



Pearson

Higher National Certificates and Diplomas offered under licence by Higher Education Institutions

Background Information for International Centres

What are BTEC Higher Nationals?

Pearson BTEC Higher Nationals are higher-level qualifications designed to support progression into employment or into completing a degree. Students taking a BTEC Higher National can expect to complete a thorough and engaging programme of study, that will equip them with the higher-level skills and competencies in their chosen discipline. This reflects the requirements of professional organisations in the UK, and where appropriate, meets the requirements for National Occupational Standards (NOS) for each sector or industry.

Pearson BTEC Higher Nationals come in the form of Higher National Certificates (HNC) (at level 4) and Higher National Diplomas (HND) (at level 5). They are internationally recognised qualifications with the potential for career progression and professional membership, and professional development for those already in employment. They may also be used as a component of Higher Apprenticeships with progression to Degree Apprenticeships as well as other higher education courses.

The HNC is equivalent to the first year of a full time undergraduate degree and the HND to the first and second year of a full time undergraduate degree. On successful completion of level 5 students may be able to progress to level 6 and achieve a degree.

Pearson is the owner of the BTEC Higher Nationals and as such is responsible for the design, quality assurance, awarding and certification of students. The BTEC Higher Nationals are delivered through FE Colleges and other training providers.

What are Higher Nationals delivered under licence by Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)?

Some HEIs in England and Wales offer Higher Nationals under licence from Pearson

The **HEI licence** enable HEIs to design, validate, deliver and award their own Higher National Diplomas/Certificates. As awarding organisations in their own right, HEIs are able to devise Higher National Certificates/Diplomas under the HEI licence. This means that they are able to respond to local and regional needs whilst still offering Higher National qualifications which are highly valued by both employers and students. These Higher Nationals are not validated, quality assured or awarded by Pearson. Nor are they BTEC Higher Nationals. However, as the trademark owner, Pearson monitors standards across the Higher Nationals under licence.

In order to ensure that Higher National students continue to benefit from the same progression opportunities, Higher National programmes delivered under licence must map to the core content of existing BTEC Higher National programmes, where in place. The aim of this design principle is to preserve recognition from employers and professional bodies.

Universities must also identify student progression opportunities at the point of validation of the awards.

There are currently 31 UK HEIs offering Higher Nationals under licence. The majority have been doing so for more than 10 years. Some HEIs deliver them, but the preferred model is to franchise them to Further Education Colleges with which they have collaborative arrangements. The agreement will include progression on successful completion to their degrees or other professional qualifications.

Some HEIs may wish to use the entire content of the new BTEC (RQF) Higher Nationals qualifications in order to offer them as their own validated awards. In this case HEIs will be asked to sign an **IP Licence Agreement** protecting the use of Pearson's intellectual property in the awards and which specifies that the content cannot be used for any other purpose. The content is defined as: Title of the Award, Unit Content, Learning Outcomes, Assessment Criteria and Rules of Combination.

How HEIs become Licensed Centres

There is a process by which an international HEI becomes a licensed centre and obtains recognition. Details of which can be found [here](#).

Support is provided throughout the process by the University Principal Examiner (UPE) who is the main point of contact for HEIs offering licensed provision.

When the application is approved centres will be asked to sign the licence which is valid for three years. The main requirements of the licence are that:

- An annual schedule of courses is submitted to Pearson each academic year for approval.
- An annual Institutional Review Report (IRR) is submitted to Pearson by centres which reviews the provision.
- Centres register students with Pearson by an agreed date and report on completion and achievement of students.
- Centres pay the agreed fee for each student registered.
- The centre commits to having, the appropriate human and physical resources to deliver the courses.
- The centre is responsible for the Quality Assurance arrangements for the course and will report on these through the IRR.

Advantages for International Degree Awarding Bodies outside the UK to offer Higher Nationals under licence.

Higher National Certificates and Diplomas are internationally recognised qualifications. The advantages for HEIs or other organisations with degree awarding powers are as follows:

- The Institution is able to respond to the specific educational needs of its country and communities.
- It can develop its own curriculum subject to Pearson approval.
- It validates, quality assures and certifies its own awards.
- Higher Nationals are attractive to employers and students.
- Higher Nationals have a global recognition.
- The institution determines the pattern of delivery. Eg. part time, full time, class based learning, distance or blended learning.
- The Higher National will provide progression routes to institutions' higher

- qualifications.
- There is ongoing support from Pearson and agreed annual visits by the UPE.
 - They strengthen relationships with collaborative partners.
 - The Higher Nationals may be delivered in the institutions' native language subject to Pearson quality requirements.

Costs

There is an initial development cost of £500.

A registration fee for each student (These are set annually and include a 40% discount for all students registered by the HEI and undertaking a Higher National under licence).

Travel/accommodation costs for Pearson visits.