

Statement of Purpose

601/2459/3 - Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Award in Children's Play, Learning and Development

Sector overview

The childcare and education sector is a large employer of over 500,000 in the UK, of whom approximately 70 per cent work in early years and childcare. Following on from publication of the Nutbrown Review (2012) and More Great Childcare Report (2013), the focus is on up-skilling the early years workforce, with the sector aspiring to be graduate-led.

The suite of BTEC National qualifications in early years can be studied in a range of sizes, which between them support progression to employment in the sector. Employment can follow directly after achieving one of the larger qualifications, or can be via the stepping stone of Higher Education (HE) in university or college. The smaller qualifications support similar progression routes by being part of a broader programme of study. By studying a BTEC National, learners develop the knowledge, understanding and skills required by the sector and apply them in real work contexts. Learners are able to operate at a standard that can reasonably be expected of an 18 year old in full-time education.

The BTEC Level 3 National Award in Children's Play, Learning and Development (VRQ)

Within this suite, the Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Award in Children's Play, Learning and Development (VRQ) is primarily an Applied General qualification, equivalent in size to an A 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 overview of the sector as part of their wider programme by developing a primary common core of knowledge in the sector through mandatory content. This common core covers a range of the content regarded as most important by employers, such as:

- child development
- play and learning
- health and safety
- safeguarding
- observation assessment and planning.

This size qualification is particularly appropriate for those with an interest in progressing to a career in an early years-related field, who want to pursue it via a principally academic route and take it as one third of a broader programme alongside other qualifications, such as a BTEC Level 3 National in Health and Social Care or A-levels in psychology, English Language, or biology. Although this qualification does not confer occupational competence on learners, the choice of optional units aids progression into undergraduate areas both within and outside the early years sector, for example paediatric nursing, linguistics, psychology and teaching. It is suitable for learners wishing to work with children outside the early years sector.

This qualification was designed in collaboration with industry, so has the specific support of the key organisations and bodies in the early years sector.

The Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Award in Children's Play, Learning and Development (VRQ) 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. UCAS points for the qualification have been confirmed, further details will be available on the Pearson website in spring 2014.