

Statement of Purpose

500/6726/6 – Pearson BTEC Level 3 Certificate in Applied Science (QCF)

The applied science industry sector 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 Certificate in Applied Science (180 GLH) is part of a larger suite of BTEC Applied Science qualifications, in 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 Level 3 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 Certificate in Applied Science (180 GLH) is primarily an Applied General qualification, equivalent in size to an AS level, which is designed to be taken alongside one or more substantial qualifications within a 16 to 19 study programme. The qualification provides learners with an element of sector specialism as part of their wider programme by developing a primary common core of knowledge in the sector through mandatory content. This common core covers the content, such as fundamentals of science and scientific practical techniques, that is regarded as most important by employers. It is therefore particularly appropriate for those with an interest in progressing to a career in an applied science-related field, who want to pursue this via a principally academic route and take it alongside other qualifications, such as A levels; e.g. in science, psychology, or another BTEC Level 3, e.g. sport, health and social care, or IT. 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, Cogent. This Pearson BTEC Level 3 Certificate in Applied Science 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>