



Pearson
BTEC



BTEC Centre Guide to Collaborative Arrangements for vocational qualifications

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Contents

Introduction	4
What is a BTEC collaborative arrangement?	5
Setting up a BTEC Formal Collaborative arrangement	7
Setting up a BTEC Exceptional collaborative arrangement	9
Quality Assurance for BTEC Collaborative Arrangements	10
Application	12
Frequently asked questions	14
Additional support	16

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Introduction

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

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

It will also support you and other centres in your arrangement, to ensure that you meet Pearson approval requirements for a collaborative arrangement and help you ensure you manage Pearson quality assurance processes effectively.

Please note that this guidance applies to all BTEC vocational qualifications (including Functional Skills), except for BTEC Tech Awards (2022), which are managed as academic general qualifications (GQ) for the purposes of consortium delivery.

Top tip:

This guide is only relevant to vocational qualifications. 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 models of collaborative arrangements:

Informal collaborations

This is when two or more approved centres, each with their own centre number, can work together to share information, assignments, staff, and physical resources. Centres make their own registrations and claims, there is no shared assessment, and each has total ownership of its own quality assurance for the course.

Formal collaborative arrangement (known as a consortium)

This is when two or more approved centres gain permission from Pearson to work together to deliver specific Pearson qualifications. This must be applied for and approved by Pearson before recruitment of learners and delivery & assessment begins.

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

One centre act as Lead Centre and has responsibility for the qualification collaborative arrangement. This centre will be responsible for communicating the quality assurance arrangements for the qualification(s) and for ensuring that all centres are aware of requirements and are updated regarding delivery, assessment, and learner progress/ achievement.

Each centre retains its own centre identity and needs to have programme approval to deliver the qualifications before a collaborative arrangement can

be set up. Any quality assurance outcomes apply to all centres collaborating for a given programme. Certificates will show the details of the centre of registration and not the Lead Centre.

BTEC Collaborative arrangement approval generates a programme number (*with “consortium” in the programme title*) which is visible to all the centres in the arrangement in Edexcel Online under their Approved Programmes tab. This allows each home centre to register its own learners, while allowing our systems to recognise it as a single programme for Standards Verification.

It is the responsibility of all centres within the formal collaborative arrangement to comply with the requirements as set out in Pearson Terms & conditions and the BTEC Centre Guides published to support centre with quality assurance.

Exceptional collaborative arrangements

This is when two or more organisations 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 a written contract between all participating organisations.

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, to enable Standards Verification to be completed. 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 complies fully with the requirements as set out in Pearson Terms & conditions and the BTEC Centre Guides published to support centre with quality assurance.

Setting up a BTEC Formal Collaborative arrangement

Roles and Responsibilities

All centres involved must already be approved to deliver the BTEC qualifications that are to be delivered as part of the formal collaborative arrangement.

Lead Centres

One centre in the collaborative arrangement is identified as the Lead Centre, to be responsible for coordinating the programme across the arrangement and acting as the main point of contact for us.

It is your responsibility to manage the quality assurance of the consortia programme; including ensuring a Lead Internal Verifier (LIV) for each programme in the arrangement is appointed annually; and that centre standardisation of all assessors takes place.

Outcomes of standards verification in the Lead centre will apply across all centres in the collaborative arrangement. You must also make sure that all centres in the arrangement have access to all quality assurance documents relating to the programmes delivered to their registered learners and are regularly updated about learner progress and achievement. The Lead Centre must contact Pearson if there are any changes to the collaborative arrangement.

Home centres

As a home centre you will retain your individual centre identity and receive your own annual Quality Assurance review through Centre Assessment Standards Review (CASR)/ Lead Standards Verification (LSV) if you deliver other BTEC qualifications. For all collaborative arrangement programmes that you register learners on, you should ensure that

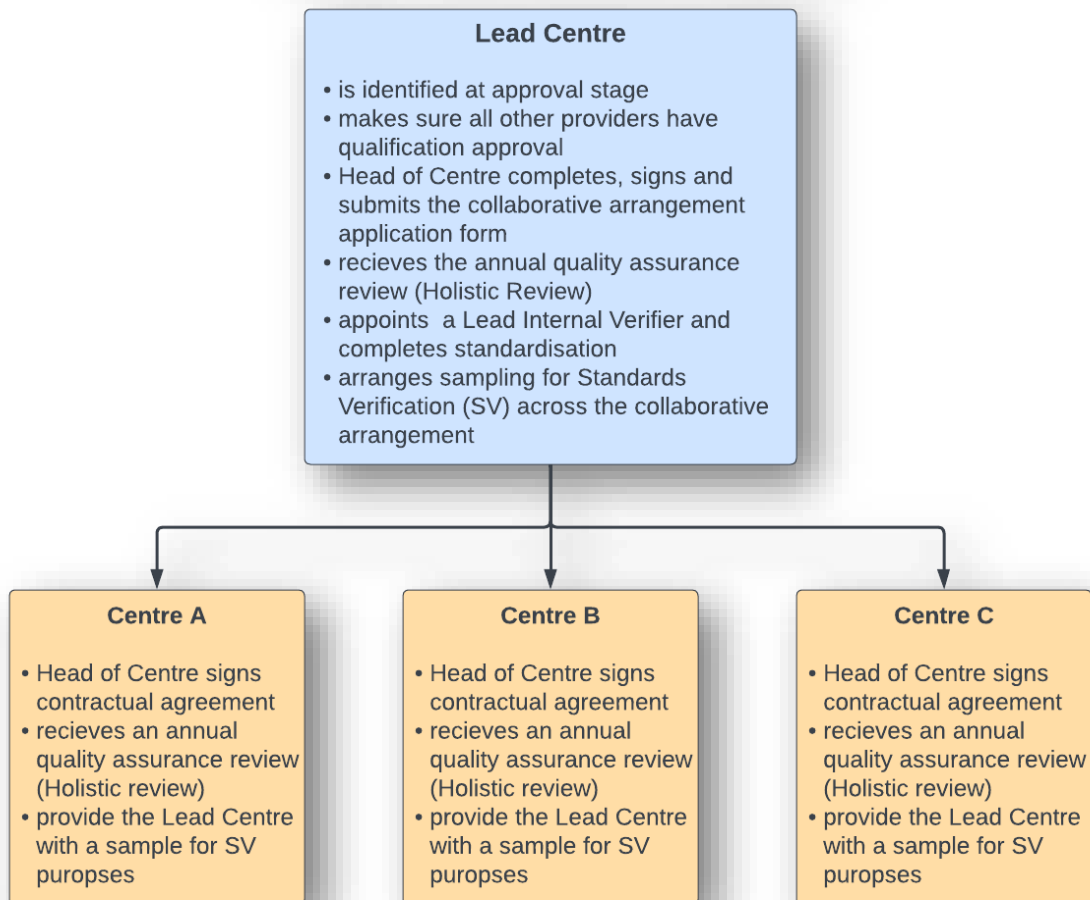
- you have access to quality assurance documentation linked to all collaborative arrangement programmes
- have access to your own learner progress and achievement records

- you are included in regular programme evaluation and review
- you retain all learner work and quality assurance documents in line with Pearson requirements under Pearson Terms & Conditions of qualification and centre approval.

All centres making learner registrations and learner claims for certification, must have appropriate BTEC policies and procedures in place to ensure that registrations meet Pearson requirements and that certification claims are secure and accurate.

Please note that you must keep all documentation relating to learner assessment and internal verification relating to your own registered learners for 3 years, including assessment plans, assessment records, tracking sheets, and IV of assessment decisions. All learner work must be kept for a minimum period of 12 weeks following receipt of the certificates.

Example - Formal Collaborative arrangement



Note: The lead centre will usually take the lead on the delivery, assessment & quality assurance of the qualifications within a collaborative arrangement. There may be exceptions to this where there are multiple qualifications delivered as part of the arrangement.

Setting up a BTEC Exceptional collaborative arrangement

In this arrangement at least one organisation will be Pearson approved and have programme approval for the qualifications they wish to deliver under this arrangement. The Pearson approved organisation will be the Lead Centre and will be 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 starts. You must also provide copies of contracts between yourselves and all other providers in the arrangement. You are responsible for making sure that you carry out appropriate 'due diligence' checks on these providers. As part of the review of your application by a Centre Quality Manager, you will be asked to provide additional documentation linked the resources, management, and quality assurance of the BTEC qualification(s) being provided and a visit to the delivering organisation will be arranged, prior to approval being authorised.

As lead centre you must 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. This will include the appointing of LIV where appropriate and that standardisation of all assessors takes place.

You will be responsible for registering learners and claiming learner achievement and making sure that these processes meet Pearson requirements, along with the management of any Appeals, Complaints and Malpractice procedures for BTEC qualifications within this arrangement.

As lead centre, you must fully support the other organisations 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).

Other providers

You must ensure that you have appropriate communication and regular formal meetings with your Lead Centre to ensure your delivery, assessment and quality assurance meets with Pearson requirements. Please note that you must keep all documentation relating to learner assessment and internal verification relating to registered learners for 3 years, including assessment plans, assessment records, tracking sheets, and IV of assessment decisions. All learner work must be kept for a minimum period of 12 weeks following receipt of the certificates.

Quality Assurance for BTEC Collaborative Arrangements

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

The quality assurance model for a BTEC collaborative arrangement is the same as for other centres. However, the main point of contact for Pearson will be the Lead Centre. While the quality assurance of the qualifications operating within a collaborative arrangement is the responsibility of each home centre, the Lead Centre must coordinate quality assurance activities for the collaborative arrangement across all centres, this includes:

- appointing an appropriately experienced Lead Internal Verifier
- completion of annual standardisation activity using Centre Standardisation Materials (CSM)
- liaising with the Standards Verifier
- collating samples
- 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 centre within a collaborative arrangement will be required to complete the Annual Quality Declaration (AQD) to confirm that all required Centre Quality processes and procedures are in place and operating effectively.

Centres may then be subject to a Holistic Review conducted by a Centre Assessment Standards Reviewer (CASR) or 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 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.

- It is the responsibility of the Lead Centre to declare and identify to the Standards Verifier where delivery is taking place, in order that all centres/cohorts and assessors within the consortia programme(s) are available for sampling
- The Standards Verifier will select the sample from learners across all the collaborative arrangement centres
- The Lead Internal Verifier will collate and sign off the sample
- Outcomes of standards verification 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 also the same. The Lead Centre should ensure that a Lead Internal Verifier is appointed annually for the consortium programme(s).

The Lead IV is required to use Centre Standardisation Materials (CSM's) to train/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 this should be undertaken prior to any assessment of learner work for the current academic year. Centres should retain evidence that this process 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](#).

Application

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
- Each home centre will be responsible for their learners' registration against this consortium programme code and remains responsible for the learners in their care
- Any 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.

Please note that 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.

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 must have a policy and procedure in place which covers BTEC Registration and Certification of learners, 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 too for Lead Standards Verification activity?

As a member of the collaborative arrangement, you should have meetings to discuss learner progress and experience and have access to the assessment plans, accurate learner achievement tracking and assessment & internal verification documents, both for current learners and learners that have completed in previous years.

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

As the registering centre you must retain the learner assessment evidence for a minimum period of 12 weeks after certificates have been received, so that it can be provided to Pearson if requested as part of an Appeal or complaint.

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

You must retain all quality assurance documents for a consortium programme for a period of 3 years following certification. This will include assessment plans, assignment brief, assessment records, all 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 you have learners from your own school / college and other centres in the same group, they must all be registered on the consortium programme code on Edexcel Online. If you

have separate groups, you register your own learners on your own programme code and the other schools register their learners on the consortium programme code.

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

This would mean that you are not meeting Pearson requirements of approval and may have an impact on future approval status. It may also cause a delay in Standards Verification for the programme and delay the release of certificates to learners. This would be referred to Pearson Centre Management for further investigation and support.

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

All students must be registered under the centre that receives the individual student funding. Whilst the students may be taught at another centre, the registered students remain the responsibility of the funding institution. In most cases a sub-site for the exceptional arrangement will be set up on your EOL account once the arrangement is approved. We can also request the registering centre to use the "Centre Ref Field" in EOL registrations to show where the learner is based.

Can my centre deliver Functional Skills under a collaborative arrangement?

Yes, but this will require approval in the same way as for BTEC qualifications. Registrations must be made at the site where assessment papers will be delivered, and this site must meet 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?

Your collaborative arrangement approval is based only on the qualifications listed in the application. If you require collaborative arrangement approval for different size qualifications, then please list all of these in the application form.

Additional Support

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 resource area of the [BTEC QN Hub](#) on our website
- [Pearson qualifications](#) page.

For further advice and support please contact Pearson Support.