

# Higher Education Institutions offering BTEC Higher Nationals under Licence

## Centre Guide

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## Introduction

### Who is this guide for?

This guide supports the **Licence Agreement for Higher Education Institutions offering Pearson BTEC Higher Nationals under Licence** (referred to in this document as the “HEI Licence”).

It provides practical support and information for UK Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) operating under licence, including guidance on becoming an HEI Licence centre and ongoing administration and communication requirements.

In the HEI Licence, an HEI is defined as a University/educational establishment with Taught Degree Awarding Powers, established with the primary aim of providing higher education.

### What are the BTEC Higher Nationals?

BTEC Higher Nationals are higher-level qualifications designed to support progression into employment or into completing a degree. Students taking a BTEC Higher National can expect to complete a thorough and engaging programme that will equip them with the higher-level skills and competencies in their chosen discipline and which reflect the requirement of professional organisations and where appropriate meets the National Occupational Standards (NOS) for each sector or industry.

BTEC Higher Nationals come in the form of the Higher National Certificate (HNC level 4) and Higher National Diploma (HND level 5). They are internationally recognised qualifications with the potential for career progression and professional membership, and professional development for those already in employment. They also provide opportunities to progress to higher education. The HNC is broadly equivalent in duration and level of study to the first year of a degree, as the HND is to the first two years of a degree.

### What is the HEI Licence?

Pearson Education Ltd is the owner, developer and administrator of BTEC Higher National qualifications.

The HEI Licence enables HEIs in the United Kingdom to deliver and award Higher National Certificates/Diplomas. As awarding organisations in their own right, HEIs are able to customise and devise their own higher level programmes under the HEI Licence.

In order to ensure that Higher National students continue to benefit from the same progression opportunities, Higher National programmes delivered under licence must map to the core content of existing BTEC Higher National programmes where in place. The aim of this design principle is to preserve recognition from employers and professional bodies.

## Becoming an HEI Licence Centre

- If you wish to apply to become an HEI Licence centre, you should contact [UKVQapproval@pearson.com](mailto:UKVQapproval@pearson.com) expressing your interest and request a copy of the HEI Licence
- Two copies of the Licence Agreement are to be signed by your Vice Chancellor/Head of the HEI and returned to our Approvals Manager accompanied by the required supporting evidence
- The supporting evidence required should include:
  - confirmation of UK HEI status
  - evidence of understanding or experience of development and delivery of BTEC higher level programmes.
  - named senior manager with responsibility for Academic Quality & Standards
  - published Quality Assurance documentation (e.g. Academic Quality & Standards Policies)
  - evidence of satisfactory external quality assurance records
  - the Higher National qualifications you wish to offer
  - expected annual students registrations on each Higher National qualification
  - mode of delivery for each Higher National qualification
  - delivery partner and location for all partnership provision
- If any further evidence or clarification is required, you will be sent a Request for Further Information
- Once the application is approved, a countersigned copy of the HEI Licence will be sent to you.
- Qualifications offered under the licence agreement are awarded by the HEI and not Pearson. HEIs must therefore adhere to the UK Quality Code for Higher Education when awarding these qualifications. They are not regulated by Ofqual or other UK qualifications regulators.

## Partner Delivery Sites

- As part of your licence agreement with Pearson, you may be able to apply to deliver Higher Nationals in partnership with other delivery sites such as FE Colleges. Should you choose to do this, your arrangements with partners are subject to the UK Quality Code for Higher Education.
- Clear instructions for the registration of learners from delivery sites are contained in the licence agreement.
- You may also apply to partner with delivery sites based overseas. If this is the case, please note that you must adhere to Pearson's policy for 'Centres Operating across International Borders to Offer BTEC and Other Pearson Vocational Qualifications'. This is available on our website. Centres operating under licence are defined as Model 3 in this policy.

## Developing your own higher level qualifications

The HEI Licence authorises your institution to develop and validate your own centre-devised qualifications using your own titles and units, tailored to meet local needs. It is the responsibility of your institution to set up its own validation panels in order to do this. On request, we may assist in the process of developing qualifications, for example by reviewing draft documentation and attending the validation event. This may attract a fee.

Where a BTEC Higher National exists with a closely related title and/or content the centre-devised programme must cover the same core content as in the equivalent BTEC Higher National programme. Where there is no equivalent BTEC Higher National programme then there is no requirement of this kind.

There is no requirement for centre-devised Higher Nationals to mirror the current QCF titles exactly beyond the core requirements. However, many HEIs consider it good practice to align their qualifications with the nationally recognised QCF qualifications.

Please note: If you wish to offer an existing QCF BTEC Higher National under licence, you will need to validate this as your own award.

### Higher Nationals awarded by HE institutions under licence

Individual Higher National units are graded at either Pass, Merit or Distinction. Where a Licensed HEI uses percentages or literal grading they should map their unit grading system to Pass, Merit or Distinction. Typically this would be 40% to 54% = Pass, 55% to 69% = Merit and 70% or above = Distinction.

Higher Nationals awards also have an overall grade i.e. HNC or HND, HNC or HND with Merit, HNC or HND with Distinction. The procedure used by licensed HE institutions in determining the overall qualification grade should be in line with that used for other awards made by the HE Institution.

## Validation and review of higher level qualifications under licence

As your institution is an Awarding Organisation in its own right, there is no requirement for Pearson to formally validate the Higher National qualification you have developed. However, as part of the HEI Licence, and to comply with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, you are required to provide us with details of:

- any newly validated qualifications
- revisions of existing qualifications
- programme specifications for any new or revised qualifications
- extensions to the validation of any qualifications
- all changes to the mode of delivery of existing qualifications
- all changes relating to student registrations, where they are more than 30% higher than the existing student numbers approved on the licence agreement

Pearson will review the new or revised programme specification(s) and if appropriate, issue a programme code for the qualification(s). Please note that unless informed otherwise, our systems will record the validation period as five years.

You should send the above information to our Centre Management team at:  
[UKVQapproval@pearson.com](mailto:UKVQapproval@pearson.com).

## Student registration and certification

### Registration

It is the responsibility of the licensed HEI to make data submissions.

At the start of each academic year, you must register students with us before 15th December via Edexcel Online. If different student cohorts enrol on a programme on a rolling basis throughout an academic year, registrations must be completed within 30 days of the start of the programme of study. Registrations on Edexcel Online can take place at any time during the year. Registration information must include:

- Qualification details
- Student details
- Partner centre details, in the case of collaborative provision (e.g. programmes delivered at a partner FE college)

On confirmation of the student registration figures, we will invoice you for the registration fees within 30 days.

Student completion and withdrawal data must also be entered into the relevant fields in the learner record on Edexcel online.

### Certification

You are responsible for producing and distributing certificates to successful students at the end of the programme. Your certificates should follow the brand guidelines provided below.

Certificates should denote that students have followed a Pearson approved programme of study.

## Brand Guidelines

It is vital that the Pearson brand and identity is correctly and consistently applied, not only by the organisation itself, but also by the many valued partners that help deliver the products and services in the UK and around the world.

HEI licensed centres offering Pearson qualifications must comply with these brand guidelines.

### A. Approved Logo

The Pearson brand identity should not be used by any third party organisation.

Only the Pearson block logo, as shown below, can **only** be used on learner certificates for the licensed centre in conjunction with the HEI logo.

The Pearson block logo uses one of the four principal Pearson colours (purple, blue, orange, green) and has 'Pearson' contained within the block.



### B. Logo Use

As the HEI will produce a certificate this should be in the HEIs brand identity with the Pearson block logo included.

The logo:

- Can **only** be used in conjunction with the HEIs own logo on certificates
- Can only be shown at no more than 70% of the size of the HEIs own logo
- Must be an approved version of the logo (as above)

### C. Logo positioning and exclusion zone

The Pearson block logo can be positioned anywhere on a certificate but only in conjunction with the HEIs logo. A protective exclusion zone is provided around the logo, as the image below shows, which is defined by the height of the 'P' in the Pearson block logo. Note that the exclusion zone itself is invisible, and the elements that help to create it should not be seen.



For all A4 certificates, the logo should be 14mm high however, the Pearson block logo should be no larger than the logo of the HEI.

The Pearson block logo must never be distorted, stretched or manipulated in any way.

## Summary of the HEI Licence Agreement and Maintenance Process

Centre	Pearson Qualification Services
Email request for an HEI Licence Agreement to become a Pearson UK licensed centre.	Contact <a href="mailto:UKVQapproval@pearson.com">UKVQapproval@pearson.com</a> . Request is reviewed.
Send two signed copies of the HEI Licence Agreement and details of qualification programmes to be run to Approvals.	Contact <a href="mailto:UKVQapproval@pearson.com">UKVQapproval@pearson.com</a> who will return countersigned copy of the HEI Licence.
<p>Ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• all higher education (Level 4–7) programmes of study provided under an HEI Licence agreement with Pearson take account of relevant QAA subject and qualification benchmark statements.</li> <li>• newly validated Higher National qualifications contain the same core content as the equivalent Pearson BTEC Higher National.</li> </ul>	If necessary clarify requirements with your local Pearson Curriculum Development Manager.
<p>For licensed Higher Nationals and Level 4–7 professional qualifications, the Institution sends:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• details of newly validated qualifications</li> <li>• revisions of existing qualifications</li> <li>• programme specifications for new or revised qualifications and extensions to the validations of any qualifications.</li> </ul>	Contact <a href="mailto:UKVQapproval@pearson.com">UKVQapproval@pearson.com</a> . Pearson scrutinises the programme specification (including core content mapping to equivalent BTEC Higher National programme) and if the specification is appropriate, issues a programme code for the qualification which will usually be valid for 5 years.
Register qualification and student details for the HEI Licensed centre and any partner centre(s) on Edexcel online before 15th December or within 30 days.	Pearson invoices the centre for registration fees.
Appoint your own External Examiners (EEs). The EEs report to your Institution, using your usual procedures, e.g. for training, monitoring and remuneration and in accordance with QAA's expectations for External Examiners. You do not need to send names and details of the EEs to Pearson.	

Centre	Pearson Qualification Services
<p>The HEI certifies students.</p> <p>The HEI updates student registration details, completion and withdrawal data on Edexcel online by 30th September each year.</p>	<p>Contact <a href="mailto:examsofficers@pearson.com">examsofficers@pearson.com</a> if further assistance is needed.</p>
<p>Send the Institutional Review Report (IRR) on each of the validated qualifications for the previous academic year to Pearson, using the supplied pro-forma, by 31st March each year.</p>	<p>Send to <a href="mailto:BTECdelivery@pearson.com">BTECdelivery@pearson.com</a>. All of the IRRs will be analysed and an annual overview report will be produced. The University Principal Examiner visits some Licensed HEIs each year.</p>
<p>Send updated centre contact details for correspondence relating to licensed qualifications</p>	<p><a href="mailto:BTECdelivery@pearson.com">BTECdelivery@pearson.com</a></p>
<p>HEI programme leaders, External Examiners and Administrative staff will be invited to attend regional licence centre briefing meetings meeting run by Pearson.</p>	<p>Briefing meetings will normally be arranged for the middle of the Autumn term.</p>

## Quality Assurance

You are responsible for recruiting, training and remunerating External Examiners to undertake external quality assurance for all of your Pearson qualifications under licence.

We require you to complete an annual Institutional Review Report (IRR), summarising the year's quality assurance activity, findings and subsequent actions, plus any relevant qualification or procedural updates. IRRs are received and monitored by our University Principal Examiner, who collates the information from all HEI Licence centres and publishes it in an Annual Report.

IRRs must be submitted to us by 31st March each year. Please send your IRR to: [BTECdelivery@pearson.com](mailto:BTECdelivery@pearson.com).

The University Principal Examiner will also attend a selection of IRR meetings at HEI Licence centres each year, usually accompanied by a Regional Quality Manager.

### Named contact

You must ensure that the contact details for the person responsible for Academic Quality & Standards relating to your licensed qualifications up to date. This person will be our named contact for all correspondence relating to your licensed qualifications. Updated contact details should be sent to our Vocational Assessment team at: [BTECdelivery@pearson.com](mailto:BTECdelivery@pearson.com).

## Support

If you require support or guidance at any time during the year, we have a team who will be ready to support you.

### HEI Licence Centre Briefing Meetings

Pearson will run regional licence centre briefing meetings to which it will invite appropriate staff from licensed institutions. Part of the briefing meeting will be used to exchange good practice and to sustain the consistency of the awards. Licensed institutions are therefore encouraged to invite staff (from the institution and its partner colleges) and their external examiners associated with quality assurance of the delivery and assessment of licensed Higher Nationals to the briefing meeting. Briefing meetings will normally be arranged for the middle of the autumn term.

### Regional Quality Managers

Your Regional Quality Manager can help with general quality assurance queries. A UK map showing Regional Quality Manager contact details is available on our website here: <http://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/Support/Quality%20Assurance/RQM-Map.pdf>.

### University Principal Examiner

A University Principal Examiner, Alison Jay, is also available for guidance. Her personal contact details are available on request from [BTECdelivery@pearson.com](mailto:BTECdelivery@pearson.com).

### Service Operations

For any questions about registering students or programme approval, please contact our Exam Officers team at: [examofficers@pearson.com](mailto:examofficers@pearson.com).

### Vocational Assessment

For advice on operational matters and to update us if your contact details change, please contact: [BTECdelivery@pearson.com](mailto:BTECdelivery@pearson.com).

