

Statement of Purpose

500/8237/1 – Pearson BTEC Level 3 Certificate in Agriculture (QCF)

The land-based sector is diverse and fragmented comprising 16 industries which are grouped around the three broad areas of land management and production, animal health and welfare and environmental industries. At 14% the food sector is the largest in the UK economy, and 60% of food eaten in the UK is produced in the UK.

Around 1.1m people and 500,000 volunteers work in the UK land-based sector, making 3% of the UK's workforce. Over 90% of the 230000 businesses in the sector employ fewer than 10 people and many are self-employed.

Growth in the land-based sectors is central to government policy. Caroline Spelman MP, Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs stated in June 2010; 'Farming and food contributes approximately £86 billion to our economy. The [land-based sector is] an absolutely indispensable part of the green economy we are putting at the heart of our economic recovery'.

To meet the challenges of sector businesses need to be more highly equipped and skilled with the latest technologies and knowledge. Agriculture and farming are in the process of significant change with the introduction of new regulations around sustainable working practices.

The Pearson BTEC Level 3 Certificate (180 GLH) in Agriculture is part of a larger suite of land-based agriculture qualifications, in a range of sizes, which share the common purpose of helping people to become occupationally ready to take up employment in the land-based sector at the appropriate level. This can follow either directly after achieving the qualification, or via the stepping stone of Higher Education (HE) in university or college. By studying a BTEC National, learners develop knowledge, understanding and skills required by the sector, including essential employability skills, and apply them in real work contexts. Learners can operate at a standard that can reasonably be expected of an 18 year old in full-time education.

Within this suite, the Pearson BTEC Level 3 Certificate in Agriculture (180 GLH) is a vocational qualification, equivalent in size to an AS level, which is designed to be taken alongside one or more substantial qualifications within a 16–19 study programme. The qualification provides learners with an element of sector specialism as part of their wider programme by developing a primary core of knowledge in the sector, such as an understanding of the principles of plant and soil science, of animal husbandry and breeding, and the opportunity to develop some practical skills by undertaking livestock production. It is therefore particularly appropriate for those with an interest in progressing to a career in a land-based-related field, who want to pursue this via a principally academic route and take it alongside other qualifications, such as A levels in Biology, Chemistry, Maths, Geography or Business; or vocational qualifications in Applied Science. It is also appropriate for those aged 16 who are ready to start an element of level 3 vocational study while completing aspects of their level 2 programme.

The qualification was designed in collaboration with industry, so has the specific support of the Sector Skills Council (SSC) for the sector, LANTRA. The Pearson BTEC Level 3 Certificate in Agriculture supports entry to a variety of HE courses in this sector and beyond, when taken in conjunction with other qualifications. This is confirmed by the specific support of a range of universities. In addition, the qualification carries UCAS points – see details published on the Pearson website here:

<http://www.edexcel.com/i-am-a/student/results/Pages/BTEC-equivalence.aspx>