

Statement of Purpose

601/1097/1 – Pearson BTEC Level 3 90-credit Diploma 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 90-credit Diploma (540 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 90-credit Diploma (540 GLH) is primarily a Technical Level qualification, equivalent in size to one and a half A levels. It has been designed as a one-year course, enabling learners to develop a common core of knowledge, based on the fundamental science needed for this sector, including understanding the principles of soil and plant science, and understanding animal anatomy and physiology. It also allows them the opportunity to study in more depth a broad range of optional areas of their choice, including:

- understanding livestock husbandry, organic production, handling and storage
- undertaking livestock and arable production
- use and maintenance of land-based machinery and equipment.

This Pearson BTEC Level 3 90-credit Diploma could either be for learners starting their final year of education, for example after taking a level 2 qualification post-16 and wishing to follow a coherent one-year course at level 3, or for learners who wish to complete their course after one year and move into an apprenticeship or training with an employer. The qualification supports progression to a wide range of roles within the sector, usually when accompanied by other qualifications achieved at level 2 or level 3, such as English, Maths or Science GCSEs; Functional Skills in English and Maths; or A levels in Biology or Geography.

As the qualification was designed in close collaboration with industry, it is fully supported by the Sector Skills Council (SSC) for the sector, LANTRA. A range of professional organisations/employers in the sector has also confirmed their support for this Pearson BTEC Level 3 90-credit Diploma. This means it is a highly respected route for those who wish to move into employment in the sector, either directly or following further study.

A significant proportion of recruitment in this sector is at graduate level. The Pearson BTEC Level 3 90-credit Diploma in Agriculture also provides a well-established route into a variety of specialist Higher Education (HE) courses in this sector and beyond when taken alongside other qualifications appropriate for the desired course of study. UCAS has reviewed the qualification to assess its value for access to Higher Education, and has allocated UCAS points. See details published on the Pearson website here:

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

In addition, a number of universities have individually confirmed that this Pearson BTEC Level 3 90-credit Diploma in Agriculture fulfils their entry requirements when achieved alongside other qualifications.