

Statement of Purpose

600/5849/3 – Pearson BTEC Level 3 90-credit 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 90-credit Diploma in Applied Science (540 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 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 90-credit Diploma in Applied Science (540 GLH) is primarily an Applied General 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 required by the sector – including fundamentals of science, scientific practical techniques, working in the science industry, and scientific investigations – and allowing them the opportunity to study in more depth a 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.

This Pearson BTEC Level 3 90-credit Diploma in Applied Science could either be for learners starting their final year of education – for example, learners who after taking a level 2 qualification post-16 wish 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 A levels, e.g. science, psychology, or another BTEC Level 3, e.g. sport, health and social care, or IT.

As the qualification was designed in close collaboration with industry, it is fully supported by the Sector Skills Council (SSC) for the sector, Cogent. A range of professional organisations/employers in the sector have also confirmed their support for this Pearson BTEC Level 3 90-credit 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 90-credit Diploma in Applied Science 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 Applied Science fulfils their entry requirements when achieved alongside other qualifications.