voice and vision:
  - Setting career development goals (e.g. expanding into new media, working internationally)
  - Evaluating how new insights influence creative direction
- Reflection on the brief:
  - Reviewing project progress and making necessary adjustments
  - Ensuring alignment with audience expectations and industry standards
- Technical execution analysis (e.g. cinematography, editing, sound design)
- Comparative analysis with similar market productions
- Integrating diversity, equity and inclusion principles
- Sustainability considerations in film-making and theatre production
- Goal setting: establishing milestones for professional and creative growth
- Identifying opportunities for networking and collaboration.

## Technical knowledge and skill

The use of existing skills and development of new skills that enable the production of creative outcomes. The ability to determine the appropriate skills to complete creative work.

### *Cinematic and theatrical elements:*

- Visual composition:
  - Colour theory in cinematography and stage design
  - Lighting techniques (e.g. natural, practical, studio lighting, theatrical lighting)
  - Camera movement and blocking for film and theatre
  - Depth, contrast and texture in visual storytelling
- Spatial and physical considerations:
  - Set design and production design principles
  - Movement and physicality in performance direction
- The impact of location vs studio shooting
- Use of props and costume in storytelling
- Aesthetic and stylistic choices:
  - Defining a visual style: realism, surrealism, expressionism, minimalism
  - Historical and contemporary influences on directorial choices
  - Thematic and symbolic use of mise-en-scène
  - Continuity and consistency in long-form storytelling.

### *Technical specification for directing:*

- Performance specifications:
  - Directing actors for screen and stage
  - Adjusting performances for different mediums
  - Capturing authentic emotions and performances
- Technical specifications:
  - Understanding industry-standard production workflows
  - Managing shot lists, storyboards and blocking diagrams.
  - Previsualisation techniques (e.g. animatics, digital previsualisation)
- Functional specifications:
  - Balancing narrative needs with production limitations
  - Adapting directorial vision to suit budgets and schedules
  - Problem-solving within a production environment
- Production documentation:
  - Script breakdowns and scheduling
  - Call sheets, shot logs and continuity tracking
  - Working with assistant directors and production managers.

### *Directing for different mediums:*

- Film and television:
  - Single-camera vs multi-camera directing
  - Genre-specific directing styles (e.g. documentary, drama, comedy, action)
  - The role of editing in shaping the director's vision
- Theatre and live performance:
  - Blocking and choreography for stage
  - Directing for different theatre spaces (e.g. proscenium, thrust, black box)
  - Managing live audience engagement
- Animation and virtual production:
  - Directing performance capture and voice acting
  - Previsualisation and animatics in animated storytelling
  - Blending live action with computer-generated imagery (CGI) elements.

### *Technical execution in directing:*

- Cinematography and camera work:
  - Camera angles, movements and lens choices
  - Framing for different aspect ratios and screen sizes
  - Achieving dynamic visuals through shot composition
- Sound and audio design:
  - Directing actors for voice clarity and performance
  - Understanding diegetic and non-diegetic sound
  - Overseeing sound mixing and design
- Editing and post-production:
  - Working with editors to refine pacing and structure
  - Colour grading and visual effects considerations
  - The impact of editing choices on narrative flow.

### *Technology in directing:*

- Virtual and augmented reality:
  - Directing for immersive storytelling
  - Integrating digital characters and environments
- Previsualisation and CGI:
  - Using motion capture and 3D environments
  - Working with virtual cinematography tools
- Software and tools:
  - Editing and production software (e.g. Adobe Premiere Pro, DaVinci Resolve, Avid)
  - 3D previsualisation and animation tools (e.g. Unreal Engine, Blender)
  - Sound design software (e.g. Pro Tools, Logic Pro).

### *Quality assurance:*

- Frameworks for quality assurance:
  - Monitoring the consistency of performance, visuals and audio
  - Ensuring adherence to production timelines and budget constraints
- Testing and evaluation:
  - Test screenings and feedback sessions
  - Adjusting directorial choices based on audience response
- Parameters for assessment:
  - Story coherence and emotional impact
  - Technical execution and industry standards
  - Audience engagement and commercial viability
  - Sustainability in film and theatre production (e.g. eco-friendly sets, digital workflows).

## **Professional practice**

Awareness of contemporary professional practice in the subject and the behaviours appropriate for employment in the sector.

### *Working with stakeholders and collaborators:*

- Stakeholder types:
  - Clients (e.g. production companies, streaming services, theatre companies)
  - Funding bodies (e.g. film grants, investors, crowdfunding platforms)
  - End users (e.g. audiences, distributors, critics)
  - Collaborators (e.g. writers, producers, cinematographers, editors, designers)
- Stakeholder relationships:
  - Contractual agreements (e.g. work-for-hire vs ownership models).
  - Financial considerations (e.g. project budgets, profit-sharing)
  - User expectations and engagement strategies
- Stakeholder analysis:
  - Establishing commitment and negotiating objectives
  - Effective communication and conflict resolution
- Teams:
  - Collaborative teamwork: defining roles and responsibilities (e.g. director, assistant director, production designer)
  - Managing remote and on-set workflows
  - Performance reviews (e.g. self-evaluation, team feedback).

### *Project planning processes:*

- Production workflow: initiation, development, pre-production, production, post-production, distribution
- Project management methodologies:
  - Agile film-making (iterative, flexible approach to storytelling)
  - Waterfall approach (linear, structured production model)
  - Risk assessment and contingency planning
- Resource management:
  - Human resources (e.g. casting, crew hiring)
  - Physical resources (e.g. equipment, locations, studios)
- Monitoring and evaluation:
  - Performance tracking (e.g. dailies, test screenings)
- Budget and schedule adherence.

### *Project management tools:*

- Traditional tools: storyboards, shot lists, production books
- Digital and cloud-based systems: scheduling software (e.g. Movie Magic, StudioBinder, Celtx)
- Collaborative workspaces (e.g. Frame.io, Google Workspace, Slack)
- Visualisation techniques:
  - Gantt charts for production timelines
  - Shot diagrams and blocking charts
  - Kanban boards for workflow tracking.

### *Career development:*

- Continuous professional development:
  - Staying updated with industry trends and emerging technologies
  - Training programmes and certifications (e.g. directing workshops, film schools)
- Critical appraisal methods (e.g. peer review, audience feedback, self-evaluation)
- Networking and industry presence:
  - Attending film festivals, pitch events, theatre openings (e.g. Raindance, Cannes)
  - Building professional connections through social media and industry bodies
- Securing work in the industry:
  - Personal branding (e.g. director's reel, professional website, IMDb profile)
  - Portfolio development (e.g. short films, commercial work, theatre productions)
- Freelance opportunities and pitching for projects
- Setting professional fees:
  - Understanding industry pay scales (e.g. union rates, independent project pricing)
  - Negotiation strategies.

### *Company types:*

- Legal business entities:
  - Sole trader (freelance director)
  - Limited companies (film production companies, theatre groups)
  - Partnerships (creative collectives, co-directed projects).

### *Legislation, regulation and taxation:*

- Employment laws and contracts
- Taxation for freelance and company-based work
- Copyright laws and licensing (e.g. music rights, script adaptations).

### *Business planning:*

- Business plan development:
  - Mission statement (defining directorial vision)
  - Market approach (e.g. independent film-making vs studio productions).
  - Strategic models (business-to-business, business-to-consumer, streaming-first strategies)
  - USP (specialised directorial style, niche expertise)
- Operating costs:
  - Production costs (crew salaries, equipment rentals, locations)
  - Marketing and promotion expenses
  - Studio/workspace rentals
- Financial and legal responsibilities:
  - Tax liabilities (VAT, self-employment tax, corporation tax)
  - Record-keeping and financial reporting
  - Contracts and intellectual property protection.

## **Communication**

The ability to share ideas and processes accurately and reliably with diverse audiences and recognising the appropriate forms of output to address different audiences.

### *Communication ethics:*

- Codes of conduct: adhering to professional and ethical guidelines when directing projects and collaborating with cast and crew
- Cultural awareness: ensuring responsible and authentic representation in performances, avoiding harmful stereotypes or misinterpretations
- Accessibility: directing performances with inclusivity in mind, considering diverse audience needs and accessibility in storytelling

- Representation: balancing authentic storytelling with commercial and artistic considerations while directing actors and crafting narratives
- Listening and responding to feedback: engaging constructively with input from producers, actors, editors and audiences.

*Applying communication techniques:*

- Professional standards and formats:
  - Adhering to industry-standard formats (e.g. screenplay and shot list formats)
  - Structuring pitch presentations, director's treatments and storyboards effectively
- Consideration of context: tailoring communication based on whether the audience is a producer, funding body, actor or crew member
- Communication channels and presentation opportunities: using verbal, written and visual methods to present directing concepts (e.g. production meetings, rehearsals, festival Q&As)
- Audience reactions: anticipating and responding to potential feedback on directing choices, performance styles and visual storytelling
- Consistency and coherence: ensuring alignment between the directorial vision, script interpretation and final production
- Relationship to existing identity: aligning personal directorial style with the types of story a director wants to be known for
- Personal and client intentions: balancing artistic vision with production constraints and audience expectations
- Purpose of work: defining a production's function (e.g. entertainment, education, social commentary, commercial viability)
- Constraints and limitations of media: understanding how production budgets, genre expectations and distribution platforms influence directorial choices.

*Engaging target markets and audiences:*

- Differentiation from existing markets: identifying unique directorial approaches that set a project apart
- Reach (primary and secondary audiences): recognising target demographics for different types of production (e.g. independent films, mainstream television, experimental theatre).
- Supportive media: creating complementary materials (e.g. director's statements, visual references, behind-the-scenes content)
- Consistency: maintaining a coherent visual and thematic style across projects, pitches and professional communication

- Marketing strategies:
  - Publicity: leveraging media exposure, interviews and social media engagement
  - Press: engaging with film/theatre journalists, blogs and industry publications
  - Marketing channels: using platforms (e.g. IMDbPro), film festivals and networking events to gain visibility
  - Launch: timing project releases for film festivals, theatre openings and distribution opportunities
  - Product placement: understanding brand partnerships and sponsored content in film and theatre
  - Follow-up communications: building and maintaining relationships with industry professionals post-screening or post-stage-production.

*Communication with clients, collaborators and stakeholders:*

- Pitches and presentations: crafting compelling loglines, director's pitches and formal pitch meetings
- Consultation: seeking and integrating feedback from producers, cinematographers, actors and industry mentors
- Briefing: understanding and responding to client or producer requirements in commissioned directing projects
- Progress updates and tracking: managing production timelines, rehearsals and shot lists effectively
- Feedback and guidance: navigating studio notes, audience reactions and actor performance adjustments
- Negotiation and conflict resolution: handling creative disagreements, contractual disputes and production challenges professionally
- Platforms for collaboration: using industry-standard platforms (e.g. Frame.io, StudioBinder, Google Drive) for project management
- Documents: producing structured proposals, production schedules and funding applications
- Visualisations: creating storyboards, mood boards and shot references to support directorial vision
- Logistical communication: coordinating schedules, budgeting and securing location permits
- Networks:
  - Social networking: engaging with the directing community (e.g. LinkedIn, Twitter/X, industry forums)
  - Making contacts: attending workshops, film festivals and directing labs (e.g. Sundance Institute labs)
  - Opportunities for communication: public speaking, podcast interviews and panel discussions.

*Communication for progression:*

- Employer/academic progression: identifying further study, mentorship or apprenticeship opportunities to refine directing skills
- Interview preparation:
  - Researching production companies, studios and theatre companies before meetings
  - Practising interview techniques for directing roles, fellowships and funding applications
  - Seeking feedback post-interview to refine approach
- Personal communication for progression:
  - Personal identity: defining a unique directorial style and professional persona
  - Portfolio/showreel: maintaining an updated portfolio with high-quality directing samples
  - Print/business media: using business cards, press kits and promotional brochures effectively
  - Online presence: establishing and maintaining a professional website, social media profiles and online portfolios
  - Modes of distribution: understanding traditional film distribution, streaming platforms and self-distribution models
  - Maintenance: regularly updating showreels, blogs, newsletters and professional profiles to remain relevant in the industry.

## 13.0 Recommended Resources

### Textbooks

- Alfreds, M. (2007) *Different Every Night: Freeing the Actor*. London: Nick Hern Books.
- Berry, C. (2000) *Voice and the Actor*. London: Virgin Books.
- Berry, C. (2000) *The Actor and the Text*. London: Virgin Books.
- Bordwell, D. (2005) *Figures Traced in Light – On Cinematic Staging*. Berkeley CA and London: University of California Press.
- Dancyger, K. (2006) *The Director's Idea: The Path to Great Directing*. London: Routledge.
- Dancyger, K. (2018) *The Technique of Film and Video Editing: History, Theory, and Practice*. 6th Ed. London: Routledge.
- Dancyger, K., Keyt, J. and Rush, J. (2023) *Alternative Scriptwriting: Contemporary Storytelling for the Screen*. 6th Ed. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Elder, R.K. (2011) *The Film That Changed My Life: 30 Directors on Their Epiphanies in the Dark*. Chicago, IL: Chicago Review Press.
- Glebas, F. (2009) *Directing the Story: Professional Storytelling and Storyboarding Techniques for Live Action and Animation*. Burlington, MA: Focal Press.
- Grove, E. (2013) *Raindance Producers' Lab: Lo-To-No Budget Filmmaking*. 2nd Ed. Oxford: Focal Press.
- Katz, S.D. (2004) *Film Directing: Cinematic Motion*. 2nd Ed. Studio City, CA: Michael Wiese Productions.
- Katz, S.D. (2019) *Film Directing Shot by Shot: Visualizing from Concept to Screen*. 2nd Ed. Studio City, CA: Michael Wiese Productions.
- Mamet, D. (1991) *On Directing Film*. New York: Penguin Books.
- Mercado, G. (2022) *The Filmmaker's Eye: Learning (and Breaking) the Rules of Cinematic Composition*. 2nd Ed. Burlington, CA: Focal Press.
- Proferes, N.T. (2017) *Film Directing Fundamentals*. 4th Ed. New York: Routledge.
- Rabiger, M. and Hurbis-Cherrier, M. (2020) *Directing: Film Techniques and Aesthetics*. 6th Ed. New York: Routledge.
- Stanislavski, K. (1980) *My Life in Art*. Translated by J. Benedetti. London: Methuen Drama.
- Tucker, P. (2019) *Secrets of Screen Directing: The Tricks of the Trade*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Tucker, P. (2023) *Secrets of Screen Acting*. 4th Ed. London: Routledge.
- Weston, J. (2021) *Directing Actors: Creating Memorable Performances for Film and Television*. 2nd Ed. Studio City, CA: Michael Wiese Productions.

## Websites/online resources

Website link	Title	Information
<a href="http://www.afi.com">www.afi.com</a>	American Film Institute (AFI)	One of the most prestigious film organisations, providing education, networking opportunities and the AFI Directing Workshop for Women, a highly respected programme supporting emerging female directors.
<a href="http://filmmakeriq.com">filmmakeriq.com</a>	Filmmaker IQ	A platform that blends film history with technical education, providing free courses and in-depth articles on directing techniques, cinematography and the evolution of film-making.
<a href="http://www.filmriot.com">www.filmriot.com</a>	Film Riot	A website and YouTube channel offering practical film-making tips, DIY effects tutorials and interviews with industry professionals. It is known for its engaging and hands-on approach to directing and production.
<a href="http://www.movingimagesource.us">www.movingimagesource.us</a>	Moving Image Source	Hosted by the Museum of the Moving Image, this platform provides scholarly articles, research materials and interviews focusing on the art and history of directing for film and television.

<a href="http://nofilmschool.com">nofilmschool.com</a>	No Film School	A leading online community for film-makers, offering industry news, practical tutorials and discussions on directing, cinematography, editing and screenwriting. It is widely followed by independent and professional film-makers alike.
<a href="http://raindance.org">raindance.org</a>	Raindance	An independent film school and network that offers courses, events and resources for film-makers and screenwriters.
<a href="http://shootingpeople.org">shootingpeople.org</a>	Shooting People	A global network for independent film-makers, offering job postings, crew calls, daily bulletins and a strong community for collaboration and discussion on film directing.
<a href="http://www.studiobinder.com">www.studiobinder.com</a>	StudioBinder	A production management software company with a highly regarded blog featuring detailed articles and guides on directing, pre-production and film-making workflow.
<a href="http://www.thefilmcollaborative.org">www.thefilmcollaborative.org</a>	The Film Collaborative	A non-profit resource for independent film-makers, specialising in fair distribution practices, legal resources and film-maker education, including directing-focused materials.

## Podcasts

Podcast link	Title	Information
<a href="http://www.filmriot.com/podcast">www.filmriot.com/podcast</a>	<i>Film Riot</i>	Hosted by Ryan Connolly, this podcast offers DIY film-making tips, techniques and insights, making it a valuable resource for aspiring directors and film-makers looking to enhance their craft.
<a href="http://www.indiefilmhustle.com/podcasts">www.indiefilmhustle.com/podcasts</a>	<i>Indie Film Hustle</i>	Alex Ferrari provides insights into the challenges and successes of independent film-making, sharing strategies, interviews and personal experiences to help film-makers navigate the indie film landscape.
<a href="http://www.justshootitpodcast.com">www.justshootitpodcast.com</a>	<i>Just Shoot It</i>	Hosted by directors Matt Enlow and Oren Kaplan, this podcast delves into the intricacies of directing, film-making and storytelling. Each episode features interviews with directors, screenwriters, editors and actors, discussing their journeys and experiences in the industry.

<a href="http://teamdeakins.libsyn.com">teamdeakins.libsyn.com</a>	<i>Team Deakins</i>	Hosted by acclaimed cinematographer Roger Deakins and his collaborator James Deakins, this podcast features in-depth conversations with industry professionals, offering insights into cinematography, directing and the broader film-making process.
<a href="http://www.dga.org">www.dga.org</a>	<i>The Director's Cut</i>	Produced by the Directors Guild of America, this podcast features directors discussing their films, creative processes and experiences in the industry, offering listeners a behind-the-scenes look at film-making from the director's perspective.

**May 2025**

**For information about Pearson Qualifications, including Pearson Edexcel and BTEC qualifications visit [qualifications.pearson.com](https://www.pearson.com/qualifications)**

**Edexcel and BTEC are registered trademarks of Pearson Education Limited**

**Pearson Education Limited. Registered in England and Wales No. 872828**

**Registered Office: 80 Strand, London WC2R 0RL.**

**VAT Reg No GB 278 537121**

