

Pearson BTEC International Level 3 Specialist Award in Esports

Specification

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Edexcel, BTEC and LCCI qualifications

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Welcome

With a track record built over 40 years of learner success, our BTEC International qualifications are recognised internationally by governments, industry and higher education.

What are BTEC International Specialist and Professional qualifications?

These BTEC qualifications are available at Levels 1–3 (Specialist) and at Levels 4–7 (Professional).

BTEC International Specialist and Professional qualifications give learners the knowledge and/or skills that they need to prepare for employment in a sector or job role. They also provide career development opportunities for those already in work.

They put learning into the context of the world of work, giving learners the opportunity to apply their learning in relevant and realistic work contexts. This applied, practical approach means that learners develop the knowledge and skills they need for career progression or further study.

Sizes of qualification

Pearson estimates the number of guided learning hours (GLH) that will be needed for centre staff to deliver the qualification. This includes all training that involves centre staff in teaching and supervising learners, as well as all assessment activities.

BTEC Specialist and Professional qualifications are available in the following sizes:

- Award – a qualification with a GLH value of 10–120 hours
- Certificate – a qualification with a GLH value of 121–369 hours
- Diploma – a qualification with a GLH value of 370 or above.

Collaborative development

This qualification has been developed with input from industry experts. We are grateful to all the individuals and organisations who generously shared their time and expertise to help us develop these new qualifications.

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Introduction to BTEC International Specialist qualifications for the Enterprise sector

This specification contains all the information you need to deliver the Pearson BTEC International Level 3 Specialist Award in Esports.

This qualification for the esports industry have been designed with input from industry practitioners.

It has been designed to give learners and understanding of the different roles available and equip them with the skills that are necessary to prepare them for their first job.

This specification signposts the other essential documents and support that you need as a centre in order to deliver, assess and administer the qualification, including the staff development required. A summary of all essential documents is given in *Section 7 Administrative arrangements*.

This qualification is not regulated in England.

The information in this specification is correct at the time of publication.

Qualifications, sizes and purposes at a glance

Title	Size and structure	Summary purpose
Pearson BTEC International Level 3 Specialist Award in Esports	90 GLH Three units, which are mandatory.	This qualification is designed to prepare learners to work in the esports industry in areas such as coaching, performance analysis and playing. It will also prepare learners to work in the production sector of the esports industry, particularly live-streaming and video production.

1 Qualification purpose and progression

Pearson BTEC International Level 3 Specialist Award in Esports

Who is this qualification for?

The Pearson BTEC International Level 3 Specialist Award in Esports is designed to give learners an introduction to the knowledge and skills required to work in the Esports industry.

It provides an introduction into the Esports industry, and will also prepare learners to work in the production sector of the esports industry, particularly live-streaming and video production.

2 Qualification summary and key information

Qualification title	Pearson BTEC International Level 3 Specialist Award in Esports
Operational start date	01/04/2022
Entry requirements	No prior knowledge, understanding, skills or qualifications are required before learners register for this qualification.
Guided Learning Hours (GLH)	90GLH
Assessment	The units are assessed using assignments that are set and marked by the centre.
Unit grading information	Pass
Qualification grading information	Pass

3 Structure

Qualification structure

Pearson BTEC International Level 3 Specialist Award in Esports

Learners will need to meet the requirements outlined in the table below before the qualification can be awarded.

Pearson BTEC International Level 3 Specialist Award in Esports		
Unit number	Unit title	GLH
Mandatory units - learners must achieve this unit		
1	Investigating the Esports Industry	30
2	Introduction to Live-streaming in Esports	30
3	Investigating Esports Strategies and Analysis	30

4 Units

Understanding your units

The units in this specification set out our expectations of assessment in a way that helps you to prepare your learners for assessment. The units help you to undertake assessment and quality assurance effectively.

Each unit in the specification is set out in a similar way. This section explains how the units work. It is important that all teachers, assessors, internal verifiers and other staff responsible for the programme review this section.

Section	Explanation
Unit number	The number is in a sequence in the specification. Where a specification has more than one qualification, numbers may not be sequential for all qualifications.
Unit title	This is the formal title that we always use, and it will appear on learners' certificates.
Level	All units and qualifications have a level assigned to them. The levels correspond with the levels used in the UK's Regulated Qualification Framework.
Unit type	This says if the unit is mandatory or optional for the qualification.
Guided Learning Hours (GLH)	Guided Learning Hours (GLH) is an estimate of the number of hours that will be needed for a typical learner to achieve the unit. Guided learning includes all training that involve centre staff in teaching and supervising learners, as well as all assessment activities.
Unit introduction	This summarises the content of the unit and how learners will benefit from taking it.
Learning outcomes and assessment criteria	The learning outcomes set out what a learner must know, understand or be able to do as the result of a process of learning. The assessment criteria specify the standard the learner is required to meet to achieve a learning outcome.
Unit content	This section sets out what needs to be taught. Content is compulsory except when it follows an 'e.g.'. Learners should not be asked to complete the assessment until all of the content for the unit has been taught.
Essential information for assessors	This section gives information to support delivery and the implementation of assessment.
Essential resources	This lists any specialist resources needed to deliver the unit. Centres will be asked to show that these resources are in place when they seek approval from Pearson to offer the qualification.

Index of units

This section contains all the units developed for this qualification. Please refer to *page 5* to check which units are available.

Unit 1: Investigating the Esports Industry	9
Unit 2: Introduction to Live-streaming in Esports	15
Unit 3: Investigating Esports Strategies and Analysis	21

Unit 1: Investigating the Esports Industry

Level: 3

Unit type: **Mandatory**

Guided learning hours: **30**

Unit introduction

This unit will give learners an understanding of the esports industry and the jobs they could pursue in this sector.

In this unit you will explore the esports industry globally and the organisation and classification of esports in different countries. You will review genres of esports games, highlighting the key differences between genres.

You will explore different job roles in esports and the qualifications, training and experience required for effective career progression in the esports industry. You will also assess your own skills, experiences and qualities in relation to a specific job role in esports and develop a career development action plan to help secure a job in that area.

Learning outcomes and assessment criteria

To pass this unit, the learner needs to meet all the learning outcomes for the unit. The assessment criteria determine the standard required to achieve the unit.

Learning outcomes		Assessment criteria	
A	Understand the esports industry and genres of esports games	A.1	Explain the structure and organisation of the esports industry globally and in specific countries.
		A.2	Explain different genres of esports games.
B	Explore career progression in esports	B.1	Describe different job roles and career progression in the esports industry.
		B.2	Produce an appropriate career development action plan relevant to a selected esports job role.

Unit content

Learning outcome A: Understand the esports industry and genres of esports games

Organisation and structure of esports

- Definition of esports
- Organisation of esports in different countries:
 - classification of esports, e.g. sport, game
 - involvement of governments, e.g. local, regional, national
 - role of national bodies that represent the esports industry in each country, e.g.:
 - player development, e.g. training programmes to develop young talent, advice and support for professional players, opportunities to play in international tournaments
 - expansion of esports, e.g. events and tournaments, local and regional clubs, number of professional teams
- Structure of esports globally:
 - role of game developers and publishers, e.g. intellectual property rights, hosting competitions, content creators, licensing to third parties, game developments, data sources for analytics
 - tournaments and leagues:
 - tournament/league organisers, e.g. franchise model used by game publishers, third-party organisers
 - audiences, e.g. spectators, exclusive streaming platforms
 - professional teams, e.g. ownership model, value, ethos, player recruitment, contracts and salaries, relationship with fans
 - revenue, e.g. sponsorship, media rights, publisher fees, merchandise and tickets, digital, streaming, government
 - self-regulation to address unethical behaviour:
 - international bodies, e.g. Global Esports Federation (GEF) and International Esports Federation (IeSF)
 - industry guardians, e.g. Esports Integrity Coalition (ESIC), industry trade bodies

Genres of esports games

- Comparing genres of esports games:
 - Multiplayer Online Battle Arena (MOBA)
 - First Person Shooter (FPS)
 - Battle Royale
 - Real Time Strategy (RTS)
 - sports-based games
 - fighting games

- Esports tournaments and leagues for specific games, e.g. Overwatch League, Fortnite World Cup, The International Dota 2 Championships

Learning outcome B: Explore career progression in esports

Job roles and career progression in esports

- Job roles in esports, e.g.:
 - gaming, e.g. professional player, coach, analyst
 - production, e.g. live broadcast director, producer, content creator, technician
 - on-air personality, e.g. shoutcaster/host, co-commentator
 - administration, e.g. team/player manager, event manager, administrator
- Career progression, e.g.:
 - qualifications, e.g. further education, higher education
 - training, e.g. job/sector specific training, technical skills, employability skills
 - experience, e.g. esports industry, gaming industry, new technologies, social platforms

Development planning for a career in esports

- Job descriptions and person specifications for jobs in esports
- Producing a personal skills audit against a selected job role in esports, e.g.:
 - skills, e.g. specific technical skills, generic employability skills, basic skills
 - experiences, e.g. qualifications, work experience, volunteering
 - personal qualities, e.g. reliability, commitment, resilience, empathy
 - SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats)
- Career development action plan (CDAP) for a selected job role in esports:
 - goals and measures of success, e.g.:
 - skills development, e.g. qualifications, formal and informal training, workshops
 - experiential, e.g. work experience, volunteering, job shadowing
 - specialism and diversification, e.g. opportunities to specialise in one area or diversify into related job roles/industries
 - milestone targets with timescales, e.g.:
 - short term, e.g. next two years
 - medium term, e.g. two to five years
 - long term, e.g. five to ten years
 - strengths and areas for personal development.

Essential information for assessors

Essential resources

There are no specialist resources needed for this unit.

Suggested assessment approach

This section must be read in conjunction with *Section 6 Assessment*.

This unit is assessed internally by the centre and externally verified by Pearson.

The table below shows the suggested approach to assessments.

The assessment for this unit should be set in a specific organisational context, it should draw on learning from the unit, and be designed in a way that enables learners to meet all the assessment criteria.

Learning outcome	Suggested assessment approach
A Understand the esports industry and genres of esports games	An audio or video podcast that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> explains the structure and organisation of esports globally and in different countries compares different genres of esports games.
B Explore career progression in esports	A report on different job roles and career progression in esports. A career development action plan for a selected job role in the esports industry.

Assessment requirements

Learning outcome A

To achieve A.1, learners must show an understanding of the structure and organisation of esports globally and in **at least two** different countries.

Learners will use appropriate examples to explain the structure of the global esports industry, such as examples of the role of game publishers, tournaments/leagues/events, professional teams, streaming platforms and international bodies.

Learners will also explain the development of esports in their **two** chosen countries based on appropriate research, for example research into the role of the national bodies that represent esports in the chosen countries. Learners do not have to draw links or comparisons between the chosen countries.

To achieve A.2, learners must demonstrate an understanding of genres of esports games by selecting **at least two** genres of esports games and describing in detail **at least one** game associated with each genre. Learners will use appropriate examples to explain some of the significant differences between the chosen genres.

Learning outcome B

To achieve B.1, learners must describe **at least two** different job roles in the esports industry. Learners will use appropriate examples to demonstrate knowledge of the qualifications, training and experiences required to gain employment in the specified job roles.

To achieve B.2, learners must produce a career development action plan in relation to a specific job role in esports, although not necessarily a specific job description and/or person specification. Learners will identify some relevant areas for personal development against the selected job role. The career development action plan must include appropriate targets to address specific areas for personal development. Although the targets must have realistic timescales, learners do not have to include targets for the short, medium and long term.

Unit 2: Introduction to Live-streaming in Esports

Level: 3

Unit type: **Mandatory**

Guided learning hours: **30**

Unit introduction

Live streaming is an exciting part of the esports industry. It provides gamers with an audience to create and deliver content to individual personal streams to global events that are viewed by millions.

In this unit, you will research and explore the different platforms used for live-streaming; you will also play games against others and then create a live-streamed broadcast of competitive game play. You will develop the understanding, knowledge and skills to enable you to develop and carry out a successful live-stream. You will develop your planning, research, and reflection skills and your ability to communicate information in a professional and constructive manner. You will learn how to critically evaluate your own work for future development and success.

This unit will support progression into employment by developing the skills and abilities required for job roles in the production side of esports.

Learning outcomes and assessment criteria

To pass this unit, the learner needs to meet all the learning outcomes for the unit. The assessment criteria determine the standard required to achieve the unit.

Learning outcomes		Assessment criteria	
A	Explore different platforms used in esports for live streaming.	A.1	Describe a live streaming platform used in esports.
		A.2	Describe the features of an existing esports live-streamed broadcast.
B	Plan and produce a live-stream of an esports game.	B.1	Produce a competent live-streamed broadcast that is appropriate for the intended audience.
		B.2	Review the live-streamed broadcast.

Unit content

Learning outcome A: Explore different platforms used in esports for live streaming.

A.1 Live-streaming platforms

Learners should practically explore the features and characteristics of different live-streaming platforms and software.

- Streaming platforms, e.g.:
 - Twitch
 - YouTube
 - Discord
 - Steam.
- Streaming software, e.g.:
 - OBS
 - FFSPLIT
 - Discord
 - Xsplit.
- Features and characteristics of platforms.
 - games, tournaments and streamers associated with different platforms
 - types of broadcast content e.g. gameplay, archive footage, interviews, statistics
 - use of branding, sponsors and advertising
 - streaming management software, e.g. steam chat, emotes, direct address, alerts
 - ways that viewers can interact with the stream

- expected codes of conduct associated with streaming platforms

A.2 Features of esports streams and videos

Learners should explore how live-streamed broadcasts engage their intended audiences through their characteristics, features and formats.

- Intention of the live-stream e.g. to educate, inform, entertain, promote
- Intended audiences and their needs
 - age
 - gender
 - country/region
 - mode of play
- Legal and ethical constraints:
 - age-appropriate content
 - data protection
 - copyright.
- Characteristics and features of live-streams:
 - genres, codes and conventions
 - visual language, e.g. colour, signs and symbols, framing, style, branding
 - content, e.g. narrative, information, dialogue, segments, game footage
 - audio and visual elements, e.g. images, VFX, animation, motion graphics, music, dialogue, sound effects.
 - adhering to codes of conduct.
- Formats, e.g. multi-camera live event, documentary, advert, title sequence, short, ident, corporate.

Learning outcome B: Plan and produce a live-stream of an esports game.

B.1 Planning and producing a live-streamed broadcast

Learners should explore the equipment and planning processes required to produce a live-streamed broadcast of an esports game.

- Game choice, e.g. Rocket League, League of Legends, Overwatch, Fortnite.
- Streaming platform choice.
- Required equipment:
 - PC and monitor
 - internet connection
 - cameras
 - microphone

- Aims and objectives of live-stream
 - target audience
 - content and purpose
- Background research
- Producing and sourcing assets e.g. graphics, video, music
- Running order and timings
- Pre-production, e.g. script, call sheets and schedules
- Setting up and testing equipment and software
- Developing and refining in-games knowledge, skills and techniques

B.2 Review of the live-streamed broadcast

Learners should understand how to reflect on a live-streamed broadcast to identify its strengths and weaknesses and set targets for future improvements.

- Critical analysis of the live-streamed broadcast
 - self-reflection
 - audience feedback
 - peer feedback
 - watching footage back
- Impact of the live-stream broadcast
- Appropriateness of the live-streamed broadcast
- Assessing strengths and weaknesses of the broadcast and own contribution
- Identifying best practice in planning and delivery of the broadcast
- Learning from mistakes
- Responding appropriately to feedback and criticism
- Setting targets for future improvements.

Essential information for assessors

Essential resources

The specialist resources needed for this unit are:

- gaming equipment
- streaming platforms and equipment

Suggested assessment approach

This section must be read in conjunction with *Section 6 Assessment*.

This unit is assessed internally by the centre and externally verified by Pearson.

The table below shows the suggested approach to assessments.

The assessment for this unit should be set in a specific organisational context, it should draw on learning from the unit, and be designed in a way that enables learners to meet all the assessment criteria.

Learning outcome	Suggested assessment approach
A Explore different platforms used in esports for live streaming.	A report such as a written document, presentation or web-based article that illustrates the features of a chosen live-streaming platform. Learners should also produce a review of an existing esports live-streamed broadcast.
B Plan and produce a live-stream of an esports game.	Footage of a live-streamed broadcast produced by the learner with a review of its strengths and areas for development.

Assessment requirements

Learning outcome A

To achieve A.1, learners will present accurate information about a chosen live-streaming platform used in the esports industry. They will describe the key features and characteristics of this platform such as the types of games and tournaments it streams, the main broadcast content and how viewers can interact. Learners will also describe streamers associated with their chosen platform and comment on its positive and negative features.

To achieve A.2, learners will present a review of an existing esports live-streamed broadcast. Their review will describe the purpose and format of their chosen stream, and they will explain how different features and characteristics have been used to engage the intended audience. Learners will provide examples from their chosen live-streamed broadcast to illustrate their points.

Learning outcome B

To achieve B.1, learners will have undertaken relevant research and planning activities and will select appropriate software and equipment to produce a live-streamed broadcast for their chosen game. They will set-up and use equipment and software effectively to produce a competent live-streamed broadcast that mostly meets its aims and objectives and is appropriate for the intended audience.

To achieve B.2, learners will review their live-stream or video production and describe its strengths and areas for development. Their review will cover a range of areas such as its suitability for intended audience, quality of content and overall impact and effectiveness in meeting its aims and objectives. They will base their judgements on self-reflection and in response to feedback from others and use examples to support their points.

Unit 3: Investigating Esports Strategies and Analysis

Level: 3

Unit type: **Mandatory**

Guided learning hours: **30**

Unit introduction

An understanding of in-game skills and strategies across a range of esports games helps you to become a better player and can also enable you to coach and train others.

Strategic knowledge and an understanding of how to analyse player or team performance will help you to guide players and teams to push the boundaries and create innovative and exciting new ways to play and dominate games. In this unit, you will play competitive games against others, developing the understanding, knowledge and skills to enable you to analyse performances in competitive esports games.

You will develop your planning, research, and reflection skills and your ability to communicate information in a professional and constructive manner. You will learn how to critically evaluate your own work for future development and success. This unit will support your progression into job roles such as analyst, professional player, shoutcaster, coach or referee and/or roles linked to the production side of esports.

Learning outcomes and assessment criteria

To pass this unit, the learner needs to meet all the learning outcomes for the unit. The assessment criteria determine the standard required to achieve the unit.

Learning outcomes		Assessment criteria	
A	Understand strategies and training requirements associated with in-game skills	A.1	Describe the different in-game skills, strategies and training requirements used in esports.
B	Explore how performance analysis can be used to recommend improvements for an individual or team	B.1	Explain why performance analysis is used in gaming.
		B.2	Carry out a performance analysis on an esports game.

Unit content

Learning outcome A: Understand strategies and training requirements associated with in-game skills

A.1 Skills, tactics and training required in different genres of games

Learners should practically explore a range of skills and tactics used in various esports games and the training needed to develop these skills and tactics.

- Features of different genres of esports games
- Skills and tactics in specific games:
 - macro, e.g. map awareness, rotational play, objective control, ability timers
 - micro, e.g. individual mechanical play, ability to hit skillshots, reaction times.
- Positional advantages and disadvantages.
- Opposition strategies and counter play strategies.
- Communication (verbal and non-verbal).
- Knowledge of in-game roles and capabilities, e.g. characters, abilities, movement.
- Adapting to game development changes, e.g. updates, season changes, meta changes, patches.
- Different training methods:
 - skill development exercises and drills
 - isolating problematic areas
 - practice routines
 - individual practice and practice with others
 - working with a coach or peer
 - setting targets

Learning outcome B: Explore how performance analysis can be used to recommend improvements for an individual or team.

B.1 Purpose of performance analysis

Learners should explore why performance analysis is used in esports and how it can lead to improved individual or team performance.

- Individual performance, e.g.:
 - identifying strengths and weaknesses
 - developing plans and strategies to improve individual performance
 - understanding of player limits
 - setting clear aims and objectives for improvement
- Team performance, e.g.:

- gelling as a team
- setting of team targets
- assessing player impact
- identifying the teams' strengths and weaknesses
- communication skills
- decision making
- developing team strategies

B2 Analysing individual or team performance

- Assessing general skills of esports players, e.g. coordination, reaction, dexterity.
- Assessing teamwork skills e.g. communication, team strategy, collective responsibility
- Identifying strengths and weaknesses of application of specific skills in game play
- Identifying strengths and weaknesses in tactical game play
- Using evidence to support judgements e.g. game footage, game reports and statistics
- Feeding back to players and teams
- Offering suggestions for improvements

Essential information for assessors

Essential resources

The specialist resources needed for this unit are:

- gaming equipment
- video capture and editing software and equipment

Suggested assessment approach

This section must be read in conjunction with *Section 6 Assessment*.

This unit is assessed internally by the centre and externally verified by Pearson.

The table below shows the suggested approach to assessments.

The assessment for this unit should be set in a specific organisational context, it should draw on learning from the unit, and be designed in a way that enables learners to meet all the assessment criteria.

Learning outcome	Suggested assessment approach
A Understand strategies and training requirements associated with in-game skills.	A report such as a written document, presentation or game footage with commentary that illustrates the skills, strategies and training requirements for a chosen esports game.
B Explore how performance analysis can be used to recommend improvements for an individual or team.	A performance analysis of an individual or team performance in an esports game. This could be presented as a written report, presentation or filmed feedback session. Learners should also account for why performance analysis is used in esports in their report.

Assessment requirements

Learning outcome A

To achieve A.1, learners will present an accurate overview of the key in-game skills and strategies used in a selected esports game. They will be able to describe specific skills/strategies used in the game and will illustrate their descriptions by referring to game footage and/or screenshots. Learners will also describe how esports players can develop and improve their skills and strategic gameplay by describing appropriate training exercises and practice drills.

Learning outcome B

To achieve B.1, learners will describe what performance analysis is and how it can be used in esports to improve the performance of individuals and teams. They will explain

different methods of performance analysis in relation to a specific game and describe why these different methods are used.

To achieve B.2, learners will present an accurate analysis of an individual or team performance in an esports game. They will identify obvious strengths and areas for improvement and will refer to game statistics and examples from the player or team's in-game performance to support the points they make.

5 Program delivery

Centres are free to offer these qualifications using any mode of delivery that meets learners' needs. This might include full time or part time direct instruction in classrooms, distance learning, and directed self-study.

Centres must make sure that learners have access to the identified resources and to the subject specialists delivering the units.

Those planning the programme should aim to enhance the vocational nature of the qualification(s) by:

- developing up-to-date and relevant teaching materials that make use of scenarios or case studies that are relevant to the sector
- giving learners the opportunity to apply their learning in realistic practical activities, for example creating business documentation or performing role plays
- developing projects with input from employers

Where legislation is taught, centres must ensure that it is current and up to date.

6 Assessment

To achieve a pass for this qualification, the learner must achieve all the units required in the qualification structure.

Internal assessment

All units in this qualification are internally assessed. This means that centres set and mark the assessments, which are then subject to external standards verification by a Pearson standards verifier.

Assessment using assignments

For all units, the format of assessment is an assignment taken after the content of the unit has been delivered. An assignment may take a variety of forms, including practical and written. Assignments are separate from teaching, practice, and other activities that learners complete with input from teachers. Assignments must be completed independently by learners, which means they work on their own without input from other learners or teachers.

An assignment needs to be issued to learners as an assignment brief which includes a start date, a completion date and clear requirements for the evidence that they need to provide. Assignments should be set within a specific organisational context. Assignments can be divided into tasks and may require several forms of evidence, including written tasks and observations.

Teachers will set the assignments. These must allow learners to generate the evidence required to meet the assessment criteria and the *Essential Requirements for Assessors* for the unit.

Issuing assessment decisions and feedback

Once the assessor has completed the assessment process for an assignment, the outcome is a formal assessment decision. This is recorded formally and reported to learners.

The information given to the learner:

- must show the formal decision and how it has been reached, indicating how or where criteria have been met
- may show why achievement of assessment criteria has not been demonstrated
- must not provide feedback on how to improve evidence
- must be validated by an Internal Verifier before it is given to the learner.

Resubmissions and retakes

Learners who do not successfully pass an assignment are allowed one opportunity to resubmit evidence for this assignment. If they still do not reach the required standard,

they should be given one opportunity to retake a different assignment that covers the same learning outcome(s).

7 Administrative arrangements

Introduction

This section focuses on the administrative requirements for delivering a BTEC qualification. It is of particular value to Quality Nominees, Lead IVs and Programme Leaders.

Learner registration and entry

Shortly after learners start the programme of learning, you need to make sure that they are registered for the qualification. You need to refer to the *International Information Manual* for information on making registrations for the qualification.

Learners can be formally assessed only for a qualification on which they are registered. If learners' intended qualifications change, for example if a learner decides to choose a different pathway specialism, then the centre must transfer the learner appropriately.

Access to assessment

Assessments need to be administered carefully to ensure that all learners are treated fairly, and that results and certification are issued on time to allow learners to progress to their chosen progression opportunities.

Pearson's equality policy requires that all learners should have equal opportunity to access our qualifications and assessments, and that our qualifications are awarded in a way that is fair to every learner. We are committed to making sure that:

- learners with a protected characteristic are not, when they are undertaking one of our qualifications, disadvantaged in comparison to learners who do not share that characteristic
- all learners achieve the recognition they deserve for undertaking a qualification and that this achievement can be compared fairly to the achievement of their peers.

Further information on access arrangements can be found in the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) document *Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration for General and Vocational Qualifications*.

Administrative arrangements for assessment

Records

You are required to retain records of assessment for each learner. Records should include decisions reached and any adjustments or appeals. Further information can be found in the *International Information Manual*. We may ask to audit your records, so they must be retained as specified.

Reasonable adjustments to assessment

To ensure that learners have fair access to demonstrate the requirements of the assessments, a reasonable adjustment is one that is made before a learner is assessed. You are able to make adjustments to internal assessments to take account of the needs of individual learners. In most cases, this can be achieved through allowing the use of assistive technology or adjusting the format of evidence. Any reasonable adjustment must reflect the normal learning or working practice of a learner in a centre or working within the occupational area. We can advise you if you are uncertain as to whether an adjustment is fair and reasonable. You need to plan for time to make adjustments if necessary.

Further details on how to make adjustments for learners with protected characteristics are given on our website, in the document *Supplementary guidance for reasonable adjustment and special consideration in vocational internally-assessed units*.

Appeals against assessment

Your centre must have a policy for dealing with appeals from learners. These appeals may relate to assessment decisions being incorrect or assessment not being conducted fairly. The first step in such a policy could be a consideration of the evidence by a Lead IV or other member of the programme team. The assessment plan should allow time for potential appeals after assessment decisions have been given to learners. If there is an appeal by a learner, you must document the appeal and its resolution. Learners have a final right of appeal to Pearson but only if the procedures that you have put in place have not been followed. Further details are given in the document *Enquiries and appeals about Pearson vocational qualifications and end point assessment policy*.

Dealing with malpractice in assessment

Malpractice means acts that undermine the integrity and validity of assessment, the certification of qualifications and/or may damage the authority of those responsible for delivering the assessment and certification.

Pearson does not tolerate actual or attempted actions of malpractice by learners, centre staff or centres in connection with Pearson qualifications. Pearson may impose penalties and/or sanctions on learners, centre staff or centres where malpractice or attempted malpractice has been proven.

Malpractice may occur or be suspected in relation to any unit or type of assessment within a qualification. For further details on malpractice and advice on preventing

malpractice by learners, please see Pearson's *Centre Guidance: Dealing with Malpractice*, available on our website.

The procedures we ask you to adopt vary between units that are internally assessed and those that are externally assessed.

Centres are required to take steps to prevent malpractice and to investigate instances of suspected malpractice. Learners must be given information that explains what malpractice is for internal assessment and how suspected incidents will be dealt with by the centre. The *Centre Guidance: Dealing with Malpractice* document gives full information on the actions we expect you to take.

Pearson may conduct investigations if we believe a centre is failing to conduct internal assessment according to our policies. The above document gives further information and examples, and details the penalties and sanctions that may be imposed.

In the interests of learners and centre staff, centres need to respond effectively and openly to all requests relating to an investigation into an incident of suspected malpractice.

Learner malpractice

The head of centre is required to report incidents of suspected learner malpractice that occur during Pearson qualifications. We ask centres to complete JCQ Form M1 (www.jcq.org.uk/malpractice) and email it with any accompanying documents (signed statements from the learner, invigilator, copies of evidence, etc.) to the Investigations Processing team at candidatemalpractice@pearson.com. The responsibility for determining appropriate sanctions or penalties to be imposed on learners lies with Pearson.

Learners must be informed at the earliest opportunity of the specific allegation and the centre's malpractice policy, including the right of appeal. Learners found guilty of malpractice may be disqualified from the qualification for which they have been entered with Pearson.

Failure to report malpractice constitutes staff or centre malpractice.

Teacher/centre malpractice

The head of centre is required to inform Pearson's Investigations team of any incident of suspected malpractice (which includes maladministration) by centre staff, before any investigation is undertaken. The head of centre is requested to inform the Investigations team by submitting a JCQ M2 Form (downloadable from www.jcq.org.uk/malpractice) with supporting documentation to pqsmalpractice@pearson.com. Where Pearson receives allegations of malpractice from other sources (for example Pearson staff, anonymous informants), the Investigations team will conduct the investigation directly or may ask the head of centre to assist.

Pearson reserves the right in cases of suspected malpractice to withhold the issuing of results/certificates while an investigation is in progress. Depending on the outcome of the investigation, results and/or certificates may not be released or they may be withheld.

We reserve the right to withhold certification when undertaking investigations, audits and quality assurance processes. You will be notified within a reasonable period of time if this occurs.

Sanctions and appeals

Where malpractice is proven, we may impose sanctions or penalties, such as:

- mark reductions for affected external assessments
- disqualification from the qualification
- debarment from registration for Pearson qualifications for a period of time.

If we are concerned about your centre's quality procedures we may impose sanctions such as:

- working with centres to create an improvement action plan
- requiring staff members to receive further training
- placing temporary blocks on the centre's certificates
- placing temporary blocks on registration of learners
- debarring staff members or the centre from delivering Pearson qualifications
- suspending or withdrawing centre approval status.

The centre will be notified if any of these apply.

Pearson has established procedures for centres that are considering appeals against penalties and sanctions arising from malpractice. Appeals against a decision made by Pearson will normally be accepted only from the head of centre (on behalf of learners and/or members or staff) and from individual members (in respect of a decision taken against them personally). Further information on appeals can be found in the JCQ Appeals booklet (<https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/appeals>).

Certification and results

Once a learner has completed all the required components for a qualification, the centre can claim certification for the learner, provided that quality assurance has been successfully completed. For the relevant procedures, please refer to our *International Information Manual*.

Additional documents to support centre administration

As an approved centre, you must ensure that all staff delivering, assessing and administering the qualifications have access to the following documentation. These documents are reviewed annually and are reissued if updates are required.

- *Pearson International Quality Assurance Handbook*: this sets out how we will carry out quality assurance of standards and how you need to work with us to achieve successful outcomes.
- *International Information Manual*: this gives procedures for registering learners for qualifications, transferring registrations and claiming certificates.
- *Regulatory policies*: our regulatory policies are integral to our approach and explain how we meet internal and regulatory requirements. We review the regulated policies annually to ensure that they remain fit for purpose. Policies related to this qualification include:
 - adjustments for candidates with disabilities and learning difficulties, access arrangements and reasonable adjustments for general and vocational qualifications
 - age of learners
 - centre guidance for dealing with malpractice
 - recognition of prior learning and process.

This list is not exhaustive, and a full list of our regulatory policies can be found on our website.

8 Quality assurance

Centre and qualification approval

As part of the approval process, your centre must make sure that the resource requirements listed below are in place before offering the qualification.

- Centres must have access to appropriate physical resources (for example equipment, IT, learning materials, teaching rooms) to support the delivery and assessment of the qualification.
- Staff involved in the assessment process must have relevant expertise and/or occupational experience.
- There must be systems in place to ensure continuing professional development for staff delivering the qualification.
- Centres must have in place appropriate health and safety policies relating to the use of equipment by learners.
- Centres must deliver the qualification in accordance with current equality and diversity legislation and/or regulations.

Continuing quality assurance and standards verification

On an annual basis, we produce the *Pearson International Quality Assurance Handbook*. It contains detailed guidance on the quality processes required to underpin robust assessment and internal verification.

The key principles of quality assurance are that:

- a centre delivering BTEC programmes must be an approved centre, and must have approval for the programmes or groups of programmes that it is delivering
- the centre agrees, as part of gaining approval, to abide by specific terms and conditions around the effective delivery and quality assurance of assessment; the centre must abide by these conditions throughout the period of delivery
- an approved centre must follow agreed protocols for standardisation of assessors and verifiers, for the planning, monitoring and recording of assessment processes, and for dealing with special circumstances, appeals and malpractice.

The approach of quality-assured assessment is through a partnership between an approved centre and Pearson. We will make sure that each centre follows best practice and employs appropriate technology to support quality-assurance processes, where practicable. We work to support centres and seek to make sure that our quality-assurance processes do not place undue bureaucratic processes on centres. We monitor and support centres in the effective operation of assessment and quality assurance.

The methods we use to do this include:

- making sure that all centres complete appropriate declarations at the time of approval
- undertaking approval visits to centres
- making sure that centres have effective teams of assessors and verifiers who are trained to undertake assessment
- assessment sampling and verification, through requested samples of assessments, completed assessed learner work and associated documentation
- an overarching review and assessment of a centre's strategy for delivering and quality assuring its BTEC programmes, for example making sure that synoptic units are placed appropriately in the order of delivery of the programme.

Centres that do not fully address and maintain rigorous approaches to delivering, assessing and quality assurance cannot seek certification for individual programmes or for all BTEC programmes. An approved centre must make certification claims only when authorised by us and strictly in accordance with requirements for reporting.

Centres that do not comply with remedial action plans may have their approval to deliver qualifications removed.

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For information about Pearson Qualifications, including Pearson Edexcel, BTEC and LCCI qualifications visit [qualifications.pearson.com](https://www.pearson.com/qualifications)

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