

Statement of Purpose

500/9149/9 – Pearson BTEC Level 3 Extended Diploma in IT (QCF)

The Information Technology (IT) sector and aspects of the creative industries, e.g. computer games development, are highly skilled and high growth sectors of the economy. Also, the IT sector is a key enabler for every other industry in the UK. The Sector Skills Council, eskills UK, estimate in the Technology Insights report (2012) that the IT industry contributes 8% of (or £75 billion to) the economy (Gross Value Add). They forecast that over the subsequent seven years the sector could generate up to an additional £47bn GVA to the economy and create 500,000 new jobs.

The Pearson BTEC Level 3 Extended Diploma (1080 GLH) in IT is part of a larger suite of BTEC National qualifications, in a range of sizes, which share the common purpose of helping people to become occupationally ready to take up employment in the IT sector and aspects of the creative industries 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 IT is primarily a Technical Level qualification, equivalent in size to three A levels. It covers many aspects of the sector and, as well as an unendorsed pathway there are three endorsed pathways available in Business, Networking and Systems Support and Software Development.

The BTEC Level 3 Extended Diploma in IT (QCF) has been designed as a full two-year programme of study, enabling learners to develop a substantial common core of knowledge, including communication and employability skills for IT, computer systems, and information systems, and allowing them the maximum opportunity to study in more depth a full range of optional areas of their choice, such as website production, event driven programming and IT technical support. It is mainly designed for those learners who know which sector they would like to specialise in. 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 IT sector, eskills UK. A range of professional organisations/employers in the sector have also confirmed their support for this Pearson BTEC Level 3 Extended Diploma in IT. 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 IT 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 IT fulfils their entry requirements, either on its own or when achieved alongside other qualifications.