

13 BTEC and NVQ/Competence-based Qualifications

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1 Scope of this section

1.1 Vocational qualifications

This part of the manual gives instructions and information on the administrative procedures for learners on programmes leading to vocational qualifications. These include:

- International BTEC Levels 2 and 3
- BTEC QCF qualifications
- non-accredited/non-regulated qualifications on Pearson's Self-Regulated Framework
- NVQ Awards, Certificates and Diplomas Levels 1-8.

The following areas are covered:

- registration
- reporting achievement
- claiming certification
- quality assurance.

It is important that this information is made available to the examinations officer/administrator, all coordinators and members of staff responsible for the preparation of documents for enrolment, registration and reporting achievement of vocational qualifications.

Language of Assessment

The language of assessment is English unless you have approval from Pearson to assess in a language other than English. Please email internationalvqapproval@pearson.com if a programme is to be assessed in a language other than English. For further guidance, please refer to the '[Use of languages in qualifications policy](#)'.

Where a learner produces any material for assessment in a language other than English, this will be stated on the certificate.

1.2 Collaborative arrangements

If your centre wants to work with other organisations you must first refer to the 'Collaborative arrangements for the delivery of vocational qualifications policy', which is available [here](#).

1.3 BTEC qualifications delivered through external testing

Most qualifications are assessed by staff in the centre, and the outcomes are then quality assured and reported to Pearson. For some qualifications assessment is through external testing. Centres are required to install appropriate supporting software for some of the tests. For further details please refer to the onscreen testing guide available [here](#).

Key dates for 2025-26 can be found in the Key Dates section of this manual or in the full Key Dates table on our [website](#). For more information about the external assessment 'type' please consult the relevant specification.

2 Registration

2.1 Responsibility for registration

When a centre has enrolled learners onto an approved programme, or individual units, learners must then be formally registered with Pearson so that quality assurance can be implemented, achievement can be reported and awards issued. Responsibility for the registration of learners and for the payment of fees lies with the approved centre.

Centres **must** ensure that learners are informed of their registration number when this is requested. It is not permissible to withhold a learner's registration number.

Note: Pearson reserves the right to refuse to accept new registrations from a centre if the centre has a debt outstanding to Pearson at the due date of submission of new registrations.

2.2 Registration deadlines

Learners must be registered within 60 days of enrolment at the centre.

Enrolment is defined as:

- for knowledge-based programmes, the day on which delivery of the learner's programme/unit commences
- for competence-based programmes, the day on which assessment of the learner's programme/unit commences.

Note: Any delay in registration may affect our capacity to provide centres with the assessment and verification opportunities that are required and, therefore, certification may be delayed. Centres should note that this could cause problems for learners going through UCAS in order to enter higher education.

BTEC registrations received after the appropriate deadline will be subject to a late registration fee.

How to make vocational registrations

Please refer to our guidance on how to make [vocational registrations via Edexcel Online or EDI/a2C](#).

2.3 Periods of registrations

Registrations must be made before the end date given for qualification approval. Registrations are valid for a period of up to five years or until the issue of certificates, whichever is the earlier. A learner may only be certificated during this time. For qualifications accredited by the regulator the final date is specified as shown on our website.

Where a learner's registration exceeds the five-year expiry limit, the learner must be re-registered on a currently approved programme.

2.4 Registration: topping up

For regulated qualifications, learners may achieve at one qualification size and 'top up' to a larger size provided that both qualifications are based on the same specification, i.e. have the same unit identification codes.

Please note that centres must be aware of certification end dates for these qualifications (given on our website) and not make top ups unless learners will be able to complete programmes before the certification deadline.

Top ups are available for the following current qualifications:

- Foundation Learning Awards, Certificates and Diplomas
- First and National Awards, Certificates, Extended Certificates and Diplomas
- Level 4 HNC and Level 5 HND
- Level 3 and Level 4 Foundation Diplomas in Art and Design
- Specialist and Professional Awards, Certificates and Diplomas
- WorkSkills Awards, Certificates and Diplomas.

2.5 Registration: estimated completion dates

At the time of registration centres are asked to give an estimated completion date. These dates are used in relation to the allocation of Standards Verifiers and External Examiners. It is important that centres give an accurate date (within two months) and that any changes are notified to pgs.international@pearson.com

2.6 Registration: programme numbers

Centres should check that the programme numbers used are those that match the programmes being delivered, particularly if registrations are submitted electronically.

Note: Whilst learners who are registered incorrectly may transfer to the correct programmes, this could delay assessment, quality assurance and certification.

2.7 Deletion of registrations

If you wish to delete a learner's registration, Pearson will issue a credit note for the original registration fee, provided that we are notified by email to pgs.international@pearson.com within 90 days of registration and the learner has not completed any units. You must give the learner name and registration number in the email. No requests for learner deletions can be made unless the learner names are supplied.

Learner registrations will not normally be deleted or fees refunded if we receive the request more than 90 days after registrations have been accepted by Pearson. A new learner cannot replace an individual who has been registered and subsequently left the programme.

Deletions for Higher Nationals

From 1 January 2023, deletions for all Higher Nationals, regardless of whether your programme follows an academic year, must be made within 49 days of the student starting the programme of study (not from the date of registration). From 1 January 2023 any deletions made 50 days or more after the student's start date will not be eligible for a full refund.

It is important that the 'enrolment date' for your students is updated in Edexcel Online to reflect their actual start date if that is different to the pre-populated enrolment date of 01 September. The 49 days will run from the 'enrolment date' entered in Edexcel Online. More information on how to make deletions can be found [here](#).

2.8 Withdrawal of learners

Centres should advise us of all learners who have withdrawn from programmes. Withdrawal can be made through Edexcel Online and can take place throughout the year. Withdrawal does not result in a credit back of any fees. Withdrawn learners may be reinstated via Edexcel Online at no extra charge.

3 Reporting learner achievement

3.1 Responsibility

Centres are responsible for reporting on the achievement in internally assessed units for each learner in respect of the assessment requirements for the programme for which he/she is registered.

The centre is also responsible for reporting success to Pearson for interim or final certification.

Where programmes also include external assessment, the centre must ensure that appropriate assessments have been completed and that Pearson has data related to achievement – please refer to qualification specifications for further guidance.

Any amendments to reported grades are monitored and evidence of why grade changes for internally assessed units have been made may be requested at any time.

3.2 Unit grades

It is important that you report unit grades accurately according to the available assessment records for the programme and in accordance with the grading rules in the specification documents.

BTEC National and Higher National qualification units are always subject to grading except where otherwise indicated in the qualification specification documents. Achievement should be reported using the grades below:

U – Unclassified

P – Pass

M – Merit

D – Distinction.

Please refer to the specifications for each programme for full details. Centres must ensure that they report grades correctly according to the status of the unit.

3.3 Overall qualification grades of achievement

The overall grade is calculated automatically from the unit grades reported (except for Level 3 and 4 Foundation Diplomas in Art and Design where you will need to report the overall grade through Edexcel Online or EDI/A2C). For all other qualifications the centre does not need to supply further information.

Full details on the overall grades available and how they are determined are given in the specification document for each qualification.

3.4 Confirmation of learner achievement

It is essential that all centres issue annual reports of success to learners.

Centres reporting grades by EDI/A2C should issue their own centre report for learners, and centres using Edexcel Online should issue learners with the Edexcel Online report. It is most important that centres accept the responsibility to provide learners with evidence of their achievement in order that they have early official evidence of their success.

3.5 Reporting success to UCAS

In March/April each year we undertake a matching exercise with UCAS to identify those BTEC Level 3–5 learners who have applied to UCAS for entry to higher education courses. These are learners who are applying for higher education places and are following BTEC Nationals, Higher Nationals, Level 3 and

Level 4 Foundation Diplomas in Art and Design, as well as any Level 3 Specialist courses that attract points on the UCAS tariff. During July/August we will provide UCAS with confirmation of these matched learners' achievements so that Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) have the latest information on each applicant.

Where a match cannot be found, because of incorrect spellings or incorrect centre details, we will still be able to inform UCAS of these learners' achievements if you notify us of each learner's UCAS Personal ID number and UCAS Scheme Code by email to examsOfficers@pearson.com

It is important that results for these learners are reported to us by 5 July.

If you are reporting results to Pearson by EDIFACT EDI/A2C, we ask that you send a file earlier in July for your UCAS learners only, rather than include these learners in a larger file later in July.

Note: Centres should ensure that staff are available to respond to university queries during peak summer periods, and that results are sent to Pearson as soon as possible. This will enable issues to be resolved more easily.

Where learners achieve a qualification and top up to a larger qualification, e.g. Level 3 Certificate to Level 3 Diploma, it is essential that you top up the learner as soon as the smaller qualification has been achieved. This is so that we can match the new qualification with UCAS as early as possible and send the grade on completion.

3.6 Submission of results to Pearson

Interim reporting

Results must be returned or results reported via EDI/A2C or Edexcel Online for every learner registered who has achieved unit success, and also where he/she has withdrawn from the programme. If he/she has already been deleted you do not need to include them in the report. Success on units should only be reported where all requirements have been met. All units are reported by EDI/A2C or through Edexcel Online.

Where a BTEC programme contains both internally and externally assessed units, you should report results on completion of the last internally assessed unit, even where there is an externally assessed unit result outstanding. We will issue the overall qualification result as soon as the externally assessed unit result is available.

Note: In all cases of interim reporting a Notification of Performance will be produced only if the option is selected by the centre.

Dates for grade reporting

In order to ensure that certification is received as soon as possible please refer to part 4.2 in this section.

For learners completing programmes at the end of the UK academic year, if results reach us by 5 July, awards will be issued by 15 August unless there is an issue from Standards Verification or a query over the result. Certificates and results for success reported after 5 July may be issued after 15 August.

3.7 Methods of reporting

There are two electronic methods of reporting success:

- EDIFACT EDI/A2C transmission
- Edexcel Online.

Note: JCQ format EDI does not currently support the reporting of unit outcomes and award claims from centres to us. Centres using this format should use Edexcel Online to report success to us. (For example, SIMS uses JCQ format EDI.)

EDI/A2C transmission

Learners' unit results, certificate claims and withdrawals may be transmitted electronically by EDI/A2C (see EDI/A2C results reporting: EDIFACT EDI format on the EDI/A2C section of our website).

Results Entry 7B files

In order to receive learners' overall results via EDI, please ensure you have submitted a Results Entry 7B file by 31 May.

How to get a Results Entry 7B file

Log on to Edexcel Online, go to the BTEC section, then select EDI Basedata. Change the Basedata Subtype drop-down to Results Entry 7B, make sure the approval year is 2025-26 and select *All Approved*

Programmes. Hit Submit and JCQ based data will be sent to your Edexcel Online mailbox within a few hours. You will then be able to import it into your MIS and create your own Results Entry 7B results request file for the learners you need results for.

Changes to learner information

To ensure that your results in August are correct, learner details in the Results Entry 7B file must exactly match the current learner registration details.

If a learner has been transferred between programmes (for example from a Diploma to a Certificate) after your original 7B file has been submitted, please send us a new file with the updated details.

Edexcel Online

You can report results, claim certification and notify withdrawals through Edexcel Online (see qualifications.pearson.com/eol for how to gain access to it).

4 Certification

4.1 Reporting success to Pearson

There are two methods of reporting results, through Edexcel Online or by EDIFACT EDI/A2C.

4.2 Certification deadlines

Data should be submitted for all learners via EDI/A2C or through Edexcel Online on these occasions:

- at the end of each year/stage of the programme: by 5 July for programmes following the UK academic year (September to July), or as soon as possible thereafter, even where learners are retaking assessments or tests (especially important for UCAS applicants)
- immediately after completion for non-UK-academic year programmes
- on transfer of the learner to another programme/centre
- for all learners who have withdrawn from the programme, even where no success has been achieved (especially important for UCAS applicants).

Certificates are issued weekly for most vocational qualifications. Certificates will be delivered to centres within 14 working days of the print date.

In order to issue certificates in August, results should be reported by 5 July for every learner completing at the end of a UK academic year. Results must be reported for every learner who has achieved unit success and also where the learner has withdrawn from the programme. No action is required where a learner has not completed any units in year one of a two-year programme.

It is particularly important that, for learners who have made applications to HEIs through UCAS, results are reported by 5 July, even where the learner is retaking assessments and/or tests, so that HEIs have information on each applicant. A member of centre staff should be available during July/August in order to process any queries raised.

For guidance on how and when to report learner achievement please refer to the [guidance](#).

Note: Results should only be reported if the centre has clearance to certificate through reports from Standards Verifiers or External Examiners.

5 Recognition of prior learning

Centres may make claims for some units or a whole qualification based on recognition of prior learning and/or experience. Please refer to the policy on Recognition of Prior Learning, found [here](#).

After accepting a learner for assessment of prior learning, registration should be made in the usual way and RPL achievement may then be reported and graded where appropriate, using normal methods.

6 Reasonable adjustments, appeals and assessment records

6.1 Reasonable adjustments

Centres can put in place reasonable adjustment arrangements for learners with particular requirements if they have, for example:

- a permanent or long-term disability or learning difficulty
- a temporary disability, illness or indisposition.

These arrangements are intended to allow learners to demonstrate their achievement. However, any reasonable adjustment arrangements must not:

- advantage or disadvantage the learner
- alter the assessment demands of the qualification.

Centres should follow the [policies and guidance](#).

Pearson reserves the right to request further clarification or information in relation to any proposed arrangements.

6.2 Appeals

As part of the approvals/centre recognition process, centres are required to provide evidence that they have a published internal appeals procedure which can be accessed by learners.

From time to time learners contact Pearson directly about issues relating to the delivery and assessment of the programme they are following. On receipt of any such communication we would, in the first instance, refer the learner back to the centre's own internal appeals procedure. Learners are advised that they must fully exhaust this system before Pearson can become involved.

If a learner does access the centre's internal appeals system and does not feel that the outcome is satisfactory, he/she can contact Pearson again.

Learners should provide the following information when making an appeal to Pearson:

- an outline of the nature of the issue and details of communication with the centre
- evidence that they have fully completed the centre's internal appeals process
- clear details of why they feel the outcome to be unsatisfactory.

At this stage we would take the appropriate steps to investigate the complaint. The outcomes of any such reviews are confidential between Pearson and the centre. Pearson may charge for carrying out these reviews. Please refer to the document [Enquiries and Appeals about Pearson Vocational Qualifications Policy](#).

Standards Verifiers are not permitted to arbitrate in appeals.

6.3 Centre assessment records

Centres are expected to make every effort to ensure the safety and security of learner work which they are holding for assessment purposes. Centres must ensure that they have detailed and up-to-date assessment records for all learners, which are kept separately from actual learner work. Assessment and verification records left in learner portfolios are likely to be unavailable when learners leave programmes or complete certification. Centres need to retain assessment and internal verification records for three years following certification. Please refer to the [centre guidance](#).

Lost or destroyed learner work

If learner work is lost or destroyed, centres will need to provide those assessment and internal verification records that will verify what has been achieved in order to ensure that certification can proceed.

Centres must notify uk.special.requirements@pearson.com immediately if learner work is lost or destroyed, ensuring they provide the following information:

- circumstances in which the work was lost or destroyed
- programme title and number
- details of the learner(s) affected
- details of which unit(s) are affected
- centre, programme and assessment records
- any evidence of internal verification
- any supplementary information, such as witness testimonies.

Each case will be considered individually and certificates may be granted if:

- sufficient centre records and supplementary evidence are available
- all other assessment on the programme has been subject to ongoing external quality assurance which identifies that national standards have been met.

7 Completion of quality assurance processes required for certification

7.1 Summary

BTEC and NVQ programmes require appropriate quality checks to be completed before certificates can be printed. Certificate claims should only be made when centres have authority from the Standards Verifier to do so. Claims made without authority may be blocked from processing or may lead to subsequent action by Pearson.

Pearson reserves the right to suspend certification if there are any concerns over standards, quality assurance or centre management.

7.2 BTEC qualifications Entry Level to Level 7

Full guidance on Pearson's quality assurance processes can be found in the International BTEC Quality Assurance Handbook, published annually [here](#).

Pearson's quality assurance system for all Pearson BTEC Higher National programmes is benchmarked to Level 4 and Level 5 on the Quality Assurance Agency's (QAA) Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ). This will ensure that centres have effective quality assurance processes to review programme delivery. It will also ensure that the outcomes of assessment are to national standards.

As it includes additional elements that are not required for other Pearson qualifications, we term this 'enhanced' quality assurance. More details of the Pearson BTEC Higher Nationals enhanced quality assurance can be found [here](#).

The enhanced quality assurance process for providers offering Pearson BTEC Higher National programmes comprises five key components:

1. The approval process
2. Monitoring of internal provider systems
3. External examination
4. Annual Programme Monitoring Report (APMR)
5. Annual Student Survey.

Standards Verification

Pearson quality assures the standards of delivery and assessment of all levels of BTEC programmes by conducting standards verification. A Standards Verifier will complete a sample either once or twice per year, depending on the centre status, either by visit or remotely. A report is produced after each sample. The outcome of the report will either release or block certification. The report will also include advice and guidance on how quality can be improved, if necessary.

The centre will allow Pearson full access to such materials and/or learners associated with any qualification for the purpose of standards verification. The centre will bear the costs associated with standards verification. A price list is available from the Regional Office and it may be updated from time to time.

8 Guidance on vocational administrative processes

We have published all current administrative guidance on our website, which provides the necessary information to carry out these processes. This will be particularly helpful for new exams officers undertaking these administrative tasks.

Please see below to find the relevant guidance:

- [How to gain approval for additional BTEC/NVQ/SVQ qualifications](#)
- [How to make vocational registrations via Edexcel Online or EDI/A2C](#)
- Our next generation BTEC Firsts require the use of our Pearson Onscreen Platform (POP) for subjects that contain an onscreen, externally assessed component. Please refer to our [guidance](#) on how to install the platform and deliver these onscreen tests
- [How to transfer registrations between programmes](#)
- [How and when to report learner achievement](#)
- For information on the [different types of vocational award certificates](#)
- [Access arrangements and special consideration for externally assessed for BTECs](#)