



Pearson Level 3 Alternative Academic Qualification
BTEC Nationals in

L3

Information Technology

Transition Guide

Extended Certificate for first teaching from September 2025

Certificate for first teaching from September 2026

This document is for centres/practitioners moving (transitioning) from:

- Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Extended Certificate in Information Technology to the **Pearson Level 3 Alternative Academic Qualification BTEC National in Information Technology (Extended Certificate)** from 2025
- Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Certificate in Information Technology to the **Pearson Level 3 Alternative Academic Qualification BTEC National in Information Technology (Certificate)** from 2026

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Introducing the Level 3 BTEC Nationals from 2025 (AAQs)

The Level 3 BTEC Nationals from 2025 qualifications provide students with meaningful and practical learning experiences across a range of career sectors. They equip students with the applied knowledge, skills and personal attributes they need to enter and thrive in higher education and meet the demands of future employment in our fast-changing world.

Level 3 BTEC Nationals from 2025 (AAQs) are:

- **Engaging and future-focused** - providing opportunities for students to learn in real, relatable and practical ways and designed to ensure that they develop critical knowledge and transferable skills to navigate the future.
- **Accessible and fair for students, balanced with the demands of progression to the next stage of learning** - the use of the N Grade and our holistic approach to designing assessment criteria means that qualifications are attainable for students whilst ensuring that they have a solid foundation of skills and knowledge, and the confidence to progress.
- **Accepted and supported by universities** - developed in collaboration with educators and universities to ensure students have the right combination of skills and knowledge for success in higher education. Over 100 letters of support from universities.
- **Well supported and straightforward to deliver and administer** - simple structure making unit combination more straightforward; uniformed format of external assessment across subjects to streamline administration; Pearson-Set Assignment Briefs (PSABs) removing the need for centres to plan their own assignments, and wide range of training and support.



What is new?

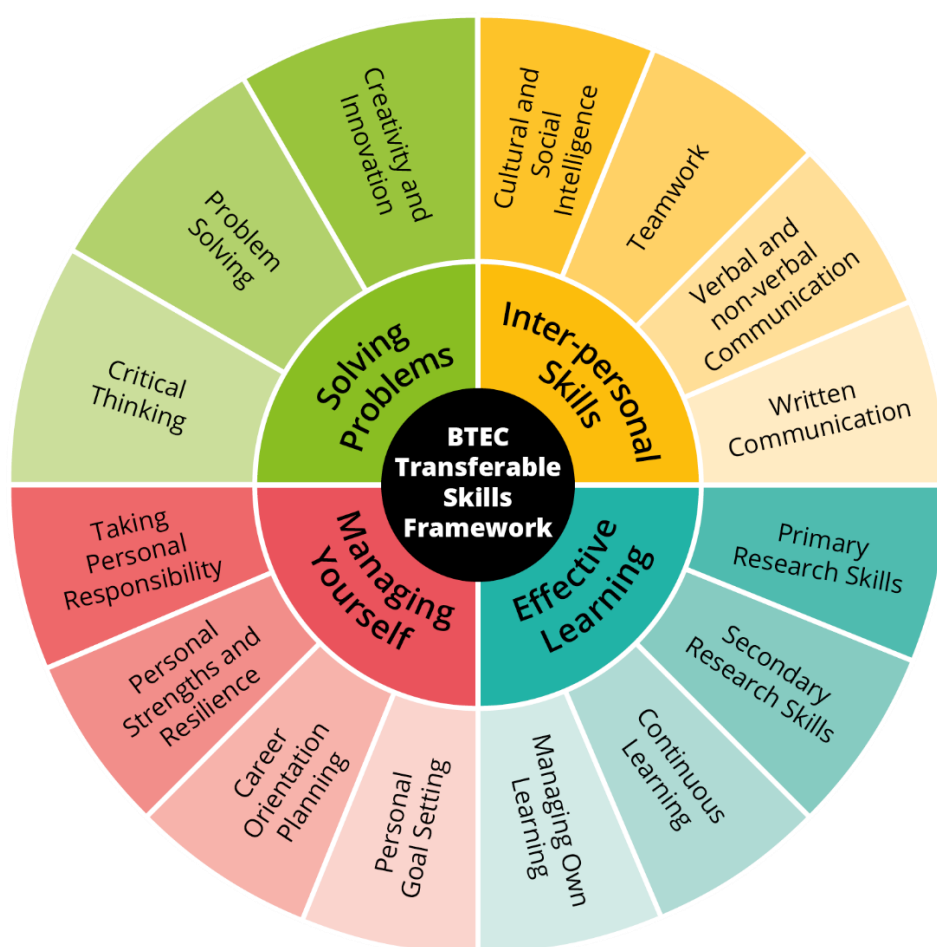
Preparing students for their future

Our new Level 3 BTEC Nationals from 2025 (AAQ) qualifications are designed with a clear focus on the future.

Our aim is to ensure that students are given every opportunity to develop the new knowledge, skills, attitudes and values they need to navigate and thrive through the uncertainty and to shape their world. We have identified three critical skill areas for the future – **transferable skills, digital skills and sustainability** – and have designed our new BTEC qualifications with these areas at the heart. Join us on the journey as we prepare young people to be the best versions of themselves for the future.

[Read our brochure.](#)

Click on the infographic to see further information.



What makes it easy to transition to the new BTEC National from 2025 (AAQ)?

- **Auto approval** - if you are currently approved to deliver BTEC Nationals you will receive automatically approval for the new qualification.*
- **Refreshed and updated content and assessments** – to ensure your learners continue to progress to popular progression routes into HEIs and beyond.
- **Simple, manageable and flexible structure** – you can continue to structure your delivery of teaching, learning and assessment when it best suits you and your learners.
- **Unchanged Quality Assurance process** with Standards Verification at the heart.
- **Assessments** - Externally Assessed Exams available twice a year, and Internally Assessed units, Assessments set by Pearson, and taken by learners when they are ready.
- **Familiar retake and resubmission rules.**
- **Grading, marking and assessment methodologies unchanged** - you can continue to teach and assess with confidence.
- **Dedicated support** - our Subject Advisors and assessments teams are here to support you every step of the way.

*You must be approved in the relevant sector to receive automatic approval.



Support offer

Complimentary resources and services

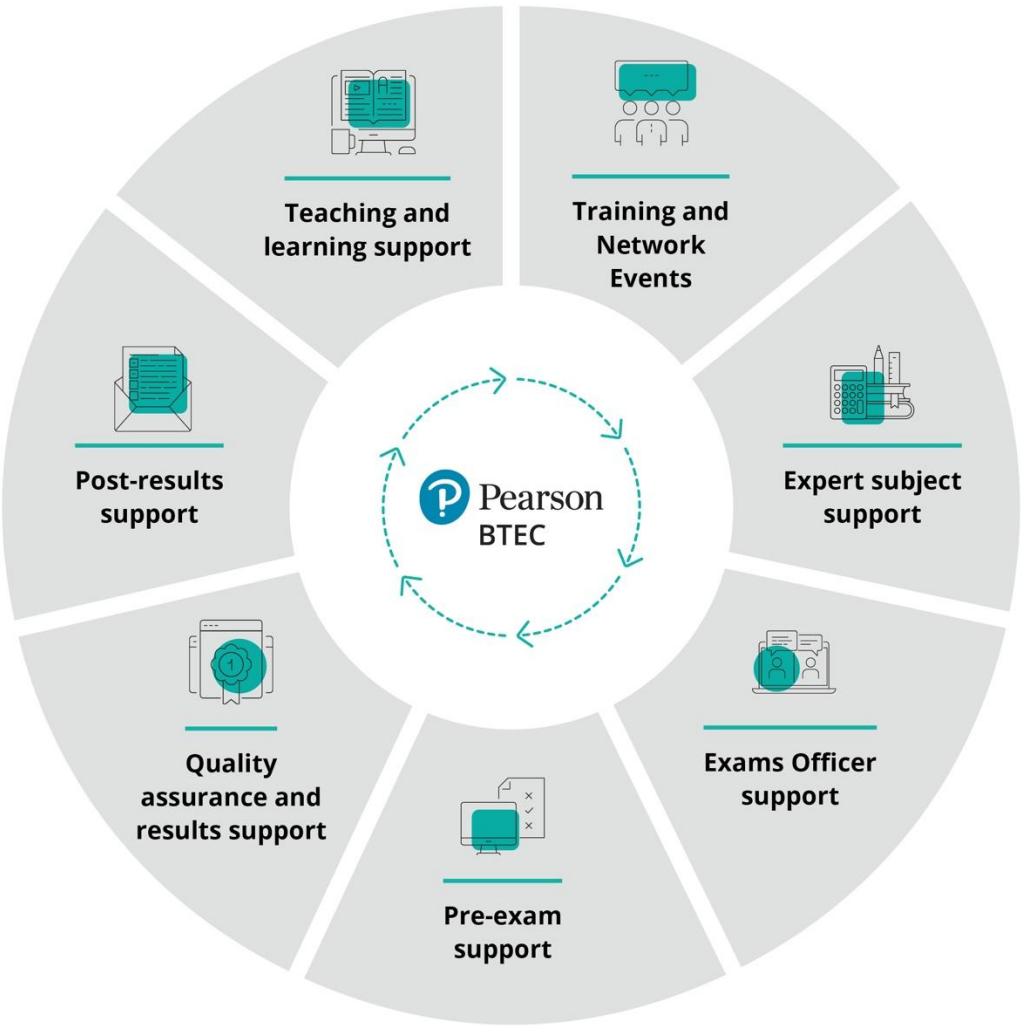
- **BTEC National Teacher Guide** – a comprehensive guide to support preparation for delivery of your new BTEC National AAQ.
- **Sample Assessment Materials** - showing how tasks, questions and marking will be applied, which can be used as sample papers/tasks to prepare learners.
- **[Exam Wizard](#)** - an online resource containing a bank of past paper questions and support materials to help you create your own mock exams and tests.
- **[Results Plus](#)** - a free online results analysis tool for teachers that gives you a detailed breakdown of your students' performance in BTEC external assessments.
- **[Training](#)** and standardisation – Getting Started and Preparing to Assess training events and recorded sessions will be available from July 2024 onwards.
- **[Network events](#)** – an opportunity to hear about the latest developments from subject experts within Pearson and to share good practice with fellow centres.
- Dedicated **[Subject Advisor](#)** available throughout the year so please do get in touch if you would like any support or guidance with:
 - Planning your courses
 - Overview of BTEC quality assurance processes
 - Suggested resources
 - Teaching and Assessment of internal units and components
 - Teaching external units and components
 - The training and support materials we have available.

Comprehensive Package of Paid resources

- **Student Books** – provide concise yet complete coverage of each sector, with ample student activities and assessment practice, covering all mandatory and optional units. Available in print and e-book formats.
- **Teacher Packs** – provide further supporting teacher resources for each sector. Designed to help students excel, including a front-of-class version of the e-book, activity sheets, fact sheets, videos and interactive knowledge check quizzes. Available as a bundle of units for each sector or as single unit packs.



Click on the infographic
to see further information.



Qualification Structure Comparison (Certificate)

Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Certificate in Information Technology			
Unit number	Unit title	GLH	How assessed
Mandatory units – learners complete and achieve all units			
2	Creating Systems to Manage Information	90	External
3	Using Social Media in Business	90	Internal

Pearson Level 3 Alternative Academic Qualification BTEC National in Information Technology (Certificate)			
Unit number	Unit title	GLH	How assessed
Mandatory Units, learners complete all units			
1	Information Technology Systems	120	External
3	Website Development	60	Internal

Qualification Structure Comparison (Extended Certificate)

Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Extended Certificate in Information Technology					Pearson Level 3 Alternative Academic Qualification BTEC National in Information Technology (Extended Certificate)			
Unit number	Unit title	GLH	How assessed		Unit number	Unit title	GLH	How assessed
Mandatory units – learners complete and achieve all units					Mandatory Units, learners complete all units			
1	Information Technology Systems	120	External		1	Information Technology Systems	120	External
2	Creating Systems to Manage Information	90	External		2	Cyber Security and Incident Management	120	External
3	Using Social Media in Business	90	Internal		3	Website Development	60	Internal
Optional units – learners complete one unit					4	Relational Database Development	60	Internal
5	Data Modelling		Internal					
6	Website Development		Internal					

Summary of key similarities and differences

- **Updated and includes topics** like information technology systems and website development that progress from the KS4 National Curriculum and are topical and challenging to students.
- **Aligned with Higher Education Computer Science courses** as well as designed with A Levels in mind.
- **Internal assessments mirror industry** and teach skills that transfer to Higher Education courses or jobs in the sector.
- **Problem solving, Critical Thinking and Self Management** are embedded into the qualification to develop student autonomy in preparation for their progression.
- **Units have been chosen to work together** and provide links throughout the qualification to embed knowledge, develop skills and allow students to achieve their potential.
- **Mandatory content means more support, better coherency and more trust** from HE Partners.
- **Employers and HE Partners have worked with us on the content** to ensure it meets the needs of the changing sector and provides progression.



Assessment Structure

Pearson Level 3 Alternative Academic Qualification BTEC National in Information Technology (Extended Certificate)

NB: For the Certificate, refer to the information on relevant units shared with the Extended Certificate.

Mandatory units, learners complete all units				Assessments
1	Information Technology Systems	120 GLH	External	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An external examination set and marked by Pearson 90 marks Assessment Availability: January and June First assessment June 2026
2	Cyber Security and Incident Management	120 GLH	External	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An external examination set and marked by Pearson 90 marks Available January and June First assessment June 2026
3	Website Development	60 GLH	Internal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pearson sets the assignment for the assessment of this unit. The PSAB will take approximately 20 hours to complete, and consists of 3 tasks The PSAB will give a choice of client briefs The PSAB will be marked by centres and verified by Pearson. You will make assessment decisions for the PSAB using the assessment criteria provided in the specification. The PSAB will be valid for the lifetime of this qualification.
4	Relational Database Design	60 GLH	Internal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pearson sets the assignment for the assessment of this unit. The PSAB will take approximately 36 hours to complete and consists of 2 tasks The PSAB will give a choice of client briefs You will make assessment decisions for the PSAB using the assessment criteria provided in the specification. The PSAB will be valid for the lifetime of this qualification.

Pearson Set Assignment Briefs (PSAB)

Internally assessed units are assessed using a Pearson Set Assignment Brief (PSAB), which is set by Pearson, marked by you and subject to external standards verification. The PSAB will be valid for the lifetime of this qualification, with [clear guidance on how to deliver for each new cohort](#).

Mapping Guide

Mapping of Pearson Level 3 Alternative Academic Qualification BTEC National in Information Technology (Extended Certificate) to the Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Extended Certificate in Information Technology specification.

NB: For the Certificate, refer to the information on relevant units shared with the Extended Certificate.

Title: Pearson Level 3 Alternative Academic Qualification BTEC National in Information Technology (Extended Certificate)	Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Extended Certificate in Information Technology	Comments
Unit 1: Information Technology Systems (120 GLH) External	Unit 1: Information technology Systems (120 GLH) External	
Assessment outcomes: AO1 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of information technology systems, terminology, concepts, and processes. AO2 Apply knowledge and understanding of information technology systems, terminology, concepts and processes AO3 Analyse and evaluate the factors and implications of information technology systems	Assessment outcomes: AO1 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of information technology terms, standards, concepts and processes AO2 Apply knowledge and understanding of information technology terms, standards, concepts and processes AO3 Select and use information technologies and procedures to explore likely outcomes and find solutions to problems in context AO4 Analyse and evaluate information, technologies and procedures in order to recommend and justify solutions to IT problems AO5 Make connections between the application of technologies, procedures, outcomes and solutions to resolve IT problems	Content has been updated to reflect changes in technology Streamlined assessment outcomes in the AAQ to focus the assessment for better student outcomes Assessment is an exam in both versions New section on Issues relating to developing computer programs



Unit 2: Cyber Security and Incident Management (120 GLH) External Assessment Outcomes A01 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of cyber security terms, security threats, system vulnerabilities and security protection methods, forensic procedures and implications resulting from threats A02 Apply knowledge and understanding to security threats, system vulnerabilities and security protection methods, forensic procedures and implications by selecting appropriate security tools and methods A03 Analyse and evaluate security threats, system vulnerabilities and security protection methods, forensic procedures and implications for cyber security scenarios	Unit 7: IT Systems Security and Encryption (120 GLH) External Learning Aims <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand current IT security threats, information security and the legal requirements affecting the security of IT systems Investigate cryptographic techniques and processes used to protect data Examine the techniques used to protect an IT system from security threats Implement strategies to protect an IT system from security threats. 	
Unit 3: Website Design (60 GLH) Internal Learning aims: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand how the principles of website development are used to create effective websites Explore website design skills and techniques to meet client requirements Develop a website to meet client requirement 	Unit 6: Website Development (60 GLH) Internal Learning aims: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the principles of website development Design a website to meet client requirements Develop a website to meet client requirements 	<p>No longer a set task, this is now an exam</p> <p>More coverage of networking in the new unit</p> <p>Updated coverage of security issues</p>
		<p>The new Website Design unit updates the previous one and places an emphasis on design.</p> <p>A similar approach to assessment in both units</p> <p>The emphasis on developing a proposal and designs gives more structure to the learning and assessment</p> <p>The Assessment is set by Pearson but allows for choice in centre</p>

Unit 4: Relational Database Development (60 GLH) Internal	Unit 5: Creating Systems to Manage Information (90 GLH) External	
Learning Aims <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explore principles of computing related to software development• Manage the development of a software solution	Learning aims: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrate knowledge of database development terminology, standards, concepts and processes• Apply knowledge and understanding of database development terminology, standards, concepts and processes to create a software product to meet a client brief• Analyse information about database problems and data from test results to optimise the performance of a database solution• Evaluate evidence to make informed judgements about the success of a database's design and performance• Be able to develop a database solution to meet a client brief with appropriate justification	<p>The new unit is now internally assessed to reduce the challenges encountered with the previous unit</p> <p>Evaluation has been replaced here with review to allow more time on technical skills</p> <p>Assessment is set by Pearson with a choice of scenarios.</p>

