

Statement of Purpose

500/6720/5 – Pearson BTEC Level 3 Extended Diploma in Applied Science (QCF)

The applied science industry offers huge potential for learners interested in the sector. The UK is currently regarded as a world leader in sectors including renewable energy, space, low carbon, pharmaceutical, utilities, automotive, agri-food and bioscience. The 2010 National Strategic Skills Audit identified problems in filling associate or 'para' professional and skilled technician roles in a number of sectors identified, including: health care, oil, gas, electricity, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, and transport equipment (UKCES, 2010). Some of these concerns have been accentuated by ageing among the current technician workforce, (Science, engineering and technology technicians in the UK economy, Geoff Mason, National Institute of Economic and Social Research, London).

The Pearson BTEC Level 3 Extended Diploma in Applied Science (1080 GLH) is part of a larger suite of BTEC Applied Science qualifications, at a range of sizes, which share the common purpose of helping people to become occupationally ready to take up employment in the applied science 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 the 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 Extended Diploma in Applied Science (1080 GLH) is primarily an Applied General qualification, equivalent in size to three A levels, which has been designed as a full two-year programme of study, enabling learners to develop a substantial common core of knowledge – including fundamentals of science, scientific practical techniques, working in the science industry, scientific investigations, perceptions of science and using mathematical tools in science – and allowing them the maximum opportunity to study in more depth a full range of option areas of their choice, such as:

- informatics in science
- biochemistry and biochemical techniques
- industrial chemical reactions
- electrical circuits and their applications
- physiological investigations
- science for environmental technicians
- microbiological techniques.

It is mainly designed for those learners who know in which sector they would like to specialise. Learners can achieve breadth of study through the large core and extensive options, rather than by studying complementary qualifications alongside it. The qualification allows learners to develop the wide-ranging knowledge, understanding and skills required for direct progression into a broad range of roles within the industry they are going to be a part of. It also meets the needs of those who wish to progress first to further study. The Pearson BTEC Level 3 Extended Diploma in Applied Science is also approved as a Technical Certificate by SEMTA and Cogent in a range of advanced apprenticeship frameworks, or it can be studied part time by learners in schools, colleges and other training provider organisations.

As the qualification was designed in close collaboration with industry, it is fully supported by the Sector Skills Council for the sector, Cogent. A range of professional organisations/employers in the sector have also confirmed their support for this Pearson BTEC Level 3 Extended Diploma in Applied Science. 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 Extended Diploma in Applied Science also provides a well-established route into a variety of specialist Higher Education (HE) courses in this sector and beyond, fully meeting entry requirements for most courses. 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 Extended Diploma in Applied Science fulfils their entry requirements, either on its own or when achieved alongside other qualifications.