



Examiners' Report

Lead Examiner Feedback

January 2022

Pearson BTEC Nationals

In Agriculture; Countryside Management;

Forestry and Arboriculture; Horticulture:

Unit 3 - Contemporary Issues in the Land-based
Sectors (21321L)

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Grade Boundaries

What is a grade boundary?

A grade boundary is where we set the level of achievement required to obtain a certain grade for the externally assessed unit. We set grade boundaries for each grade, at Distinction, Merit and Pass.

Setting grade boundaries

When we set grade boundaries, we look at the performance of every learner who took the external assessment. When we can see the full picture of performance, our experts are then able to decide where best to place the grade boundaries – this means that they decide what the lowest possible mark is for a particular grade.

When our experts set the grade boundaries, they make sure that learners receive grades which reflect their ability. Awarding grade boundaries is conducted to ensure learners achieve the grade they deserve to achieve, irrespective of variation in the external assessment.

Variations in external assessments

Each external assessment we set asks different questions and may assess different parts of the unit content outlined in the specification. It would be unfair to learners if we set the same grade boundaries for each assessment, because then it would not take accessibility into account.

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, are on the website via this link:

<http://qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/support-topics/results-certification/grade-boundaries.html>

Awarding BTEC qualifications in 2022

Ofqual has [set out their plans](#) for awarding qualifications in 2022 and intend to return to a normal, pre-pandemic, approach to grading standards over by 2023. They have confirmed that 2022 will be a transition year, to reflect that we are in a pandemic recovery period and students' education has been disrupted.

Our guiding principle and approach to awarding BTEC qualification results in 2022 will be to ensure parity in relation to the approach being taken for GCSE and A level learners. BTEC courses have a different structure and design to academic qualifications - BTECs are modular qualifications (with assessments taking place throughout the course) compared to GCSEs and A levels which are linear (assessed and awarded at the same time at the end of the year), and therefore our approach needs to be different.

In 2022 we will return to the usual method of calculating BTEC qualification results, however adaptations including, U-TAGs and reduced internal assessment, are in place to provide a comprehensive package of support for students.

The basis of our awarding approach to BTECs this year is to ensure it is as fair as possible for all learners. We will use a range of evidence to set grade boundaries for the external units. Part of this evidence will be to closely monitor learner performance in all assessments that contribute to learners' final qualification grade, to ensure parity with A level and GCSEs.

Further information can be found [on our website](#) and via our Social Media channels.

21321L – Contemporary Issues in the Land-Based Sectors

Grade	Unclassified	Level 3			
		N	P	M	D
Boundary Mark	0	9	18	33	49

Introduction

January 2022 was the first opportunity learners had to take this externally assessed element of the Agriculture; Countryside Management; Forestry and Arboriculture; Horticulture Unit. This forms part of the new specification, many centres had been involved with the previous (QCF) specification for a number of years which included internally assessed assignments. The move to an exam-based format means that teaching teams have needed to prepare learners in a different way for assessment.

Introduction to the Overall Performance of the Unit

As identified above, this is the first opportunity for learners to be assessed within this Unit. The format follows the Sample Assessment Material (SAM) and Specimen Assessments very closely which hopefully has enabled this material to be suitable examination preparation.

The entry this series was comparatively small, and some centres were obviously “testing the waters”. Answers and approaches were extremely varied. Examiners took saw a range of land uses from different learners that were used as the focus e.g. housing development, tree planting, renewable energy, changing the grazing regime, game shoots, rewilding, green belt, hedge planting etc.

However, there were a number of significant errors that often meant learners were restricted to Band 1 or Band 2 in the generic marking criteria. These included:

- Limited or no evidence of explicit research mentioned or stated
- Only one land use or land use change considered
- Failing to read / interpret the scenario instructions and guidance before each question (these are the same in both the SAMs and Specimen papers)
- Failing to clearly state the land use (or activity)

The characteristics of the best responses (by Activity)

Activity 1

- Clearly understands their activity / and or land use in question.
- Is able to write about two different aspects / elements of and the implications of change.
- Paints a picture of the "context" but using different resources to set the scene and to provide data.

Activity 2 + 3

- Focused on the land use / activity with balance in terms of economic / social impacts 1 vs 2.
- Opinion backed up by data and evidence (numbers and locations), ideally referenced (author, publication and date).
- The research shows different sources and different perspectives.
- Does not express personal feelings / judgements that can be viewed as biased or unfounded.

Activity 4

- Is able to "take-on" the view and says how much they agree or disagree using evidence that has already been presented.
- Writes in a reflective style, with ongoing evaluation, accepting that there will be different views from different stakeholders or organisations.
- Reasoned judgements, linked to the other parts of their response, understanding the complexity of the topic / issue.

Suggestions to support preparation in future series

1. Learners need to understand that **this paper is set in the context of scenario** so it's perhaps similar to a piece of "managed coursework" or task-based activity, rather than a traditional exam. Learners should also be made aware of the published descriptors that are used to mark the work.
2. **Research is key.** Learners need to know the importance of high-quality research, be supported in the process of how to research, and learn how to plan their time their time productively in the 6 hrs for Part A. They need to make sure their research is also explicit in their responses, i.e., by providing supporting data / information linked to a source and / or date.
3. **Quality and range of research** are also important considerations so that the learner can demonstrate a range of viewpoints and opinions. This adds balance and importantly, validity. Examples might include national government agencies e.g., DEFRA, Environmental Agency, Forestry

Commission, Natural England and ONS (Office for National Statistics), Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (CEH). Other sources could be the NFU, CPRE, RSPB, National Trust, Woodland Trust, Plantlife, local Wildlife Trusts etc. The link here provides some additional sources from Naturenet <https://naturenet.net/orgs/>

4. Learners need to be made aware of that the **paper structure is now well established**. Learners can see for example the changing mark tariff and how one activity leads logically from one to the next and that they are interrelated. Ongoing conclusions at the end of each Activity for example, help with being reflective.
5. **Planning responses is probably a good idea**. There is space under the Activity instruction for doing this.
6. Need to **carefully read the scenario** so they understand the context and nature of the task - they form instructions to help navigate the test.
7. **Time management is crucial** and each Activity carries guidance regarding suggested timings. Marks cannot be transferred from one section to another as each is considered interdependently.
8. **Learners should read the supporting study guide**. This can be found on the Pearson / Edexcel website.

Individual Questions

This section considers each question on the paper, providing examples of popular learner responses and a brief commentary on why they achieved their marks within the mark scheme. This section should be considered with the live assessment material.

At this point, it's worth again revisiting on the Scenario that was presented to learners in this assessment as part of the Set Task Information.

The land-based sector in the UK is currently facing a number of challenges involving land use change, where land is being converted to other uses.

These changes often involve the conversion of land to other uses to maximise returns in the land-based sector. This raises several issues that must be considered when understanding land use changes in the sector.

You are employed by a land-based organisation.

As part of your continuous professional development, you have been asked to produce a summary report to update colleagues in your sector on these issues.

Your report will include the following activities:

- *the effectiveness of current land use in adding value in your land-based sector*
- *the economic, social and cultural implications of changing land use in your sector*
- *judgements on the impact of changing land use within your sector.*

This provides both a context and a direction from which learners should approach the assessment.

Activity 1

The opening question of the paper (Activity 1) was for many learners important in shaping their direction of travel. If they were able to clearly identify a land use (or linked land-based activity) then it meant that the rest of the questions followed for them logically. Few learners completed this section which was a shame.

You should spend approximately 25 minutes on this activity.

Activity researched in Part A

Affordable Housing

In the example response included in this report the learner provides a context in "Land use 1" and then develops this through their discussion in "effectiveness of land use 1" based around commercial forestry. For their second activity / land use they have written about carbon sequestration.

Land use 1

- Describe how current land use by organisations and individuals affects land value.

Within the forestry and arboriculture sector, the primary forms of land use are ~~the~~ for the purposes of commercial forestry, woodland maintenance, ~~the~~ sapling/tree production and carbon sequestration. I will be assessing the effectiveness of how commercial forestry and carbon sequestration affect ~~value~~ ~~the~~ ~~value~~ value is the shared activity of ~~the~~ tree propagation. Within commercial forestry, land value is dictated by the amount of timber produced, with much being owned by large companies, many hectares of land. ~~As~~ As the land they use is rarely developed, it is down to ~~other changes~~ ^{other changes} to increase value.

Effectiveness of land use 1

- Consider evidence from a variety of source material and make reference to it.
- Show how you have ensured the accuracy of the sources used.

As of 2020, for the purpose of commercial forestry operations, the average ~~value~~^{gross value} per hectare was roughly £11,600, ~~while~~ while for more productive forestry hectares it was around £15,000 (their higher productivity resulting from less non-usable areas, such as roads, rivers, lake and other not tree growable areas). While larger operations of 150 hectares or more benefitted from economies of ~~of~~ scale, generating on average £13,100 per hectare, while more productive areas averaged around £18,250. ~~These~~ These prices have been growing annually, with 2020 showing a 17% rise in average gross forest value, resulting from a higher global demand for wood for the purposes of construction, furniture production, cardboard production and biofuels. ~~The majority of~~ These figures and changes in value are from Savills research, a company specialising in the purchase and sale of land, as so have a vested interest with an accurate calculation of value, with other calculations supported by the London School of Economics and the

Grantham Institute.

The land use of commercial forestry is a tested method to increase land value, as it is unlikely to become a redundant industry due to the need of wood for a huge number of purposes.

Values for commercial forestry also have many avenues to increase value in the future, from improved tree management, better species selection and genetically modified trees. And although climate change will most likely have a detrimental effect on many species, specifically very drought vulnerable species such as Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*), it could also increase value by creating a longer growing period each year.

Land use 2

- Describe how current land use by organisations and individuals affects land value.

On the other hand, land being used for the purpose of carbon sequestration is a relatively new way of improving land value. Due to the availability of government grants and subsidies, businesses and individuals have benefitted from significantly lower startup costs for carbon sequestration operations.

While in the UK over 20,372 hectares of UK forests were sold for a value of £205.5 million, the highest value since records began, with a huge amount of it being for the purpose of carbon sequestration.

Effectiveness of land use 2

- Consider evidence from a variety of source material and make reference to it.
- Show how you have ensured the accuracy of the sources used.

Carbon sequestration allows land to generate value with minimal investment ~~for~~ or maintenance ~~for~~ from the landowner. As government subsidies of a maximum of £8500 per hectare are available for ~~the~~ woodland creation plans, initial costs are ~~greatly~~ ^{greatly} reduced, allowing more land to be of use from the excess of fund ~~for~~ in many cases. Carbon sequestration can also be used on land where forestry proves difficult, as there is no requirement for people or machinery to come into direct contact with each tree.

~~Therefore~~ Carbon sequestration operations also have significantly lower maintenance costs compared to commercial forestry, as they do not require the machinery, personnel and training that would normally be needed to extract value from the trees.

Large areas of ~~the~~ woodland is currently ~~damaged~~ and could be benefitting from

Carbon sequestration management. ~~Such~~ Such management can include the removal of ~~dead trees~~ trees with limited growth options, to allow more access to resources for trees more likely to thrive.

Carbon sequestration is also an ~~activity~~ ^{activity} being looked ~~at~~ ^{at} by many non-traditionally land based groups as a safe ~~future~~ future investment for their funds and image, being more reliable than investment in other areas. This can lead to both more support and attention but less understanding of ~~the~~ good practice.

9 marks. Top of Band 3.

Assessment of the issue is supported by quantitative and/or qualitative evidence, though it lacks balance between competing arguments/factors. Most research used to support comes from a range of resources to create validity, although there are one or two minor omissions.

Activity 2 (1)

Here examiners were looking for links between what was written in Activity 1 and this part of the exam. Again, explicit research was important. In the context of the example provided here, the learner is considering the economic impacts (1) resulting from the loss / conversion of farmland due to affordable housing.

Note only the first Economic implication is shown here.

You should spend approximately 50 minutes on this activity.

Economic implication 1

The Loss of farmland to land change to Affordable Housing Has numerous implications economically.

The loss of food production on that land can ~~be~~ result in a drop in Value to the Landowner. No crops or Livestock grazing would potentially cause the Landowners profit to drop over the year. If the ~~farmer~~ Land owner decided to develop this land into housing, or Sell their Land to a Housing company, the price for the Land can change dramatically.

"Whereas Agricultural land has a Value of £8,000 - £12,000 per Acre, the same Land with a residential housing Consent can achieve, 30, 40 or even 50 times that Value." MULLER PROPERTY ADVISORS.

Looking at these numbers, it would depend on the Landowners decisions on how much the Land could be worth. With Crop production, Land owners could earn a Substantial yield year on

year, whilst selling the land at a value of £8,000-12,000/ACRE would give the land owner a one time, lump sum of money. The use of this land could potentially earn similar numbers with crop production every year.

If the landowner decided to apply for planning permission and was successful in doing so, their land's value has increased substantially.

"WELL POSITIONED PARCELS WITH PLANNING PERMISSION HAVE SOLD FOR AS MUCH AS £1M/ACRE IN THE SOUTH OF ENGLAND AND £600,000/ACRE FURTHER NORTH, WHILE LAND IN NORTH WALES HAS GONE FOR 50 TIMES ITS AGRICULTURAL VALUE." BEN PIKE FOR FARMERS WEEKLY.

This would increase value to a high amount, and could benefit the land owner immensely, allowing them to sell the land to interested housing parties/associations.

The building of houses and creating new communities of people, will also increase the value of local businesses.

with the increased population, the economic value of the surrounding land and businesses will increase with the use by the new residents. Shops and local events will be ~~subject~~ subject to an increased customer base / clientele, which will increase income + business. This in turn will allow businesses to grow, increasing their value.

13 marks. Middle of Band 3.

Demonstrates a sound understanding of the relationship between the researched contemporary issue, e.g. housing and the economic impacts. Shows links between their issue and the economic impacts and lines of reasoning are supported and clear, with an effective structure to the response. They use some data and research (both explicit and implied). Discussion / assessment is attempted but doesn't reach the standard required for Band 4.

Activity 2 (2)

This second examples was perhaps much more typical of the entry for this first series. Borderline Band 1-2, mostly basic and lacking assessment. The context was game shooting and renewable energy land use changes. There is some data used, but its origin is unclear. It is hoped that this answer shows the significance of high-quality research as well as assessment in order to be able to progress up the mark scheme.

You should spend approximately 50 minutes on this activity.

Economic implication 1

Shooting/game Supports the equivalent of 74,000 full time jobs, Out of the 74,000 jobs 35,000 jobs are supported directly by the shoot providers.

~~Shooting~~ Shoots help support local businesses, which helps sustain rural communities through autumn and winter when income from other forms of tourism is reduced, without the shoot the businesses could go bankrupt without the support of the shoot.

The shooting also supports the 5,200 full time jobs in the ~~game~~ food and accommodation industry.

Shooters spend on average £2.5 billion every year on goods and services, which puts money back into the economy through tax, which can be used for schools, the police force and hospitals.

Shooting/ game could also cost the landowner money if the turnout for the shoots didn't cover the maintenance cost which could lead to all of the ~~the~~ ~~employees~~ employees being fired leading to less tax income for government and potentially more people on benefits which takes money away from the industries that need them.

The landowner's fields could also be ruined which could affect next year's crops due to compaction of vehicles damaging the crops, ~~and~~ potentially causing the landowner to come out with a loss with that crop which he ~~might~~ not ~~be~~ recover from.

Economic implication 2

wind turbines have a massive impact when it comes to the public and property value.

For example a wind turbine can decrease the value of a property 13x if they are located within 1.2 miles of a large wind turbine farm. which could massive affect the home owners ideas of moving to a wealthier area of a large home.

Those ~~within~~ 2.5 miles away from the large wind farm could lose 31% of the property value, which could also affect their next property purchase ideas/locations. ^{location} With the loss in property value this could affect the home owners mental health which could then lead to them losing their job which would affect the amount of tax that they contribute.

The reasons behind the decrease in property value are because the wind turbine are viewed as a eye sore and can create a loud sound when spinning.

The owners of the wind turbines will also have any financial issue with the long term maintenance of the turbines as they are a lot of moving parts, which are prone to breaking or failing which would lead to an expensive repair bill.

6 marks awarded. Low Band 2.

A generic response, covering two sets of economic implications but with very limited support of researched data and particularly provenance of sources (dates, authors, publications etc). Many of the comments are general and are not located, e.g. no place specific detail that would have been very useful. Sweeping statements such as "wind turbines have a massive impact to the public and property value" should be discouraged as this simply doesn't hold true in all cases.

As a result, it is considered to be a low Band level 2 response.

Activity 3 (1)

This is an extract from a Band 3 response. Note this is the first of their Social and cultural implications.

Social and cultural implication 1

The change of brownfield sites to green spaces can also benefit the public's health both physically and mentally. This is because the NHS says exercise can reduce chances of early death by up to 30%, that ~~is~~ statement along with a European study ~~and~~ results analysed by the US national library of medicine, national institute of health says people living in greener environments were 3 times more likely to exercise.

These statements show how adding green spaces closer to where people live can help people exercise and increase their health. This adding of green spaces can only come through brownfield reclamation in places like cities where there is not much free space, showing overall how this turning of brownfield sites into green spaces is beneficial for the public's health.

A Report from Aarhus university in Denmark showed children below 10 living close to green space have 55% less chance of psychiatric disorder. Another study from the UK annual population survey ~~showed~~ ^{from} over 25,000 people showed people who lived within 300 meters of green space had significantly

better mental well being. These ~~abstract~~ results ~~show~~ both show how living close to green space is good for mental health. In places like cities there is not much green space left, mostly brownfield sites are not used meaning the conversion of brownfield sites to green places is the most efficient way of people being near green spaces. This then improves their mental health.

overall, ~~it~~ ^{this} shows how brownfield reclamation into green spaces can help both the mental and physical well being of people nearby. This will also help people who gain work from this change in land use, from ~~which~~ ^{that} councils ~~can~~ get involved funding this change.

13 marks awarded. Mid Band 3.

This is an example of a secure Band 3 response. There needs a greater range and depth of both discussion, assessment and reasoning to get into Band 4. Also, the response would have been improved by the addition of dates for example on some of the research. Another example of good practice from this response was its structure. Clear paragraphs, as well as a conclusion at the end

of the section which shows the fact that the learner is clearly making an attempt to assess.

Activity 3 (2)

This is an extract from another Band 3 response. Note that all parts of their Social and cultural implications. The first part reads like a list, but the second part is much stronger in terms of its assessment.

You should spend approximately 50 minutes on this activity.

Social and cultural implication 1

Many groups oppose development.

Seems to be some misconceptions about the GB amongst public. 64% (Ipsos MORI) of public think GB shouldn't be developed. However, 2006 Barker Report - asked what land should be protected - 14% said 'land at edge of cities + towns':

Prof Paul Cheshire (LSE) - form of discriminatory zoning, keep urban unwashed out of home countries

Private landowners - own land - against

Wildlife Trust + CPRE - against

Sadiq Khan - against + case-by

Social and cultural implication 2

The loss of nature on the GB has massive social + cultural implications

Nature is essential for strong mental health. Mental Health Foundation found 45% people found visiting green spaces helped mental health during pandemic. The highest benefit gained was ~~gained~~ from building 'connectedness' with nature. This requires regular visits to ~~spaces~~ ^{spaces}. Those with better access to these places would have better mental health. It is much easier for people living in the GB to get access to nature. This shows the ^{social} inequality of the GB, as the people on higher incomes would be able to live there. Why should people on a lower income not have the same rights.

An interesting study by Roger Ulrich (1984), found that hospital patients recovering post surgery had shorter stays if their window gazed a natural scene instead of brick wall. ~~Abuse~~ ^{Demonstrates} the importance of nature for health.

Lots of brownfield sites, which are encouraged for building instead of greenfield, have higher

biodiversity value. For example, Lodge Hill in Kent is a naturally rewilded military training site. It has 5000 homes planned, but the land supports 1% of the British population ^{the culturally important} of nightingales. It is also an SSSI. Instead ~~of~~ managing it as a nature reserve, the 'the developers must find a compensation site'. This shows how broad the brownfield spectrum. Other important brownfield sites include Box Mine, Wiltshire, which are abandoned stone mines housing a population of the rare greater horseshoe bat. Some brownfield sites are the only access to green sites for some communities. However a lot of brownfield sites within urban areas do have little ecological value and should be built on first. Can revitalise communities.

Peer

13 marks awarded. Mid Band 3.

This is an example of another secure Band 3 response. It is a shame that both parts of the answer were so different in terms of their approach, with the second part being much stranger than the first which is essentially like a list. Nonetheless it was good to see use of explicit and quantitative research coupled with sound understanding loss of wildlife. This means that it reached the requirements of Band 3.

Activity 4

This example was one of the more successful responses seen on this series. The context for this was interesting – focusing on woodland goods and services. The learner was able to contextualise their ideas in a wider context of flooding, for example whilst at the same time bringing in aspects of their research by using located information and evidence. Although there was room for improvement, especially in terms of discussion and reasoning this was well explored in terms of different viewpoints.

You should spend approximately 25 minutes on this activity.

Firstly the protection for the woodlands is crucial the woodlands provide so many benefits such as flood control food, wildlife and timber for construction and provide a lot of uses like camping, exploring. but the main thing is that timber is a renewable source for construction and is better for the environment as well, if Scotland can use 75% timber in construction so should inner London.

Secondly, the greenland cover in some parts of the united Kingdom are dramatically lower than others like. The northern forest its got nearly 5% lower but will have a huge return once the project is completed in 2032 and from the 30000 trees they have already made a impact from when they planted them in 2018. The project will produce jobs, habitats and flood prevention so that a drainage system wont need to be paid by the Council / government.

Thirdly for buying land like in Kent 6 acres for £145,000 there is a huge return and benefits for the people houses can be made for the leisure and not all trees have to be cut down. But if it was in Scotland it would be worse because the land is bigger it has more trees that are filtering CO² so its better to keep more trees

instead of having the whole £110,000 16 1/2 acre of land used for construction and used for Mass deforestation of timber.

Lastly for the plantation it could have numerous benefits the cost of land in the past 5 years has increased because companies have started to grow trees to help prevent climate change and invest in carbon credits. The reason for companies to buy land of woodlands is to keep them safe from illegal logging or for their age value like for Ancient - semi Ancient species so that people can educate themselves. That is why all the leading organizations like Woodland Trust, Forestry Commission and the government are investing in woodlands, like the government planting 30,000 hectares a year till 2050 is a huge investment to tackle the climate change to benefit wildlife and the people that live near the woodlands. So I agree that land-use changes in my sector added value and can ~~also~~ mitigate the effect of climate change.

9 marks awarded. Top Band 3.

This is an example of very secure Band 3 response. The issues is explored from different perspectives and it has a developed discussion. More judgment is needed for Band 4 - this could be achieved for example with a more explicit

conclusion. It would also benefit from additional links back to their original research.

Summary

1. Learners need to understand that this paper is set in the context of scenario so it's perhaps similar to a piece of "managed coursework" or task based activity, rather than a traditional exam. Learners should also be made aware of the published descriptors that are used to mark the work.

2. Research is key. Learners need to know the importance of high-quality research, be supported in the process of how to research, and learn how to plan their time their time productively in the 6 hrs for Part A. They need to make sure their research is also explicit in their responses, i.e. by providing supporting data / information linked to a source and / or date.

3. Quality and range of research are also important considerations so that the learner can demonstrate a range of viewpoints and opinions. This adds balance and importantly, validity. Examples might include national government agencies e.g, DEFRA, Environmental Agency, Forestry Commission, Natural England and ONS (Office for National Statistics), Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (CEH). Other sources could be the NFU, CPRE, RSPB, National Trust, Woodland Trust, Plantlife, local Wildlife Trusts etc. The link here provides some additional sources from Naturenet <https://naturenet.net/orgs/>

4. Learners need to be made aware of that the paper structure is now well established. Learners can see for example the changing mark tariff and how one activity leads logically from one to the next and that they are interrelated. Ongoing conclusions at the end of each Activity for example, help with being reflective.

5. Planning responses is probably a good idea. There is space under the Activity instruction for doing this.

6. Need to carefully read the scenario so they understand the context and nature of the task - they form instructions to help navigate the test.

7. Time management is crucial and each Activity carries guidance regarding suggested timings. Marks cannot be transferred from one section to another as each is considered interdependently.

8. Learners should read the supporting study guide. This can be found on the Pearson / Edexcel website.

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