

Purpose Statement

Name of regulated qualification	
QAN: 603/0446/7	Title: Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Certificate in Computing (180 GLH)

Overview

The computing sector

Computing is concerned with both computers and computer systems – how they work and how they are designed, constructed, and used. The study of computing encompasses programming languages, data structures, algorithms, and the underlying science of information and computation. The influence of computing has been profound in shaping the world in which we now live. The use of technology is almost universal among UK businesses, and increasingly businesses are adopting strategic technologies to deliver new opportunities.

There are approximately 1.2 million people employed in computing-related occupations, which is about 4 per cent of all employment in the economy. Over recent years, employment in this sector has been increasing at a faster rate than overall growth in UK employment. As a result, the proportion of employment accounted for by these occupations is forecast to continue to grow to 4.2 per cent by 2022.

The UK is ranked second in the world for technological readiness by the World Economic Forum. Ongoing developments in the sector include the government commitment of £1.2 billion to extend superfast broadband to 95 per cent of UK premises by 2017.

Who is this qualification for?

The **Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Certificate in Computing** is intended to be an Applied General qualification for post-16 students wanting to continue their education through applied learning, and who aim to progress to higher education and ultimately to employment, possibly in the computing sector. The qualification is equivalent in size to 0.5 A level and aims to provide a basic introduction to the study of computing.

No prior study of the sector is needed, but students should normally have a range of achievement at level 2, in GCSEs or equivalent qualifications.

What does the qualification cover?

The content of this qualification has been developed in consultation with academics to ensure that it supports progression to higher education. In addition, employers and professional bodies have been involved and consulted, in order to confirm that the content is also appropriate and consistent with current industry practice in computing and related occupational disciplines.

Everyone taking this qualification will study two mandatory units, covering the following content areas:

- fundamentals of computer systems
- security and encryption.

What could this qualification lead to?

Will the qualification support progression to further learning, if so, what to?

In addition to the content areas outlined above, the requirements of the qualification will mean that students develop some of the transferable and higher-order skills that are highly regarded by higher education and employers.

The qualification carries UCAS points and is recognised by higher education providers as contributing to admission requirements for many relevant courses. Students who have completed this qualification in a year may progress to further learning at level 3; for example, the Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Extended Certificate in Computing. Equally, it combines well with almost all subjects across the sciences, technology, arts and humanities as part of a programme of learning.

Students will be able to choose a wide range of degree programmes to progress to, but these will depend on the other qualifications they have taken; for example, students may combine this course with a Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Diploma in Art and Design to progress to an undergraduate degree in Design for Theatre, Performance and Events; or with a Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Extended Diploma in Music Technology to progress to an undergraduate degree in Music, Sound and Technology.

Students should always check the entry requirements for degree programmes at specific higher education providers.

Will the qualification lead to employment, if so, in which job role and at which level?

This qualification, when studied with other level 3 qualifications, is aimed at progression to higher education. However, it also supports students progressing directly to employment, as the transferable knowledge and skills will allow successful students the opportunity to apply for a range of entry level roles.

Why choose this size of qualification

If there are larger and/or smaller versions of this qualification, or it is available at different skills levels, why should the student choose this one?

The **Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Certificate in Computing** is equivalent in size to 0.5 A level. It is for students interested in getting an introduction to the computing sector, when studied within a full-time study programme alongside other fields of study, with a view to progressing to a wide range of higher education courses, but not necessarily in computing.

The suite also includes the following qualifications.

The **Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Extended Certificate in Computing**, which is equivalent in size to one A level. It is for students interested in learning about the sector alongside other fields of study, with a view to progressing to a wide range of higher education courses, but not necessarily in computing.

The **Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Foundation Diploma in Computing**, which is equivalent in size to 1.5 A levels. It is for students looking for a one-year course of full-time study, or alongside another area of study that contrasts or complements the qualification over a two-year full-time study programme.

The **Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Diploma in Computing**, which is equivalent to 2 A levels. It typically makes up two-thirds of a student's course of study, and is normally taken alongside other qualifications. It offers a significant core of learning in computer science, alongside a complementary subject, such as science, technology, engineering or mathematics, for students wanting to focus on a computing or computing-related course at higher education.

The **Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Extended Diploma in Computing**, which is equivalent in size to 3 A levels and is typically the major qualification in a full two-year 16–19 study programme. It offers a breadth of study for students who want to focus on the computing sector at higher education level, before entering employment.

There are four further BTEC Level 3 National Diplomas in the Computing suite:

- **Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Diploma in Computer Science**
- **Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Diploma in Computing for Creative Industries**
- **Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Diploma in Computer Systems and Network Management**
- **Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Diploma in Business Information Systems**

These are tech level qualifications that focus on a particular area of employment in the computing sector and are aimed at students who want to progress directly to employment. These qualifications are equivalent in size to 2 A levels and typically make up two thirds of a study programme, so may be taken alongside another level 3 qualification such as maths, engineering or physics.

For more detail about the other qualifications listed here, and the different progression opportunities they particularly support, please refer to their statements of purpose.

This qualification is supported by the following organisations

Higher Education

Kingston University

Leeds Beckett University

University of Chichester

University of Exeter

University of Huddersfield