

12 BTEC, NVQ, SVQ and Apprenticeships

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12 BTEC, NVQ, SVQ and Apprenticeships

I Registration

I.1 Registration deadlines

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.

BTEC Programmes

For programmes that follow the academic year, i.e. enrolment in September/October and completion in June/July, the following deadlines for registration apply:

1 November 2013

Foundation Learning Awards, Certificates and Diplomas
 First and National Awards, Certificates, Extended Certificates and Diplomas
 Specialist and Professional Awards, Certificates and Diplomas
 WorkSkills Awards, Certificates and Diplomas

15 November 2013

Level 4 HNCs and Level 5 HNDs
 Level 3 and 4 Diplomas in Art and Design

15 December 2013

Higher Education Licence Agreement registrations

For programmes that do not follow the academic year (ie programmes where learners have enrolled between November and August), for any programmes of less than one academic year in length and for individual units, registration is due within one month of enrolment.

Note: BTEC registrations received after the appropriate deadline will be subject to a late registration fee (please see the Fees Information published on the website www.edexcel.com).

NVQ/SVQ

Registrations are due within one month of commencing the assessment of the learners' programme/unit.

Apprenticeship Schemes

Registrations for the full Apprenticeship Scheme are due within one month of commencing the first component of the scheme. For Apprenticeship Schemes this may be when:

- learners start the knowledge-based component
- assessment of the competence-based component starts.

How to make vocational registrations

For guidance on how to make vocational registrations via Edexcel Online or EDI please refer to www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/making-vocational-registrations.aspx

1.2 Certification deadlines

Last date for SRFs to be received by Edexcel	Last date for Edexcel Online certificate claims	Certificates will be in centres on
Wednesday 28 Aug 2013	Friday 06 Sep 2013	Friday 13 Sep 2013
Wednesday 04 Sep 2013	Friday 13 Sep 2013	Friday 20 Sep 2013
Wednesday 11 Sep 2013	Friday 20 Sep 2013	Friday 27 Sep 2013
Wednesday 18 Sep 2013	Friday 27 Sep 2013	Friday 04 Oct 2013
Wednesday 25 Sep 2013	Friday 04 Oct 2013	Friday 11 Oct 2013
Wednesday 02 Oct 2013	Friday 11 Oct 2013	Friday 18 Oct 2013
Wednesday 09 Oct 2013	Friday 18 Oct 2013	Friday 25 Oct 2013
Wednesday 16 Oct 2013	Friday 25 Oct 2013	Friday 01 Nov 2013
Wednesday 23 Oct 2013	Friday 01 Nov 2013	Friday 08 Nov 2013
Wednesday 30 Oct 2013	Friday 08 Nov 2013	Friday 15 Nov 2013
Wednesday 06 Nov 2013	Friday 15 Nov 2013	Friday 22 Nov 2013
Wednesday 13 Nov 2013	Friday 22 Nov 2013	Friday 29 Nov 2013
Wednesday 20 Nov 2013	Friday 29 Nov 2013	Friday 06 Dec 2013
Wednesday 27 Nov 2013	Friday 06 Dec 2013	Friday 13 Dec 2013
Wednesday 04 Dec 2013	Friday 13 Dec 2013	Friday 20 Dec 2013
Wednesday 11 Dec 2013	Friday 20 Dec 2013	Friday 03 Jan 2014
Wednesday 18 Dec 2013	Friday 03 Jan 2014	Friday 10 Jan 2014
Wednesday 01 Jan 2014	Friday 10 Jan 2014	Friday 17 Jan 2014
Wednesday 08 Jan 2014	Friday 17 Jan 2014	Friday 24 Jan 2014
Wednesday 15 Jan 2014	Friday 24 Jan 2014	Friday 31 Jan 2014
Wednesday 22 Jan 2014	Friday 31 Jan 2014	Friday 07 Feb 2014
Wednesday 29 Jan 2014	Friday 07 Feb 2014	Friday 14 Feb 2014
Wednesday 05 Feb 2014	Friday 14 Feb 2014	Friday 21 Feb 2014
Wednesday 12 Feb 2014	Friday 21 Feb 2014	Friday 28 Feb 2014
Wednesday 19 Feb 2014	Friday 28 Feb 2014	Friday 07 Mar 2014
Wednesday 26 Feb 2014	Friday 07 Mar 2014	Friday 14 Mar 2014
Wednesday 05 Mar 2014	Friday 14 Mar 2014	Friday 21 Mar 2014
Wednesday 12 Mar 2014	Friday 21 Mar 2014	Friday 28 Mar 2014
Wednesday 19 Mar 2014	Friday 28 Mar 2014	Friday 04 Apr 2014
Wednesday 26 Mar 2014	Friday 04 Apr 2014	Friday 11 Apr 2014
Wednesday 02 Apr 2014	Friday 11 Apr 2014	Friday 18 Apr 2014
Wednesday 09 Apr 2014	Friday 18 Apr 2014	Friday 25 Apr 2014
Wednesday 16 Apr 2014	Friday 25 Apr 2014	Friday 02 May 2014
Wednesday 23 Apr 2014	Friday 02 May 2014	Friday 09 May 2014
Wednesday 30 Apr 2014	Friday 09 May 2014	Friday 16 May 2014
Wednesday 07 May 2014	Friday 16 May 2014	Friday 23 May 2014
Wednesday 14 May 2014	Friday 23 May 2014	Friday 30 May 2014
Wednesday 21 May 2014	Friday 30 May 2014	Friday 06 Jun 2014
Wednesday 28 May 2014	Friday 06 Jun 2014	Friday 13 Jun 2014
Wednesday 04 Jun 2014	Friday 13 Jun 2014	Friday 20 Jun 2014
Wednesday 11 Jun 2014	Friday 20 Jun 2014	Friday 27 Jun 2014
Wednesday 18 Jun 2014	Friday 27 Jun 2014	Friday 04 Jul 2014
Wednesday 25 Jun 2014	Friday 04 Jul 2014	Friday 25 Jul 2014
* Friday 04 July 2014	Friday 25 Jul 2014	Friday 15 Aug 2014
Wednesday 06 Aug 2014	Friday 15 Aug 2014	Friday 22 Aug 2014
Wednesday 13 Aug 2014	Friday 22 Aug 2014	Friday 29 Aug 2014
Wednesday 20 Aug 2014	Friday 29 Aug 2014	Friday 05 Sep 2014
Wednesday 27 Aug 2014	Friday 05 Sep 2014	Friday 12 Sep 2014

♦ End of academic year, peak results period

1.3 Key dates

1 November 2013	Registration deadline for the following programmes beginning in September 2013: Foundation Learning Awards, Certificates and Diplomas First and National Awards, Certificates, Extended Certificates and Diplomas Specialist and Professional Awards, Certificates and Diplomas WorkSkills Awards, Certificates and Diplomas
15 November 2013	Registration deadline for the following programmes beginning in September/October 2013: Level 4 HNCs and Level 5 HNDs Level 3 and 4 Diplomas in Art and Design
15 December 2013	Registration deadline for Edexcel Higher Education Licence Agreement registrations
31 January 2014	Deadline for requesting deletion of learners enrolled September/October 2012
30 April 2014	Submission deadline for vocational JCQ EDI results entry files
5 July 2014	Deadline for receipt of vocational results submitted by Student Report Forms (SRFs)
12 August 2014	Release of vocational EDI EDIFACT and JCQ format results files

NOTE: The key dates for external assessments associated to the new NQF BTECs can be found in the 'Key Dates' section.

2 Scope of this Section of the Information Manual

2.1 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:

- Foundation Learning Awards, Certificates and Diplomas
- First and National Awards, Certificates, Extended Certificates and Diplomas
- Specialist and Professional Awards, Certificates and Diplomas
- WorkSkills Awards, Certificates and Diplomas
- Level 4 HNCs and Level 5 HNDs
- Level 3 & 4 Diplomas in Art and Design
- NVQ/SVQ, Certificates & Diplomas Levels 1-8
- Apprenticeship Schemes.

The following areas are covered:

- overview of registration
- quality assurance
- assessment
- overview of onscreen testing
- overview of reporting achievement
- overview of claiming certification.

Previous versions of current qualifications or qualification types are addressed, even where registrations are no longer permitted.

It is important that copies of this information are 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.

Licence Agreement: BTEC qualifications offered through Higher Education Institutions

Universities and HEIs operating under the Licence Agreement are required to follow the administrative procedures detailed in the Edexcel Licence Agreement Handbook (revised July 2007). The procedures set out in this section do not apply.

However, the Licence Agreement does not apply in the case of registration and reporting of achievement for the BTEC nationally accredited qualifications (QCF).

For programmes not under the licence, centres should follow the procedures set out in this manual.

2.2 Collaborative Arrangements and Consortia

Where a centre works with other organisations or institutions to deliver programmes this is termed a collaborative arrangement (formerly referred to as a franchise). The lead centre has responsibility for the programme, and is the only centre that can make registrations and receive communications about the programme. All collaborative arrangements must be approved by Edexcel prior to the commencement of programmes. The form can be found on the Edexcel website.

Where several centres work together to deliver a programme, which is jointly approved to all of them, this is termed a consortium. Each centre within a consortium registers its own learners using the single programme number assigned to all the member centres. However, quality assurance is carried out across the consortium as a whole, and centres will be reported on jointly with regard to programme quality and certification sign off.

It is important that copies of this information are made available to the examinations officer/administrator and all coordinators and members of staff responsible for the preparation of documents for enrolment, registration and the certificate claims for BTEC qualifications.

2.3 BTEC Qualifications delivered through external testing

Most qualifications are assessed through the centre, and the outcomes are then reported to Pearson. For some qualifications assessment is through external testing. For some tests centres are required to install appropriate supporting software. For further details please refer to the onscreen testing guide available on the Edexcel website.

Key dates for NQF BTEC Firsts and Nationals offered since 2012 can be found in the Key Dates section of this manual. For more information about the external assessment 'type' please consult the relevant specification.

3 Notes on issues for registration and certification

Centres should note these important issues in relation to registration and certification.

3.1 Timing of registration

Programmes that do not follow the academic year

This refers to all programmes that:

- enrol learners at any time other than September/October (including roll-on roll-off and onscreen tested programmes)
- are of less than one academic year's duration.
- are competence-based assessment programmes eg NVQs/SVQs.

Learners must be registered within one month of enrolment at the centre. Enrolment at the centre is defined as the day on which delivery of the learner's programme/unit of learning or assessment on competence-based programmes commences.

Programmes that do follow the academic year

For programmes that follow the academic year, ie enrolment in September/October and completion in June/July, the registration deadlines are detailed in part 1.1. Registrations received after the relevant deadline will be subject to late registration fees (please see the Fees Information on the website www.edexcel.com).

Note: Any delay in registration may affect our capacity to provide centres with the assessment and verification opportunities that they require 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.

3.2 Registration: topping up

For nationally accredited qualifications, learners may achieve at one qualification level and top up to a further type (eg Pearson BTEC Level 2 Certificate to Pearson BTEC Level 2 Extended Certificate) provided that both qualifications are based on the same specification ie have the same unit identification codes.

Learners registered before September 2013 on a qualification may top up onto the same specification Certificate or Diploma. Please note that centres must be aware of certification end dates for these qualifications (given on the website) and not make top ups unless learners will be able to complete programmes before the certification deadline.

Centres should always register learners on the qualifications they are aiming to achieve.

Top ups are available for the following current qualifications:

- Foundation Learning Awards, Certificates and Diplomas
- Firsts and Nationals Awards, Certificates, Extended Certificates and Diplomas
- Level 4 HNC and Level 5 HND
- Level 3 Diploma in Art and Design and Level 4 Diploma in Art and Design
- BTEC Specialist & Professional Awards, Certificates and Diplomas
- WorkSkills Awards, Certificates and Diplomas
- NVQ/SVQ Awards, Certificates and Diplomas Levels 1–8

3.3 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 and the delivery of assessment and verification/external examining for nationally accredited qualifications. It is important that centres give an accurate date (within two months) and that any changes are notified.

3.4 Registration: programme numbers

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

Note: Whilst learners who are incorrectly registered may transfer, this could delay assessment, quality assurance and certification. Centres are advised that it could also affect funding for the programme.

3.5 Unique Learner Number (ULN)

The ULN is a learner identifier that is allocated by the government agency LRS (Learner Records Service) and is used in the aggregation of learner results across awarding bodies for the Diplomas.

Pearson is able to accept the ULN in EDI entry, amendment and registration files and on any entries/registrations made through Edexcel Online.

It is not necessary for you to provide the ULN with entries or registrations for learners who are not taking Diplomas.

The ULN is a 10 digit number and it is important that you validate the ULN against the Learner Registration Service (LRS) before submitting the learner's entry/registration to Pearson. Please ensure that the personal details (name, gender and date of birth) being provided with the learner's entry or registration match exactly the details on the LRS. Edexcel will check the ULN against LRS and if there is a mismatch the ULN will not be accepted and a query will be raised with you.

For further information about the ULN, and to find out how to obtain ULNs for your learners, please refer to the LRS website www.learningrecordsservice.org.uk

3.6 Reporting success to Edexcel

There are three methods of reporting results, through Edexcel Online, EDIFACT EDI or by SRF. There are significant advantages in reporting results electronically through Edexcel Online or EDIFACT EDI in terms of the speed we can process the results (see certification deadline table in part 1.2). SRFs will continue to be issued to centres unless otherwise requested.

Centres which intend to report all results electronically and which do not wish to continue to be issued with SRFs should email the request to examsofficers@pearson.com.

In order to issue certificates in August, results should be reported by 5 July for every learner completing at the end of an 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 www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/reporting-vocational-achievement.aspx

3.7 Certification

Certificates are issued weekly for most vocational qualifications. Please refer to part 1.2 of this section for the schedule of dates. Edexcel reserves the right to withhold certificates if fees are outstanding at the time of despatch.

Results should only be reported if the centre has clearance to certificate through reports from standards verifiers or external examiners. Subject to this, results must be reported immediately following programme completion so that certificates can be issued as soon as possible.

4 Registration policies and procedures

4.1 Responsibility for registration

When a centre has enrolled learners onto an approved programme, or individual units, the 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 operating under a collaborative arrangement are not able to register learners directly, and the responsibility lies with the approved centre to register learners and identify the collaborative centre attended by each learner. (Please refer to the Collaborative Arrangements Vocational Qualifications Centre Guidance available on the Edexcel website.)

Where two or more centres are operating as a consortium the approved centre within the consortium is responsible for registering learners with Pearson (Please refer to Pearson policy: Consortium Arrangements for BTEC and Edexcel Qualifications available on the Edexcel website.)

Timing of registration

For programmes which do not follow the academic year learners must be registered within one month of enrolment at the centre. Enrolment is defined as the day on which delivery of the learner's programme/unit commences. For roll-on roll-off and assessment-only programmes, such as BTEC Specialist and Professional courses and NVQ/SVQ, it is acceptable for registrations to be submitted monthly if it assists the centre's administration. All learners must still be registered within one month of enrolment.

Programmes that follow the academic year

For programmes that follow the academic year, ie enrolment in September/October and completion in June/July, the following deadlines apply:

1 November 2013

Foundation Learning Awards, Certificates and Diplomas
 First and National Awards, Certificates, Extended Certificates and Diplomas
 Specialist and Professional Awards, Certificates and Diplomas
 WorkSkills Awards, Certificates and Diplomas

15 November 2013

Level 4 HNCs and Level 5 HNDs
 Level 3 and 4 Diplomas in Art and Design

15 December 2013

Higher Education Licence Agreement registrations

A delay in registration may affect our capacity to provide centres with the assessment and verification/ external examining opportunities that they require and, therefore, certification may be delayed or withheld completely. Centres should note that this could cause problems for learners applying through UCAS in order to enter higher education. If you are unclear about the correct time for registrations please contact Account Services (see the Contact Information section of this manual).

Edexcel reserves the right to:

- refuse to accept new registrations from a centre if the centre has a debt outstanding to Edexcel at the due date of submission of new registrations
- withhold certificates if the centre has a debt outstanding to Pearson at the due date of issue of certificates.

4.2 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 the stipulated period. For qualifications accredited by the regulator the final date is specified as shown on the website.

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

4.3 Deletion of registrations

Learner registrations will not normally be deleted or fees refunded once registrations have been accepted by Pearson. A new learner cannot replace an individual who has been registered and subsequently left the programme.

However, we are aware that there may be learners who drop out from academic year programmes over the Christmas period. Therefore, we will accept all requests for the deletion of learners registered from September 2013 provided we are notified by email to examsofficers@pearson.com before 31 January 2014 and the learners have not completed any units. Please give the learner name and registration number in the email. This provision does not apply to any other learner intake.

4.4 Withdrawal of learners

Centres should advise us of all learners who have withdrawn from programmes. Withdrawal can be done through Edexcel Online and can take place throughout the year. Withdrawal does not result in a credit back of any fees.

5 Reporting learner achievement

5.1 Responsibility

Centres are responsible for reporting on the achievement in internally assessed units for each learner, in respect of assessment requirements for the programme for which he/she is registered, and 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 Edexcel has data related to achievement – please refer to qualification specifications for further guidance.

Any amendment to reported grades is monitored and evidence of grade changes for internally assessed units may be requested at any time.

5.2 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 stipulated.

Level 2-5 qualifications (First, National and Higher National) units are always subject to grading except where otherwise indicated in the qualification specifications. Achievement should be reported using the grades below:

U – Unclassified
 LI - Level 1 Pass (new NQF BTECs)
 P – Pass
 M – Merit
 D – Distinction.

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

5.3 Overall qualification grades of achievement

The following qualifications have overall grades based on reported unit achievement of

Unclassified, Pass, Merit and Distinction grades:

- Level 4 HNC & Level 5 HND
- Foundation Diploma in Art and Design.

Unclassified, Pass, Merit, Distinction, Distinction* grades:

- Level 2 Awards, Certificates and Diplomas
- Level 3 Awards, Certificates and Diplomas
- Level 3 and Level 4 Diploma in Art and Design

L1 Pass, L2 Pass, L2 Merit, L2 Distinction, L2 Distinction* grades NQF (from 2012 and 2013):

- Level 1 and Level 2 Awards, Certificates, Extended Certificates and Diplomas

The overall grade is calculated automatically from the unit grades reported (except Level 3-4 Diplomas in Art & Design where you will need to report the overall grade through EOL, EDI or by SRF); the centre does not need to supply further information. Full details on how grades are determined are given in the specification for each programme.

5.4 National Vocational Qualifications/Scottish Vocational Qualifications

In line with Ofqual regulations, the 10-week rule continues to be applicable to all NVQs accredited on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

However, the 10-week rule has been removed for NVQ and NVQ Successor Qualifications accredited under the Qualifications and Curriculum Framework (QCF). This means that there does not have to be a ten week period between registration and applying for certification.

The 10-week rule does apply to all Scottish Vocational Qualifications accredited by SQA.

All claims should be validated by an occupationally competent and qualified internal verifier. Centres must ensure that all claims for certification are authentic and valid and can be supported by auditable records.

5.5 Confirmation of learner achievement

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

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

5.6 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. During July/August we will provide UCAS with confirmation of these matched learners' achievements so that 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 the learner's UCAS Personal id number and UCAS Scheme Code by email to examsofficers@pearson.com

Red UCAS SRFs will be issued in May for matched learners who are applying for higher education places and are following BTEC Nationals, Higher Nationals, Level 3-4 Diplomas Art and Design as well as any Level 2-3 Specialist courses which attract points on the UCAS tariff.

It is important that results for these learners are reported to us by 5 July. Where we receive results after 5 July, and before 31 July, we make every effort to confirm the results to UCAS.

If you are reporting results to Edexcel by EDIFACT EDI, we would 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: We are concerned by the number of problems which arise where centres do not have staff available in August to resolve queries from universities concerning results. Centres should ensure that staff are available to respond to university queries during this period and that results are sent to Edexcel as soon as possible.

5.7 Submission of results to Edexcel

Interim reporting

Results must be returned or results reported via EDI, SRF 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 on the SRF, by EDI or through Edexcel Online.

Note: In all cases of interim reporting a Notification of Performance will be produced automatically.

Dates for grade reporting

In order to ensure that certification is received as soon as possible please refer to part 1.2 in this section for the required dates.

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

Note: Results should be submitted immediately at the end of each summer term, as the results submitted to Edexcel are used, in some instances, to create the performance and league tables. If you have not reported early enough to enable us to process the results by the end of July, you may find your outcomes are incorrect in these tables

5.8 Methods of reporting

There are two electronic methods of reporting success:

- EDIFACT EDI 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 or the student report form (SRF) to report success to us. (For example, SIMS uses JCQ format EDI.)

EDI transmission

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

Edexcel Online

Centres may report results, claim certification and notify withdrawals through Edexcel Online (see the Edexcel Online section of the website for how to gain access to Edexcel Online).

5.9 Timing of success reporting

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

- at the end of each year/stage of the programme: by 5 July for programmes following a normal academic year, or as soon as possible thereafter, even where learners are retaking assessments or tests (especially important for UCAS applicants)
- immediately after completion for non-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).

6 Completion of quality assurance processes required for certification – BTEC

6.1 Summary

BTEC programmes are operated on the basis that appropriate quality checks are completed prior to certification. Certification claims should only be made when centres have authority 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 by a centre on a programme/unit if there are any concerns over standards, quality assurance or centre management.

Language of Assessment

The language of assessment is English unless agreed with Pearson. Centres are required to notify VQ Assessment by the end of September 2013 where a programme is delivered solely in the medium of Welsh. Pearson will endeavour to provide standards verification in Welsh for programmes notified by this date.

6.2 BTEC qualifications Entry Level & Levels 1–3

Quality Review and Development (QRD)

This process addresses quality and review across all the BTEC programmes of this type offered by a centre. Full details of the Quality Review and Development process are provided in the UK Vocational Quality Assurance Handbook 2013-14, available in the Quality Assurance Process area of the BTEC website www.btec.co.uk/keydocuments

QRD is the central focus of our quality partnership and central to the shift to centre-driven quality assurance.

QRD takes the form of an annual visit to every centre delivering BTEC and vocational qualifications. During this visit our team of dedicated Centre Quality Reviewers will help centres focus on their quality systems and processes.

QRD will:

- enable each centre to manage and drive quality across all BTEC programmes
- provide support and development
- make full use of the role of the Quality Nominee and empower them to review and develop quality.

The outcomes of QRD are reported against criteria. If there are serious issues that require immediate corrective action, certification will be prevented and the relevant Regional Quality Manager will support the centre to address the issues.

Lead Internal Verifiers

A Lead Internal Verifier is a person designated in a centre who takes overall responsibility for assessment and quality assurance of a Principal Subject Area (for example BTEC Firsts and Nationals in Business, or BTEC First and Level 1 in Hospitality). There can only be one Lead Internal Verifier for each principal subject area. The Lead Internal Verifier is responsible for the co-ordination of internal verification and the standard of assessment.

A Lead Internal Verifier:

- is the named key person for a group of programmes
- has access to induction and support from Pearson
- has opportunities for personal recognition and development.

Lead Internal Verifiers have the important role of ensuring that qualifications with overlapping groups of units have consistent assessment, whilst building a team approach to internal verification.

Pearson will provide free of charge, specific induction training for every Lead Internal Verifier that is related to the role and to the accreditation process. This will only need to be undertaken once.

Following induction the Lead Internal Verifier will undertake a standardisation activity through an online process.

Please note that there are slightly different Lead Internal Verifier standardisation procedures for BTECs accredited on the Qualifications Credit Framework (QCF) and next generation BTEC Firsts accredited on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) from 2012 and 2013.

For BTEC (QCF)

The standardisation activity takes the form of an online exercise, undertaken by the Lead Internal Verifier. Success in this activity demonstrates understanding of the role and competence in maintaining assessment standards. There are two possible outcomes following completion of Lead Internal Verifier standardisation:

- The Lead Internal Verifier is given accredited status for the current year, plus 3 years. After that time a renewal of accreditation will take place. During the accreditation period, confirmation sampling may apply

or

- A Standards Verifier will be allocated to undertake monitoring of assessment outcomes via postal sampling. If the first sample meets national standards, the Lead Internal Verifier is given accredited status for the current year, plus 3 years. After that time a renewal of accreditation will take place. During the accreditation period, confirmation sampling may apply.

For BTEC (NQF) from 2012 and 2013

The standardisation activity takes the form of a training exercise that the Lead Internal Verifier completes with their programme team. Confirmation of completion is required before Standards Verification can take place and certification released.

Full guidance on the Lead Internal Verifier role can be found in the UK Vocational Quality Assurance Handbook 2013-14, available in the Quality Assurance Process section of the BTEC website www.btec.co.uk/keydocuments and www.edexcel.com/centreinduction.

6.3 Standards Verification (SV)

Standards verification is the way in which we check that centres are operating quality assurance and assessing to the right standards. It will focus on looking at both assessment outcomes and internal verification processes.

For BTEC (QCF), standards verification takes place in two ways:

- Following Lead Internal Verifier standardisation, where it is deemed that the Lead Internal Verifier would benefit from Standards Verifier support in order to gain accreditation.
- Confirmation Sampling, through the monitoring of programmes, based on risk, where there is an accredited Lead Internal Verifier.
- * Please note, certain Principal Subject Areas are not covered by Lead Internal Verifier accreditation. Instead, they will be allocated a Standards Verifier in 2013-14. Please refer to Chapter 5, page 11 of the UK Vocational Quality Assurance Handbook 2013-14 for details: www.btec.co.uk/keydocuments

For BTEC (NQF) from 2012 and 2013, standards verification is undertaken annually.

SV is the method by which Pearson monitors the maintenance of standards for all units on all approved BTEC Entry Level to Level 3 programmes. The standards verification of assessment decisions ensures that samples are consistent with the requirement of the qualifications. Where SV takes place, it must be completed successfully for certification to be released. Full details of the SV process are given in the UK Vocational Quality Assurance Handbook 2013-14 in the 'Quality Assurance Process' area of the website: www.btec.co.uk/keydocuments.

6.4 Other BTEC Programmes

This includes qualifications approved prior to 2003 and those on the customised qualification framework (CQF). Programmes are subject to external verification. From September 2013, full details of the new Self-Regulated Framework are given in the customised handbooks on the Pearson website.

7 Access to assessment

Equal access to assessment is a tenet of our provision and is embedded in Pearson's policies. There should be no artificial barriers to Pearson BTEC programmes and awards, which must:

- be available to everyone who can achieve the required standard
- be free from barriers which restrict access to progression
- be free from overt or covert discriminatory practices with regard to age, colour, creed, ethnic origin, gender, nationality, marital status, race or sexual orientation

- pay due regard to the particular requirements of individuals, including those who may require support to undertake learning and assessment
- be free from any restrictions that are not legally required.

Pearson's policy on access arrangements and special considerations for BTEC and Pearson NVQ qualifications aims to enhance access to the qualifications for learners with disabilities and other difficulties (as defined by the Disability and Discrimination Act 1995 and the Amendments to the Act), without compromising the assessment of skills, knowledge, understanding or competence being measured.

Note: For full information on equal opportunities, visit the Disability Rights Commission website: www.drc-gb.org and refer to the latest Draft Code of Practice: The Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

8 Recognition of prior learning

8.1 Recognition of prior learning and/or experience (RPL)

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 which is on the Pearson website: www.edexcel.com/policies.

8.2 Claiming a qualification by RPL

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.

9 Equality of opportunity

Equality of opportunity is a tenet of our provision and is embedded in Pearson's policies. There should be no artificial barriers to Pearson programmes and awards, which must be:

- available to everyone who can achieve the required standard and be free from barriers which restrict access to progression
- free from overt or covert discriminatory practices with regard to age, colour, creed, ethnic origin, gender, nationality, marital status, race or sexual orientation, and pay due regard to the particular requirements of individuals, including those who may require support to undertake learning and assessment
- free from any restrictions that are not legally required.

Every approved centre must have an equal opportunities policy and a strategy for monitoring and reviewing:

- access to assessment and learning
- prevention of discrimination
- provision for learners with particular requirements and a mechanism for dealing with learner appeals.

It is essential that centres recruit with integrity and fully explore with applicants any issues which may prevent them from achieving in any areas of their proposed qualification.

Centres should assess each applicant's potential and make a judgement about his/her ability to successfully achieve the programme of study. This should include access to specialist resources and/or essential skills such as basic and key skills. Initial assessment is highly recommended, with particular regard to the Disability Discrimination Act as applicable.

Centres should refer to the appropriate Occupational Standards, the Evidence Requirements and, where available, the Assessment Requirements/Strategy, for the particular NVQ/SVQ title when giving advice to prospective learners. As part of this process centres should advise learners if there is a more appropriate qualification, or if they would only be able to achieve unit certification, rather than the full qualification.

10 Reasonable Adjustments, Appeals and Assessment Records

10.1 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 notify Pearson in writing to the Quality Operations Manager of any reasonable adjustment arrangements they are putting in place to support learners.

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

10.2 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 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.

The standards verifier's role is to monitor the conduct of the appeal in line with the centre's published appeals procedure. Standards verifiers are not permitted to arbitrate in appeals.

In line with QCA regulations, the ten week rule continues to be applicable to all SVQs accredited on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

However, the ten week rule has been removed for NVQ and NVQ Successor Qualifications accredited under the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF). This means that there does not have to be a ten week period between registration and applying for certification.

10.3 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. Copies of learner work submitted for any external verification sampling must also be kept for the same period.

Lost or destroyed learner work

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

Centres must notify BTEC Quality Standards immediately when 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.

11 Completion of quality assurance processes required for certification – NVQ/SVQ and BTEC Apprenticeships

QCA NVQ Code of Practice (2006), The Statutory Regulation of External Qualifications (2004) and the SQA Accreditation Regulatory Principles.(2011)

The above regulations specify the quality assurance and control requirements which apply to, and reflect, the distinctive character of NQF NVQs, QCF NVQs, SVQs and competence-based qualifications. All staff involved with the delivery of NVQ and SVQs should be familiar with their contents. Copies of the documents can be found on the regulators websites ([Ofqual](#) & [SQA](#)).

The NVQ code of practice will continue to apply to all NVQs in the NQF until their last certification end date. These NVQs will continue to be part of the NQF and therefore must meet the requirements that applied when they were accredited – [The statutory regulation of external qualifications 2004 and the NVQ code of practice](#).

This means that there will be a transition period during which awarding organisations and their centres, operating in both the QCF and the NQF, are required to work with two sets of regulatory requirements – one for QCF NVQs and competence-based qualifications and one for NVQs in the NQF.

Pearson continues to apply the following sections of the [QCA NVQ Code of Practice](#) to NVQs and competence-based qualifications accredited within the QCF:

- Expertise: Paragraphs 4-5.
- Data Requirements: Paragraphs 22, 23 & 24.
- Application of assessment methodology: Paragraphs 40-72.
- Approved centre criteria Appendix 1
- Sanctions for non-compliance with the centre approval criteria Appendix 3

All centre staff members managing, delivering and administering Pearson NVQs & SVQs should be fully aware of the contents and requirements of both the Pearson NVQs, SVQs and competence-based qualifications – Delivery Requirements and Quality Assurance Guidance and the relevant sections of the QCA NVQ Code of Practice, QCA/06/2888, 2006 and the SQA Accreditation Regulatory Principles (2011), respectively.

It is highly recommended that examinations officers and NVQ, SVQ administrators are briefed on any issues which are affected by the above regulations. These could include (among others) the 10-week rule, direct claims status and record-keeping.

Also, all staff involved must be aware that centres need to have approval with Pearson before they can register learners and deliver either NQF NVQs or SVQs (see part 3). Similarly, centres must have gained centre recognition and qualification approval before they can register learners and deliver QCF NVQs and competence-based qualifications. It is essential that the deadlines given in part 1 are strictly adhered to.

The NVQ Code of Practice and Pearson Assessment Requirements, as specified in the Pearson NVQ/SVQ Handbook and the NVQs, SVQs and competence-based qualifications – Delivery Requirements and Quality Assurance Guidance, stipulate that centre records, including all recording information, internal verification and assessment records, are retained for auditing purposes for a period of three years.

There is no penalty for withdrawing learners if they are no longer on a programme or have transferred to another programme or centre.

Having accurate data enables us to provide appropriate solutions to centres' needs to meet their quality assurance obligations. We can also provide better responses to any queries they may have about administration.

Centres approved to offer Pearson accredited NVQ, SVQs and/or competence-based qualifications with learners registered on these programmes will usually receive two standards verification visits per year (a total of two days per year). The exact frequency and duration of standards verifier visits must reflect the centre's performance, taking account of the number:

- of assessment sites
- and throughput of learners
- and turnover of assessors
- and turnover of internal verifiers.

For centres offering a full BTEC Apprenticeship (ie all elements of the Apprenticeship are delivered with Pearson through registration of learners on a BTEC Apprenticeship framework) a single standards verifier will be allocated to verify all elements of the BTEC Apprenticeship programme. If a centre is also offering stand-alone NVQ/SVQs in the same sector as a full BTEC Apprenticeship, the same standards verifier will be allocated.

Each of the individual qualifications within a BTEC Apprenticeship framework is subjected to external quality assurance in its own right. Standards verifiers will sample each qualification and submit separate reports for each qualification.

Where problems have been encountered with the assessment of the programme or with the assessment of individual learners, the standards verifier will have reported this to Pearson and certificates for learners on these programmes may be withheld or blocked.

A block on certification may be the result of information received by Pearson which raises doubt as to the validity of certificates issued, or a potential risk may have been indicated to, or identified by, Pearson.

The decision to block certification may have been made by the regulator or by the funding providers. Centres are reminded of the NVQ Code of Practice and the NVQs, SVQs and competence-based qualifications – Delivery Requirements and Quality Assurance Guidance and of the role of the awarding body in ensuring the validity of certificates. There is an overriding implication that the regulator and/or funding providers may influence this decision.

Following a visit by a standards verifier, he or she will complete a Qualification Report Form (QRF). The QRF authorises claims for certification by allowing direct claim status or allows limited certification to be claimed by specifying those learners for whom certification should be released. Where a certification box is checked as 'No', a further standards verifier visit will be required before certification can be released, and centres may be required to pay for this. Centres can keep track of the information on registrations and their associated certification through Edexcel Online.

Pearson standards verifiers will provide support, advice and guidance to centres to achieve Direct Claims Status (DCS). Pearson will maintain the integrity of NVQ/SVQs through ensuring that the awarding of these qualifications is secure. Where there are quality issues identified in the delivery of programmes Pearson will exercise the right to:

- direct centres to take actions
- limit or suspend certification
- suspend registration.

The approach of Pearson in such circumstances is to work with the centre to overcome the identified problems. If additional training is required, Pearson will aim to secure the appropriate expertise to provide this.

When programme teams are contacted by their allocated standards verifier they need to liaise with the standards verifier to make the best use of standards verifier time during visits, so as to ensure that the certification status of their programmes is upheld. Programme teams should use Edexcel Online to check their standards verifier allocations.

12 QCF Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT)

Learners may transfer credit achieved with other awarding bodies to Edexcel QCF programmes provided the credits fall within the rules of combination for the qualification.

Transfer credit may be reported for each learner through Edexcel Online and will appear on certification.

It is hoped that in future an online service will be available that can interface with MIAP's Personal Learner Record system and check CAT claims automatically.

13 Guidance on vocational administrative processes

As we are looking to refine many of our administrative processes during 2013-2014 we have not included the usual administrative instructions in this year's Information Manual. Once these new processes go live we will be providing you with all the support you need to carry them out.

In the meantime we have published all current administrative guidance on our 'I want to...' website pages providing the necessary information to carry out these processes. This will be particularly helpful for new exam officers undertaking these administrative tasks.

Please refer to the below website links to find the relevant guidance.

- 13.1 For guidance on how to gain approval for additional BTEC/NVQ/SVQ qualifications please refer to www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/vocational-qualification-approval.aspx
- 13.2 For guidance on how to make vocational registrations via Edexcel Online or EDI please refer to www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/making-vocational-registrations.aspx
- 13.3 Our next generation BTEC Firsts requires the use of our Pearson Onscreen Platform (POP) for subjects which contain an onscreen externally assessed component. For guidance on how to install the platform and deliver these onscreen tests please refer to www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/onscreen-testing-next-generation-btec-firsts.aspx
- 13.4 For instructions on how to transfer registrations between programmes please refer to www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/vocational-transfers-changes-registration-details.aspx
- 13.5 For guidance on how and when to report learner achievement please refer to www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/reporting-vocational-achievement.aspx
- 13.6 For information on the different types of vocational award certificates please refer to www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/vocational-certification.aspx
- 13.7 For guidance on relevant Access Arrangements and special consideration for externally assessed units for new NQF BTECs please refer to: www.edexcel.com/iwantto/pages/special-requirements.aspx