

Statement of Purpose

500/8302/8 – Pearson BTEC Level 3 Extended Diploma in Countryside Management (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 230,000 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.

The Pearson BTEC Level 3 Extended Diploma (1080 GLH) in Countryside Management is part of a larger suite of land-based countryside management 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 Extended Diploma in Countryside Management (1080 GLH) is primarily a Technical Level qualification, equivalent in size to three A levels, which has been designed as a full two-year programme of study. It enables learners to develop a substantial common core of knowledge, including understanding the principles of wildlife populations, ecology and conservation, and undertaking estate skills. Learners are also required to complete a mandatory investigative project in the sector and to undertake and review work-related experience.

Learners are also allowed the maximum opportunity to study in more depth a full range of option areas of their choice, spanning science-based areas such as the principles of physical and biological environmental processes, and plant and soil science; a broad range of habitat management units including forestry and game habitats; units on recreation and tourism in the countryside; and the use and maintenance of land-based machinery.

The Extended Diploma 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.

As the qualification was designed in close collaboration with industry, it is fully supported by the Sector Skills Council for the land-based sector, LANTRA. A range of professional organisations/employers in the sector has also confirmed their support for this Pearson BTEC Level 3 Extended Diploma in Countryside Management. 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 Countryside Management 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 Countryside Management fulfils their entry requirements, either on its own or when achieved alongside other qualifications.