

Pearson Higher Nationals

Important Changes

Based on feedback from the consultation that our stakeholders took part in at the end of 2014 regarding the quality and continuous improvement of the Pearson BTEC Higher National qualification suite, we will be introducing some important changes, which are being introduced to bring the qualifications more in line with UK Higher Education practices, and will take effect from September 2016.

Changes to the Quality Assurance (QA) cycle

From September 2016, we are introducing a number of changes to the quality assurance cycle for the Pearson BTEC Higher Nationals (HNs), including the introduction of the following:

- the Annual Programme Monitoring Report form (AMPR)
- the requirement to run Assessment Boards
- a change in title for the current 'Standards Verifier' (SV)
- the annual student survey.

Annual Programme Monitoring Report (AMPR) form

The AMPR is an annual self-evaluation to be conducted for each Pearson BTEC Higher National programme that is run at the centre. The form will be available online with some fields pre-populated by Pearson, for ease of completion. The purpose of this annual review is to improve delivery of the Pearson BTEC Higher National qualifications and inform our support and training offer, as well as the visits conducted by our Quality Assurance staff.

This form was piloted for UK centres between January and March 2016. If you have any comments or feedback on the AMPR form or process, please do contact us at hnqa@pearson.com.

Requirement to run Assessment Boards

From September 2016, we expect centres to run Assessment Boards. The purpose of an Assessment Board is to make recommendations on the following:

- the grades achieved by students on the individual units
- extenuating circumstances
- cases of cheating and plagiarism
- progression of students onto the next stage of the programme
- the awards to be made to students
- referrals and deferrals.

It may be possible for centres to arrange with their Pearson Quality Assurance representative for a verification visit that includes time for them to attend the Assessment Board. Alternatively, they will need to see any minutes from the Assessment Board(s) held.

Change in title for the current 'Standards Verifier' (SV)

From academic year 2016/7, we are changing the job title of 'Standards Verifiers' for the BTEC Higher Nationals to 'External Examiners'. This is the term frequently used within UK Higher Education. They will continue to carry out a similar job function and in addition to previous checks carried out; they will also ensure that centres are running Assessment Boards, as part of the delivery of the qualifications.

Annual student survey

In 2016, we are introducing an annual student survey for all of your Higher National students, which will form an important part of the HN quality cycle.

The survey has been designed to provide valuable and quantifiable feedback on the Pearson BTEC Higher Nationals to inform the future design of the qualifications; to triangulate other aspects of the quality assurance mechanisms; and to support the development of resources for Pearson BTEC Higher National students globally. The survey will also allow us to gain a global perspective of student opinion.

We expect that centres will encourage students to engage with the survey at the relevant time of year.

As part of our responsibilities as the awarding organisation for the suite and in response to the requirements of the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) as regards student experience, the results from the survey will provide us with data to better inform the future of the Pearson BTEC Higher National qualifications and their efficacy.

Pearson has a responsibility to consider and act on information received. We will seek to address what may be common issues, and where necessary Pearson will provide appropriate support to both students and our providers.

Introduction of an annual student fee

For all BTEC Higher National students registered from September 2016, we are introducing an annual student fee of £20 that will apply to all BTEC Higher National students from the second year of study onwards. The purpose of this fee, which is a common feature of UK Higher Education programmes like the Pearson BTEC Higher Nationals (HNs), is to ensure we can support students effectively whilst they are on programme and maintain accurate data on the numbers of students on programmes.

The annual student fee will not apply to students in the first year of their study, as this is already built into the qualification registration fee charged to centres.

Please note that this fee will be charged for each subsequent year students take to complete a HNC/D programme, after their first year of study. This means that if students complete the HND in two years, their centre will only have the £20 fee to pay once in their second year, whilst for any students who complete the HND in three years, their centre will have the £20 annual fee to pay twice (in their second and third years).

English language requirements

From academic year 2016/7, we are introducing English language requirements for our new Pearson BTEC HN programmes.

This will help ensure that students have the appropriate level of English in order to successfully complete one of the new Pearson BTEC HN programmes. The English language requirements can be summarised as follows:

Language of delivery/ assessment	English language requirement(s)
HN is taught and assessed in local language	English language requirements do not apply, students' certificates will continue to say "assessed in a language other than English"
HN is taught and assessed in English	Non-native English speakers and those students who have not had their final two years of schooling in English will need to demonstrate one of the following upon entry: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) B2 • IELTS 5.5 (including 5.5 for reading and writing) • PTE 51 • or equivalent
HN is taught in a mix of English and local language, and assessed in English	Non-native English speakers, and those students who have not had their final two years of schooling in English, will need to demonstrate one of the following upon exit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) B2 • IELTS 5.5 (including 5.5 for reading and writing) • PTE 51 • or equivalent

Programme approvals process for existing centres

In February 2016, we introduced a new Pearson BTEC HN programme approval process for existing Pearson BTEC HN centres, that would like to gain programme approval for one of the **new** Pearson BTEC HNs on the RQF, starting initially with Business. For the new Pearson BTEC Higher Nationals in Business specification, please see details available [here](#).

This process is detailed in the [Approvals guidance document](#) available on the website [here](#).

For more information about the changes for the Pearson BTEC Higher Nationals, please contact us at highernationals@pearson.com.