



BTEC Centre Guide to Collaborative Arrangements for vocational qualifications.

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Introduction

The basics of collaborative arrangements.

First steps.

A centre consortium is a partnership between centres to offer qualifications. For vocational qualifications we call this a **collaborative arrangement**.

We are here to help you identify if you need a collaborative (also known as consortium) arrangement for your BTEC qualifications and set up a centre consortium for vocational qualifications.

Visit our [Collaborative and consortium arrangements for vocational qualifications policy](#) to check if you need to apply for approval, if you haven't already got approval for a partnership arrangement.

We will support you to meet Pearson approval requirements for a collaborative arrangement and help you manage Pearson quality assurance processes effectively.

Important information, this guidance applies to all BTEC vocational qualifications (including Functional Skills), **except for BTEC Tech Awards (2022)**, which are managed as academic qualifications for the purposes of consortium delivery.



If you wish to deliver academic qualifications in partnership with another centre, please visit [Centre consortia | Pearson qualifications](#)

What is a BTEC Collaborative arrangement?

There are three different types of collaborative arrangement:

Type of collaborative arrangement	Approval required	Brief description
Informal collaborative arrangement	No	Two or more approved centres , each with their own centre number and qualification approval, work together to share information, assignments, staff, and physical resources. There is no shared assessment, and each centre has total ownership of its own quality assurance.
Formal collaborative arrangement	Yes , before you recruit or start delivery.	Two or more approved centres work together to deliver the qualification. All centres must have qualification approval and are responsible for registering and claiming their own learners. One centres acts as lead centre and submits the application. Centres work together to deliver, assess and quality assure the qualification(s). These are usually delivered at one centre in the arrangement, often the lead centre.
Exceptional collaborative arrangement	Yes , before you recruit or start delivery.	Two or more providers work to deliver, assess or quality assure specific Pearson qualifications. One of the organisations must be approved by Pearson to deliver the qualifications and will act as the lead centre. The lead centres must make sure all delivery sites are approved with Pearson.

The **lead centre** is fully responsible for the recruitment, enrolment and certification of the learners.

The **lead centre** is responsible for making sure the delivery, assessment and quality assurance meets Pearson requirements across all delivery sites.

What you need to know about each type.

The three models are explained in a little more detail below. You should read this guide alongside the [Collaborative and consortium arrangements for the delivery of vocational qualifications.](#)

An **Informal collaborative arrangement**

Two or more approved centres, each with their own centre number and qualification approval, work together to share information, assignments, staff, and physical resources. There is no shared assessment, and each centre make their own registrations on Edexcel Online (EOL) and has total ownership of its own quality assurance.

This type of arrangement does not need approval. Centres are simply sharing good practice and supporting delivery of a qualification.

A formal collaborative arrangement (also known as consortium).

Two or more approved centres are formally approved by Pearson to work together to deliver specific Pearson qualifications. ***This must be applied for and approved by Pearson before recruitment of learners and delivery begins.***

You are jointly responsible for the quality assurance of the qualification(s): sharing equal responsibility for the registration and certification of all learners, although delivery and assessment may take place at one centre, with learners attending that centre for delivery and assessment. ***(For UK centres, the centre that receives the public funding must register the learners).***

One centre is the **Lead Centre** and is responsible for the collaborative arrangement, submitting the application form to [Pearson Support](#). They are responsible for communicating the quality assurance arrangements for all the qualification(s) and for making sure that all other centres are aware of the requirements and communicating any information about delivery, assessment, and learner progress/ achievement.

All centres must be approved to deliver the qualifications before a collaborative arrangement can be set up.

Standards verification outcomes apply to all centres in the arrangement. Certificates will show the details of the centre where the learner is registered.

Important: When you are part of a Collaborative arrangement you will be provided with a **unique programme code** (with “consortium” in the programme title) which must be used by all centres in the arrangement to make registrations. Each centre registers their own learners, but Pearson will manage them as a single cohort.



An Exceptional collaborative arrangement

This is when **two or more providers work together** to deliver, assess and quality assure specific Pearson qualifications, with at least one of them being a Pearson approved centre.

The **Lead Centre** must have qualification approval for each qualification to be delivered under the arrangement, and they must submit a Collaborative arrangement application for ***an exceptional collaborative arrangement***. This must be approved by Pearson before the recruitment of learners, and the programme begins. ***For UK centres the centre that received the public funding must register the learners***. They must also provide a copy of an appropriate written contract between all participating organisations and completing 'due diligence' checks on all the organisations involved.

These are viewed on a 'case by case' basis and will require the Lead Centre to register learners on their own centre number, and under a specific sub-site code to give full visibility of learners and where delivery takes place. Learners are viewed as one cohort for Standards Verification / External Examiner sampling. Additional quality checks will be undertaken before approval is authorised.

It is the responsibility of the lead centre within the exceptional collaborative arrangement to ensure that the provision JCQ regulations and Pearson requirements.

Setting up a BTEC Formal Collaborative arrangement

Roles and Responsibilities.

All centres in the arrangement must already be approved to deliver the BTEC qualifications that they wish to deliver in the collaborative arrangement.

Lead Centres

One centre in the collaborative arrangement is identified as the **Lead Centre** and is responsible for coordinating the programme(s) across the arrangement and acting as the main point of contact for us.

As the lead centre, it's your responsibility to manage the quality assurance of the consortia programme; making sure a Lead Internal Verifier (LIV) is in place for each programme in the arrangement; and that standardisation of all assessors takes place each year before they complete any assessment.

The outcomes of standards verification (SV) apply across all centres in the collaborative arrangement. All centres in the arrangement must have access to all quality assurance documents relating to the programmes being delivered to their students and take part in regular updates about student progress and achievement.

The Lead Centre must contact Pearson if there are any changes to the collaborative arrangement, such as to add or remove qualifications or centres. If you no longer need the arrangement, you should let us know.



Important: you should make sure that you keep your approval confirmation letter, which tells you your **consortia ID and name**. This is needed when you contact Pearson to make changes to your arrangement or to withdraw it.

Home centres.

The **home** centre is usually one that sends their students to the lead centre for delivery and assessment. You keep your individual centre identity and may be allotted to a centre level review (CCl)/ Lead Standards Verification (LSV) if you deliver other BTEC / NVQ qualifications. For all collaborative arrangement programmes that you register students on, you must make sure that

- you can access all quality assurance documents linked to all collaborative arrangements
- you can access to assessment and achievement information for your registered students
- you take part in programme evaluation and review meetings / activities

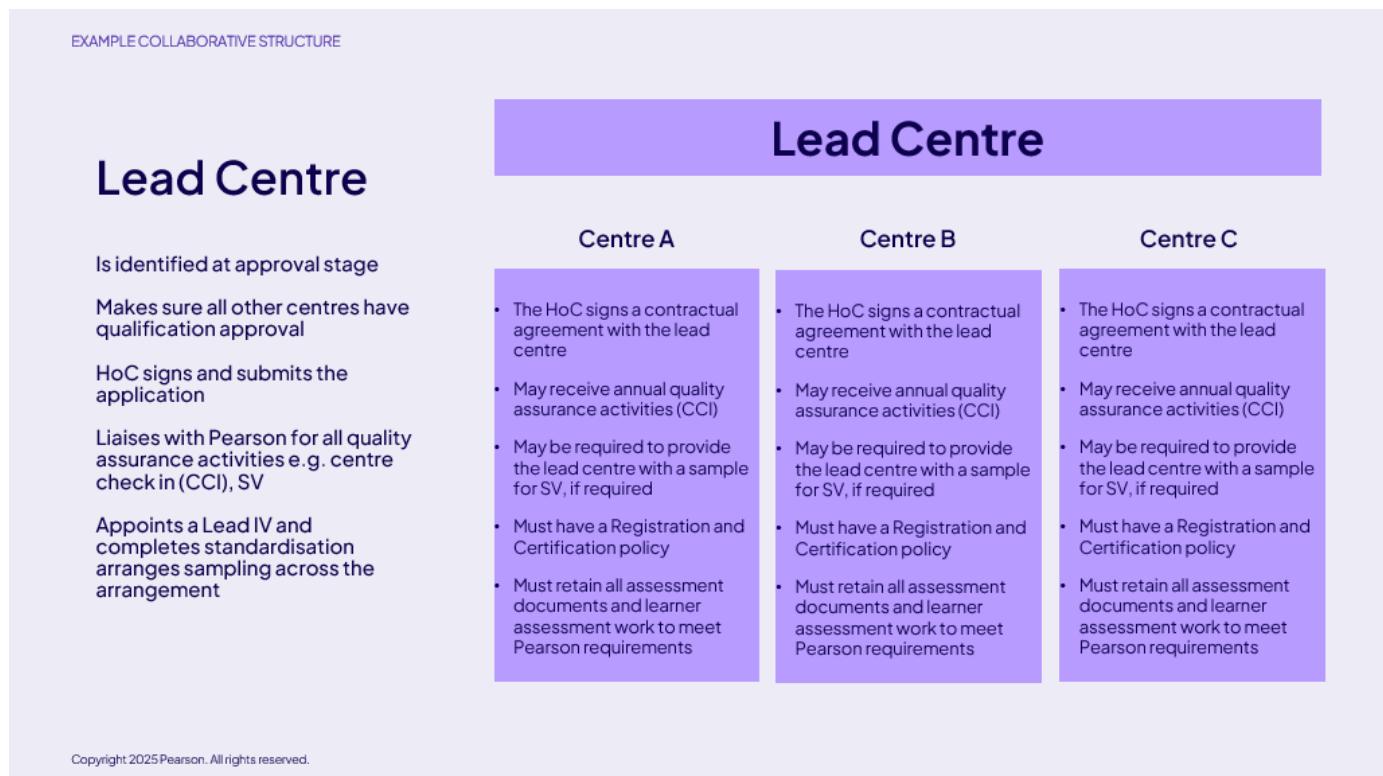
- you keep all student work and quality assurance documents to meet Pearson requirements under Pearson Terms & Conditions of qualification and centre approval.

If you are making registrations and claims for certification, you must have BTEC policies and procedures in place to ensure that your registrations meet Pearson requirements and that certification claims are secure and accurate.

You must keep all documents relating to assessment and internal verification relating to your own registered students for 3 years. This includes assessment plans, assessment records, tracking sheets, and IV of assessment decisions. All assessment work must be kept for a period of 12 weeks following receiving the certificates.

The **lead centre** is usually where the delivery, assessment & quality assurance of the qualifications within a collaborative arrangement takes place (there may be exceptions to this where there are multiple qualifications delivered as part of the arrangement).

Here is an example of a **formal collaborative arrangement** with 4 centres working together.



Setting up a BTEC Exceptional collaborative arrangement

In this type of arrangement at least one provider will be **Pearson approved** and have approval for the qualification(s) they wish to deliver in this arrangement. The Pearson approved organisation will be **the Lead Centre** and is responsible for ensuring that the delivery, assessment, and quality assurance at all providers meets requirements.

Lead Centre

As **Lead Centre** you must

- apply for approval for this arrangement before recruitment and delivery start
- provide copies of written contracts between yourselves and all other providers in the arrangement
- make sure that you carry out appropriate 'due diligence' checks on these providers
- provide additional documentation linked the resources, management, and quality assurance of the BTEC qualification(s) being provided
- must arrange a visit to the delivering organisation by a Centre Quality Manager prior to approval being authorised, if required
- monitor, evaluate, and review the arrangement to ensure that all delivery, assessment & internal verification meets with Pearson's current requirements set out in the published Pearson Quality Assurance Centre Guides
- appoint a LIV where appropriate and ensure standardisation of all assessors takes place annually.
- register learners and claim learner achievement, making sure that these processes meet Pearson requirements
- manage any Appeals, Complaints and Malpractice procedures for BTEC qualifications within this arrangement
- fully support the other providers in the arrangement, to make sure they have adequate training, access to relevant documentation and support, to meet Pearson requirements for the approved qualification(s).

As lead centre, you should make sure that you read the current [Collaborative arrangements for vocational qualifications policy](#), to make sure you and other organisations in the exceptional arrangement are meeting requirements of continued approval by Pearson.

Other providers

You must

- communicate regularly with the lead centre and attend formal meetings with your Lead Centre
- participate in all activities arranged by the lead centre (e.g. training & support activities, formal meetings, Assessment Boards)
- ensure your delivery, assessment and quality assurance meets with Pearson requirements
- keep all learner assessment and internal verification records for 3 years, including assessment plans, assessment records, tracking sheets, and IV of assessment decisions
- keep all learner work for a minimum period of 12 weeks following receipt of the certificates.

Quality Assurance for BTEC collaborative arrangements

BTEC collaborative arrangement approval has benefits for registration and recognition of collaborative working, but it also involves an extra layer of administration and monitoring.

Quality assurance for a BTEC collaborative arrangement is the same as for other centres. The main point of contact for Pearson will be the **Lead Centre**. The quality assurance of the qualifications operating within a collaborative arrangement is the responsibility of each home centre delivering a qualification, if not delivered at the lead centre.

The Lead Centre coordinates quality assurance activities for the collaborative arrangement across all centres, and will include:

- appointing an appropriately experienced Lead Internal Verifier
- completion of annual standardisation activity using Centre Standardisation Materials (CSM)
- working with the Standards Verifier and arranging the sample required
- managing collaborative arrangement approval and informing Pearson of any programmes which are no longer active or where additional programmes are required
- applying for centres to be added to or withdrawn from the collaborative arrangement
- withdrawal of the collaborative arrangement completely, where it is no longer active.

Centre Level Quality Assurance Activity

Each approved centre within a collaborative arrangement takes part in our annual Edexcel Online Account Confirmation (EAC) and needs to accept our terms and conditions of centre recognition and qualification approval.

Centres may then be included in a centre check in activity or be allocated to a Lead Standards Verifier (LSV) to support them throughout the quality assurance cycle. The type of activity will be determined by the volume of BTEC learner registrations at the centre, the qualifications you deliver and the outcomes of any previous quality assurance reporting at the centre.

Standards verification

When sampling is required, the collaborative consortium arrangement will be allocated to one Standards Verifier (SV), who will liaise with the Lead Centre and treat all learners on the qualification as one cohort for sampling.

- The Lead Centre should inform the Standards Verifier where delivery is taking place, and make sure that all centres/cohorts and assessors within the consortia programme(s) are available for sampling
- The Standards Verifier selects the sample from learners across all the collaborative arrangement centres

- The Lead Internal Verifier collates and sign off the sample
- Standards verification outcomes apply to all centres running the consortium programme(s).

Lead Internal Verifiers

The process for appointing a Lead Internal Verifier for a consortium programme is the same as for any BTEC centre. The Lead Centre should ensure that a **Lead Internal Verifier** is appointed annually to manage the consortium programme(s).

Lead internal verifiers should make sure all assessors and internal verifiers involved in a programme undertake a standardisation activity annually. We'd recommend you conduct this activity before any formal assessment begins with students.

The Lead IV should use Centre Standardisation Materials (CSM's) to standardise their team of Assessors and Internal Verifiers each year. This ensures that everyone involved in the assessment of learner work understands national standards and should be completed before any assessment of learner work for the current academic year. You should retain evidence that this has taken place and make the evidence available on request.

For further details on access to Centre Standardisation Materials please see the [BTEC Centre Guide for the Lead Internal Verifier](#).

How to apply

Before applying, please read the '[Collaborative arrangements for the delivery of Vocational Qualifications](#)' policy. You should be aware that for all collaborative arrangements

- The Lead Centre of the collaborative arrangement must complete the Collaborative Arrangement application form
- The Lead Centre should submit the completed forms to [Pearson Support](#) at least six weeks before you intend to start delivery of the qualification
- If you do not gain approval before delivery starts this may delay Standards Verification sampling and learner certification. Your centre may also be referred to Pearson Centre Management for investigation and support.

What happens next?

Once the collaborative arrangement application has been agreed, we will issue the Lead Centre with a programme number (*with 'consortium' in the title*) which will also be visible to all involved centres. If it is an exceptional arrangement, we will set up a subsite on Edexcel Online that the lead centre can see.

Each centre is responsible for registering their learners on this consortium programme code and is responsible for the learners in their care. With an exceptional arrangement, the lead centre will make all the registrations on Edexcel Online.

Changes to the collaborative arrangement must be approved by Pearson, by applying to amend the arrangement. This applies to adding or withdrawing centre and / or qualifications.



If the Lead Centre wishes to withdraw from the arrangement or closes, they must let Pearson know immediately and notify them who the new Lead Centre will be. In these circumstances a new arrangement will need to be set up so a new application is required.



Frequently asked questions

Frequently asked questions.

If my centre makes learner registrations and claims certificates, but all assessment & delivery takes place at another centre, what policies and procedures do I need to have for quality assurance?

You need policies covering **BTEC Registration and Certification, Assessment Malpractice, and Appeals** as a minimum.

I register and claim our learners on EOL, but all teaching & assessment happens at the Lead Centre. What quality assurance documents should I have access to for Lead Standards Verification activity?

Hold meetings to review learner progress and experience, and ensure access to **assessment plans, accurate achievement tracking, and assessment and internal verification documents** for both current and former learners.

Once learner certificates have been received, what documents do I need to retain?

As the registering centre, you are required to **retain learner assessment evidence for at least 12 weeks** following receipt of certificates. This ensures that the documentation can be made available to Pearson if requested during an appeal or complaint process.

What BTEC quality assurance documents do I need to keep for collaborative arrangements?

Retain all **quality assurance documents for a consortium programme for 3 years after certification**. This includes assessment plans, assignment briefs, assessment records, internal verification documents, and learner achievement tracking.

If my school delivers a BTEC subject to our own learners, but we also have learners from other schools in the same group, which programme code should I register them on?

If your group includes learners from both your centre and others, register all on the consortium programme code in Edexcel Online. For separate groups, register your own learners on your programme code; other schools should use the consortium code for theirs.

What are the implications of not having approval for a collaborative arrangement before starting delivery?

This means that Pearson's approval requirements are not being met, which could affect future approval status. It may also result in delays to Standards Verification for the programme and delay the release of certificates to learners. In such cases, the matter will be referred to Pearson Centre Management for further review and support.

Where do I register students in the case of an Exceptional Collaboration?

All students must be registered under the centre that receives individual student funding. Although students may attend classes at a different centre, registration and associated responsibilities remain with the funding institution. Typically, a sub-site for this arrangement is created on the EOL account when approval is granted. The registering centre can also use the “Centre Ref Field” in EOL registrations to indicate the learner's location.

Can my centre deliver Functional Skills under a collaborative arrangement?

Approval is required for this process, similar to BTEC qualifications. Registrations should be completed at the location where assessment papers will be delivered, and the site must comply with JCQ requirements.

My centre appears to have approval for one size of qualification in the subject sector but is not showing the different size qualifications in the same suite. Is the approval at subject or qualification level?

Approval for your collaborative arrangement only covers the qualifications specified in your application. If you need approval for other size qualifications, include them all on the application form.

More resources to help you

For further support with collaborative arrangements, you can contact your [Vocational Quality Assurance Manager](#) using [Pearson Support](#)

You can also find support at the links below.

- [Policies for centres, learners, and employees](#) – Collaborative arrangements for the delivery of vocational qualifications policy
- The application form – [collaborative-consortia-arrangements-application-form.pdf](#)
- Resources available on the [BTEC QN Hub](#) on our website
- [Pearson qualifications](#) page.

For further advice and support please contact [Pearson Support](#).