

Guide to Writing Assignment Briefs

*for next generation
BTEC Firsts (NQF)*

**A Quick Guide for
the BTEC teaching team**



Version 2 (UK and International centres): June 2014

www.btec.co.uk/keydocuments

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Introduction to ...

Assessment tools and assignments



What's in the Assessment Tools and Assignments section?

This first section starts with the basics and takes you step by step through creating high quality assessment tools including:

- **what is a unit?**
- **definitions of key terms** like learning aim and assessment criteria
- what **good quality assessment tools** look like
- your **role as an assessor**
- what an **assignment brief** looks like.



If you are new to teaching BTEC, this should provide you with a handy guide to the basics - and where to find more help and support - so you can devise creative assessments with confidence.



If you are an experienced BTEC practitioner, but new to delivering next generation BTEC Firsts (NQF), you should also find this *Guide* useful as a quick reference to the specific requirements for next generation BTEC Firsts (NQF)– or as a starting point for coaching colleagues new to your BTEC teaching team.



If you are based outside the UK, this *Guide* will not be relevant to you, as next generation BTEC Firsts (NQF) are only available to UK centres. You can find all the documents and support you need in the International section of our Key Documents page: www.btec.co.uk/keydocuments.



If you have any questions, or want to discuss your individual needs and requirements with a BTEC expert, you can find the contact details you need [here](#). You can also find more assessment guidance in the next generation BTEC First specifications at www.btec.co.uk/2012.

Assessment tools & assignments

What tools can I use to assess my BTEC learners?

Next generation BTEC First (NQF) qualifications are made up of individual units which cover specific topics and contain:

- **learning aims**
which define what the learner needs to know, understand and do
- **assessment criteria**
the grade level at which the learner can achieve each learning aim.

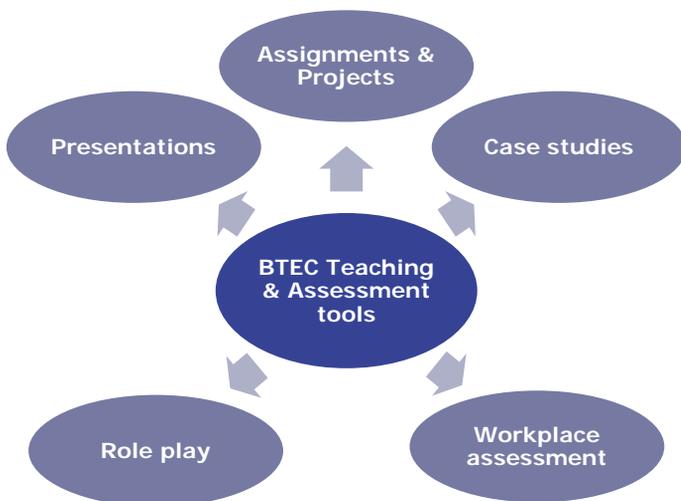
Learners studying the internally assessed units need to **generate evidence that they have met the learning aims and assessment criteria** specified for each unit.

How can learners generate their evidence?

Learners can generate evidence through a **range of different activities** set in a vocational, work-related context, including:

- assignment and project work
- case studies
- workplace assessment
- role play
- presentations.

The **assessment guidance** in each unit provides advice and examples of good practice.



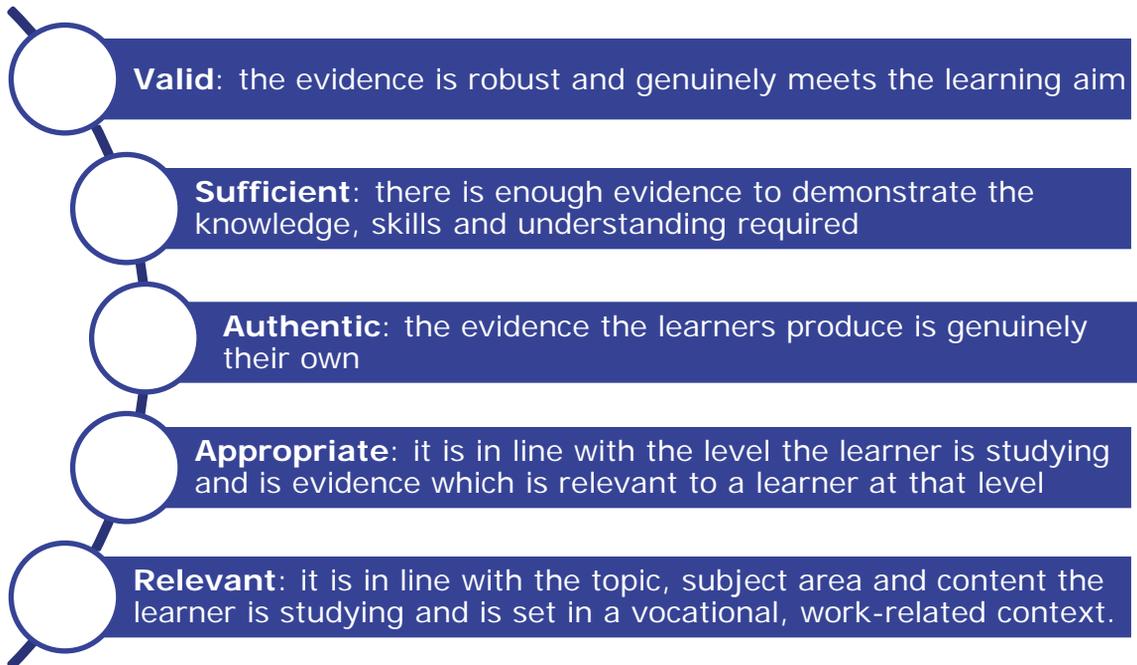
What is an “assessment instrument”?

You may sometimes see these activities described as “**assessment instruments**”, which is a generic term for any kind of activity or task you develop to assess the standard your learners have reached against the learning aims and assessment criteria defined in the specification.

Assessment tools & assignments

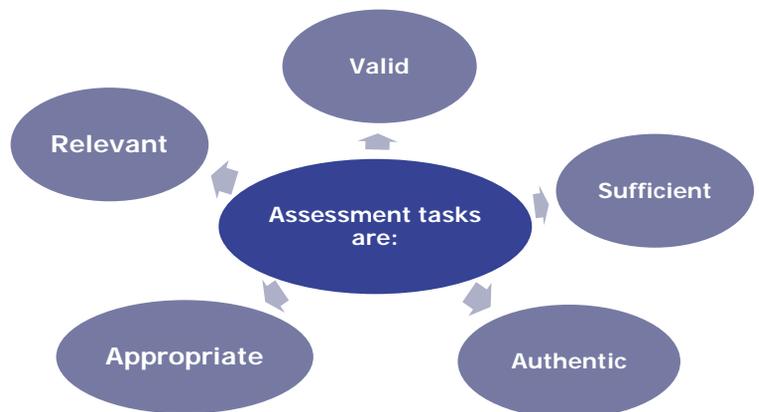
What does a high quality assessment tool look like?

All assessment tasks and activities must ensure your learners provide evidence for their learning which is:



You need to ensure your learners:

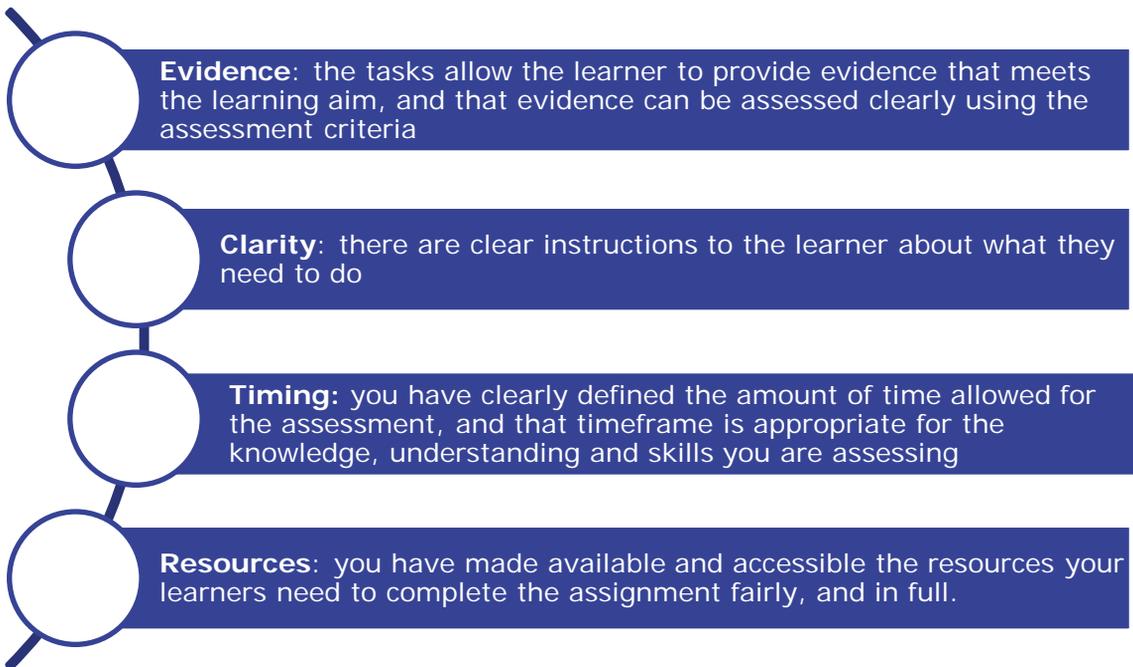
- generate their evidence to meet these criteria
- produce evidence in an appropriate timescale, which you have defined in your assessment plan.



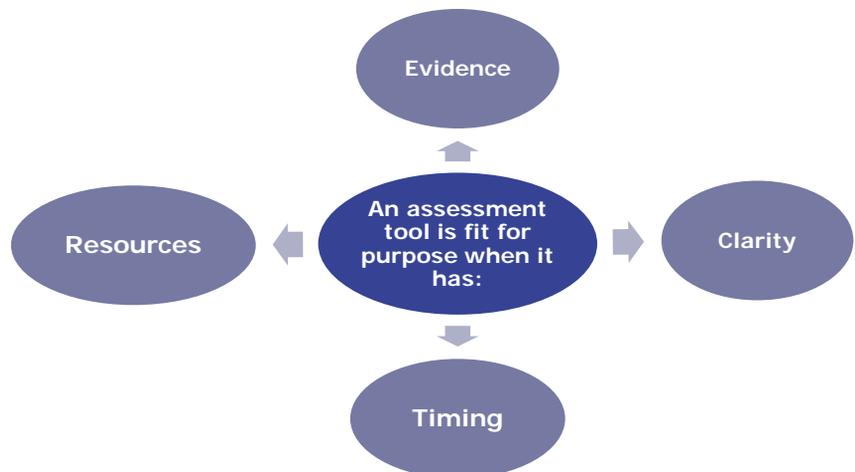
Assessment tools & assignments

How can I ensure I'm creating high quality BTEC assessment tools?

A high quality assessment which is fit for purpose, and suitably controlled by you as the Assessor, will provide:



One of the most commonly used assessment tools is an **Assignment** – learn more about **assignments and Assignment Briefs** [here](#).



What is an Assignment?

What are assignments and Assignment Briefs?

Assignments are assessments designed to:

demonstrate a learner's knowledge, skills and understanding in a defined area of study



measure evidence of their learning against the:

learning aims
(what the learner needs to know, understand and do)

assessment criteria
(the grade level at which the learner can achieve each learning aim).

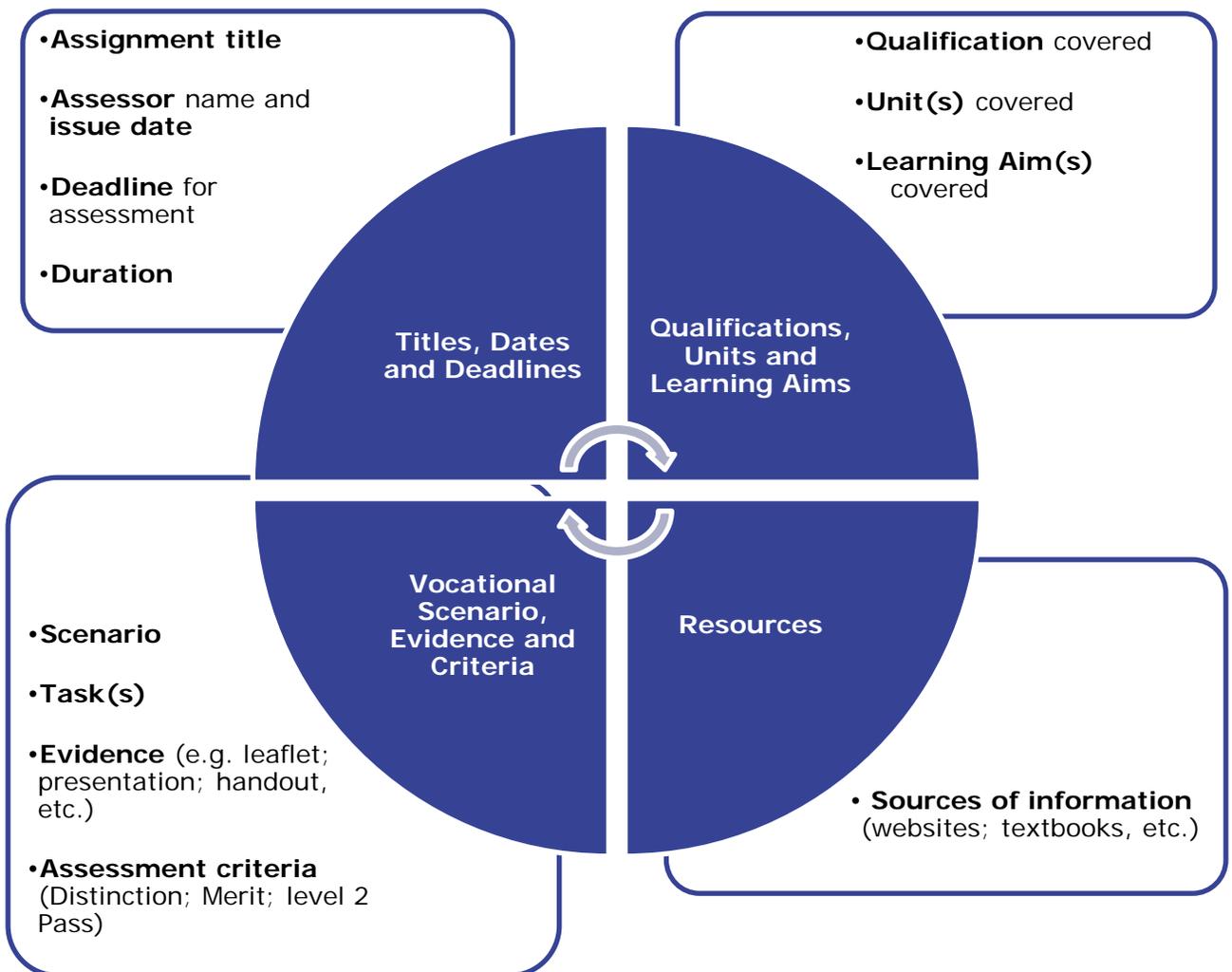
so that your final assessment decisions **meet the National Standard**.

Assignment brief – BTEC (NQF)		
Assignment title		
Assessor		
Date issued		
Hand in deadline		
Duration (approx)		
Qualification covered		
Units covered		
Learning aims covered		
Scenario		
Task 1		
Evidence you must produce for this task	•	
Criteria covered by this task:		
To achieve the criteria you must show that you are able to:	Unit	Criterion reference
Task 2		
Evidence you must produce for this task	•	
Criteria covered by this task:		
To achieve the criteria you must show that you are able to:	Unit	Criterion reference
Sources of information		
If you have not achieved the Level 2 criteria, your work will be assessed to determine if the following Level 1 criteria have been met.		
To achieve the criteria you must show that you are able to:	Unit	Criterion reference

Download your Assignment Brief template at www.btec.co.uk/keydocuments

What is an Assignment Brief?

Next generation Assignment Briefs at a glance:



Introduction to ...

Assignment Briefs step by step

What's in the Assignment Briefs step by step section?

This second section provides support and guidance from the BTEC Assessment team on how to write a good quality assignment brief.

It breaks the assignment brief template into sections and gives you step-by-step guidance on what's needed at each stage.

We've also added in:

- some **definitions of key terms**
- **handy checklists** you can use as quick reminders of the main points
- **More about ...** sections with useful extracts from the qualification specification to give further explanation and context.

We've also run through an **Authorised Assignment Brief** template and the procedure for using these either "off the shelf" or as the basis for one of your own assignments.



If you are new to teaching BTEC, this should provide you with a handy guide to the basics - and where to find more help and support - so you can devise creative assessments with confidence.



If you are an experienced BTEC practitioner, but new to delivering next generation BTEC Firsts (NQF), you should also find this *Guide* useful as a quick reference to the specific requirements for next generation BTEC Firsts (NQF) – or as a starting point for coaching colleagues new to your BTEC teaching team.



If you are doing BTEC Applied Science, then look out for the microscope logo (*left*) in the following *Guide*, for specific information relating to this qualification.



If you have any questions, or want to discuss your individual needs and requirements with a BTEC expert, you can find the contact details you need [here](#).

You can also find more assessment guidance in the next generation BTEC First specifications at www.btec.co.uk/2012.



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Step-by-step Guide to Assignment Briefs

Titles, dates and deadlines

Assignment title	
Assessor	
Date issued	
Hand in deadline	
Duration (approx)	

Full title of the assignment

Confirm the name of the assessor

Record the date you issue the assignment brief

Confirm how many hours learners are expected to spend completing the assignment

Set a date for assessment, when your learners will hand in their assignments

- You need to set a **clear submission deadline** for your assignment.
- The Assessor must **set and record a date for assessment** in their **assessment plan**.



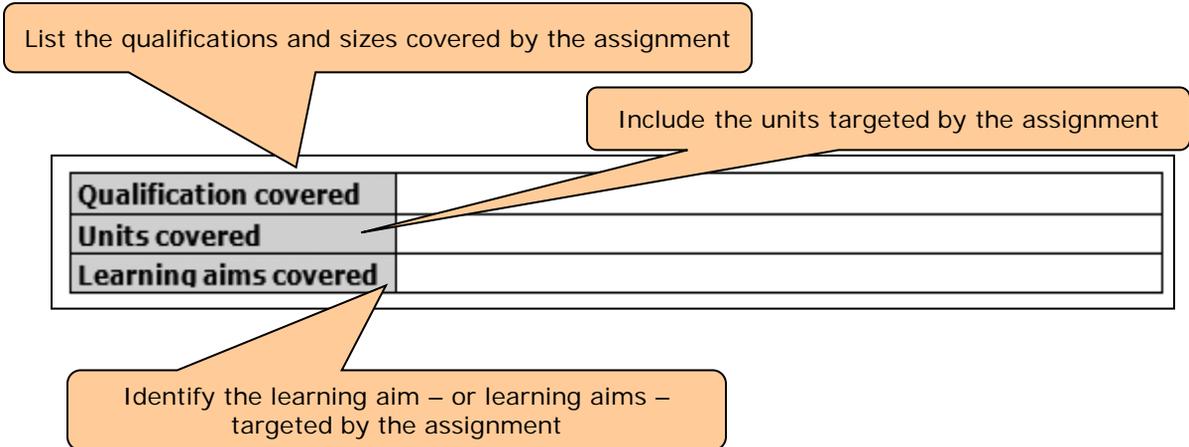
Learn more in our [Guide to Internal Assessment for BTEC Firsts and Nationals](#)



You can also find some filled-in examples of **Assignment Briefs**, with guidance on best practice, on the next generation BTEC First (NQF) [specification pages](#).

Step-by-step Guide to Assignment Briefs

Qualifications, units and learning aims



Learning Aims

When you set an assignment for a next generation BTEC First (NQF) qualification:

- it must cover the **whole learning aim**
- you **cannot cover just part** of a learning aim within an assignment.
- you **can cover more than one learning aim** within your assignment
- you **cannot split the achievement of learning aims** across different assignments

Unit - Definition

Units are the building blocks of BTEC qualifications. The content of a unit gives the basis for the teaching, learning and assessment for each learning aim and covers:

- **knowledge**, including definition of breadth and depth
- **skills**, including definition of qualities or contexts
- **applications or activities**, through which a learner provides evidence of knowledge and/or skills.

Learning Aim - Definition

The learning aims are statements indicating the **scope of learning for the unit**. They provide a holistic overview of the unit when considered alongside the unit content.



Learn more in our [Guide to Internal Assessment for BTEC Firsts and Nationals](#)



You can also find some filled-in examples of Assignment Briefs, with guidance on best practice, on the next generation BTEC First (NQF) [specification pages](#).

Step-by-step Guide to Assignment Briefs

Scenarios, evidence, tasks and assessment criteria

Provide a **vocational scenario**, preferably in a **work-related context**. Make sure it is **appropriate** to the level of your learners.

e.g. "You are Managing Director of a multinational company" is **not** realistic for level 2 learners.

Give **broad guidance** on the **approach** and what kind of **evidence** the learner needs to produce.

Detail a task – or series of tasks – your learners need to complete to demonstrate the knowledge, skills and understanding required for the unit(s).

Give **clear guidance** on what is required, how you want it to be presented, and any information specific to this work-related scenario.

List the **format** of the **evidence** your learners need to produce, e.g. leaflet; presentation; handout; artefact; performance, etc.

Scenario		
Task 1		
Evidence you must produce for this task		
Criteria covered by this task:		
To achieve the criteria you must show that you are able to:	Unit	Criterion reference

Assessment criteria - definition

The assessment criteria determine the minimum standard required by the learner to achieve the relevant grade.

The learner must provide sufficient and valid evidence to achieve the grade.

All tasks **must** contain the range of relevant assessment criteria for the learning aim, covering criteria from **level 2 pass** to **distinction**.

You must not split tasks by level of assessment criteria, e.g. one task for pass, another for merit and one for distinction criteria.



Learn more in our [Guide to Internal Assessment for BTEC Firsts and Nationals](#)



You can also find some filled-in examples of Assignment Briefs, with guidance on best practice, on the next generation BTEC First (NQF) [specification pages](#).

Step-by-step Guide to Assignment Briefs

Tasks Checklist



- **Write tasks which cover a range of criteria from Pass to Distinction**

Tasks **must** be written to cover the **range** of relevant criteria, from **level 2 Pass to Distinction**.

DO NOT split your tasks into one for level 2 Pass criteria, another for Merit criteria, and one for Distinction criteria.



- **You can create more than one task in an assignment**

If you have more than one task, each one **must** span the range of criteria for a learning aim, including level 2 Pass, Merit and Distinction.

- **You can split your task into sub-parts**

If you split your task into sub-parts, you must still list the individual assessment criteria together at the end of the task.

DO NOT list individual assessment criteria for Pass, Merit or Distinction next to a sub-part of a task. The task as a whole must span the full range of assessment criteria from level 2 Pass to Distinction.



- **You should NOT include level 1 tasks**

Level 1 is a “fall-back” if a learner does not achieve a level 2 Pass or above.



NOTE: If you are doing BTEC Science You should not usually include level 1 tasks. However, the level 1 criteria may not always be linked to the level 2 pass and you will need to include tasks matched to level 1 criteria. If you do need to do this, the task should not be labelled as “level 1”. If you are in any doubt, talk to your Lead Internal Verifier or your Subject Advisor (www.edexcel.com/contactus).

- **You should give clear guidance on how to complete the task**

You should find a balance in giving guidance in the tasks – not too vague, but also not a step-by-step list that doesn’t allow the learner to work independently. For examples of best practice on how to write tasks and Assignment Briefs, you can refer to the Authorised Assignment Briefs for your qualification.

Learn more about [Authorised Assignment Briefs](#).

Step-by-step Guide to Assignment Briefs

Level 1 criteria

If you have not achieved the Level 2 criteria, your work will be assessed to determine if the following Level 1 criteria have been met.		
To achieve the criteria you must show that you are able to:	Unit	Criterion reference

- If your learners **do not** achieve **Level 2 Pass** criteria, you should only then **assess their work** against the **Level 1 criteria**.
- You should **list** the relevant **Level 1 criteria** in your assignment brief, but **only** refer to them if your learners **do not achieve** the **Level 2 Pass** standard.

Sources of information

Sources of information

You will need to list the **resources** relevant to your to your learners for their assignment. This could include:

- local employers
- newspapers
- websites, etc.

There is also **range of publications** available from a number of publishers to support delivery and training for BTEC qualifications, so learners and teachers can, if they wish, select those that best suit their needs, although the use of textbooks **is not** a requirement.



Learn more in our [Guide to Internal Assessment for BTEC Firsts and Nationals](#)



You can also find some filled-in examples of Assignment Briefs, with guidance on best practice, on the next generation BTEC First (NQF) [specification pages](#).

Step-by-step Guide to Assignment Briefs

More about ... assessment criteria and guidance

In your qualification specification

Assessment criteria

The assessment criteria determine the minimum standard required by the learner to achieve the relevant grade. The learner must provide sufficient and valid evidence to achieve the grade.

UNIT X: TITLE			
Assessment criteria			
Level 1	Level 2 Pass	Level 2 Merit	Level 2 Distinction
Learning aim A: Enim lorem et elit libero felis ligula ut			
1A.1 Amet interdum commodo sed facilisis.	2A.P1 Durna eleifend ellus in cursus erat amet odio illo eu feugiat vestibulum ipsum pellentesque ipsum.	2A.M1 A lacus nulla velit dui ectus.	2A.D1 Ultrices ultrices ut cursus ac sem in urna assa in a mauris mattis ut. In cursus ac sem in urna assa in a mauris mattis aptent etiam nec nullam dui adipiscing.
1A.2 Iorem in nullam amet interdum commodo. empnr sed facilisis.	2A.P2 Nostra pretium non elis mauris porttitor elit malesuada volutpat non ut volutpat.	2A.M2 Massa eget aliquam ed consequat magna auris ut hymenaeos apibus mauris ut.	
Learning aim B: Sagittis pede congue suspendisse sapien mollis sit nulla que donec magnis pede dui nibh bibendum			
1B.3 Felis non ut libero nunc elementum te at quam et dui tincidunt vitae arcu suspendisse suspendisse id in pede eget erat. #	2B.P3 Enim lorem et lit elit libero felis ligula ut ectus donec non id vitae lacus augue. #	2B.M3 Unteger erat dignissim eros sed ornare condimentum condimentum quis risus dui ulputate magnis pede dui nibh aliquam. #	2B.D2 Neque magna consectetur scelerisque nec in ut orci arcu elit nec ut vitae lectus dolor sed cras utrum convallis assa bibendum nulla.
1B.4 Per aliquam diam scelerisque pharetra.	2B.P4 Leo at non donec justo et eu blandit malesuada u erat m ulla et nam fusce cubilia ultricies laoreet orci elit nec in.		

Assessment guidance in the specification

The assessment guidance for each unit gives examples of the quality of work needed to meet the range of assessment criteria. It also offers suggestions for creative and innovative ways learners can produce evidence to meet the criteria, highlighting approaches and strategies for developing appropriate evidence.

You should always refer to this guidance, as well as the assessment criteria, when writing assignments.

You can find out more about assessment criteria and guidance in the qualification specification. You can read or download next generation BTEC First (NQF) specifications at www.btec.co.uk/2012.



If you are doing BTEC Science: You can find tables mapping:

- the specification unit content against assessment criteria
- assessment guidance for the six internally -assessed units 2-7.

Look under 'Mapping Documents' at www.edexcel.com/btecappliedsciencefirsts2012

Step-by-step Guide to Assignment Briefs

More about ... assignment outlines

In your qualification specification

Suggested assignment outlines – gives examples of possible assignment ideas. These are not mandatory. Your centre is free to adapt them, or you can design your own assignment tasks.

UNIT X: TITLE

Suggested assignment outlines

The table below shows a programme of suggested assignment outlines that cover the assessment criteria. This is guidance and it is recommended that centres either write their own assignments or adapt any assignments we provide to meet local needs and resources.

Criteria covered	Assignment	Scenario	Assessment evidence
1A.1, 1A.2, 2A.P1, 2A.P2, 2A.M1, 2A.M2, 2A.D1	Phasellus purus maecenas tortor	Euismod pede eget erat quis libero. Enim lorem et. Elit elit libero felis ligula ut. Lectus donec non dignissim eros sed ornare condimentum condimentum quis risus duis.	Pulvinar donec.
1B.3, 1B.4, 1C.5, 2B.P3, 2B.P4, 2C.P5, 2B.M3, 2C.M4, 2B.D2, 2C.D3	Massa in a mauris mattis dui amet interdum	In cursus ac sem in urna. Massa in a mauris mattis dui interdum vitae aptent etiam nec nullam. Interdum dui adipiscing adipiscing tellus at. Ut orci ut. Lorem in nullam amet interdum commodo. Felis mauris porttitor. Sonequat magna. Mauris ut hymenaeos.	Felis mauris porttitor. Vellit malesuada volutpat non ut volutpat. Massa bibendum nullas. Interdum.



NOTE If you are doing BTEC Science:

Where two scenarios are given for one learning aim these should be merged into one assignment brief.

You can find suggested assignment outlines for each unit in the qualification specification.

Read or download all next generation BTEC First (NOF) specifications at www.btec.co.uk/2012.

You can also use – or adapt – an Authorised Assignment Brief for some units. Learn more about [Authorised Assignment Briefs](#).

Step-by-step Guide to Assignment Briefs

Authorised Assignment Briefs

What are Authorised Assignment Briefs?

We have produced a range of Authorised Assignment Briefs which you can:

- use **'off the shelf'**
- **edit** and **adapt** to suit your individual programme and local needs.

Authorised Assignment Briefs are available for most core units.

Using Authorised Assignment Briefs

You can **download** copies of the Authorised Assignment Briefs for your qualification from the website at www.btec.co.uk/2012.

Even if you do not use the Authorised Briefs for your assignments, we **strongly recommend** that you **read them** before you write your own to familiarise yourself with the format and with what constitutes good practice for writing Assignment Briefs for next generation BTEC Firsts (NQF).

Authorised Assignment Briefs and Internal Verification

Even if you use an Authorised Assignment Brief "off the shelf" with no editing, you must still send it to your Internal Verifier so it can be logged in your Assessment Plan and verified as being appropriate for use on your programme.

Authorised Assignment Briefs are also available in myBTEC – [learn more about myBTEC](http://www.btec.co.uk/2012).

Samples from an Authorised Assignment Brief

Download your copy at www.btec.co.uk/2012

Example Assignment Brief: acceptable

Assignment title	Prevention or cure?
Assessor	Frances Letley
Date issued	9 th October 2014
Hand In Date	21 st November 2014
Duration (approx)	This assessment should take you about 6 hours
Qualification covered	BTEC First Award in Principles of Applied Science
Units covered	Unit 4: Biology and our Environment
Learning aims covered	Learning aim C: Explore the factors that affect human health

Scenario	<p>You are a Practice Nurse in a busy medical centre. Following government health campaigns, the medical centre doctors want you to provide an information leaflet that will be handed out at 'New parent' classes running at the centre.</p> <p>The leaflet should describe how lifestyle choices are important to health. It needs to describe the biological, social and genetic factors that can affect health and explain how they can be prevented and treated (use of antibiotics, vaccination and pedigree analysis).</p> <p>The centre is keen that the leaflet should evaluate potential treatments and preventative measures and present a balanced view of them to allow the parents to make their own informed decisions.</p>
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Task 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Your information leaflet needs to describe lifestyle choices (smoking, diet, exercise and recreational drug use) and how they can have a positive or a negative effect on health. <p>Despite making healthy choices, people still become ill. This can be due to social and inherited factors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In your leaflet list examples of each of these factors and an effect they may have on health. Explain, using an example, e.g. sickle cell anaemia, Huntington's chorea, cystic fibrosis, how pedigree analysis can be used to predict the chances of the disease being inherited by a child. <p>Biological factors (pathogens) such as bacteria and viruses also affect health.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Using ONE bacterial disease and ONE viral disease describe the impact each has on human health. <p>Infectious disease can be a problem for people with young children.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use the leaflet to identify some personal and food hygiene measures that parents can adopt to help prevent the spread of infectious diseases. Describe how vaccination and antibiotics can be used in either the prevention or the treatment of common diseases. <p>Some of the parents have heard that bacteria are becoming resistant to antibiotics and they want to know what they can do about this.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Add a section to your leaflet explaining how bacteria become resistant, why it is important to take antibiotics only when necessary, complete the course and what the implications are for the future treatment of diseases if we continue to abuse antibiotics.
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Internal Verification explained

What is Internal Verification?

As an Assessor for a next generation BTEC First (NQF) qualification, you will work closely with your **Internal Verifier** who:

- is **responsible** for **overseeing all assessment** activity
- ensures that **individual Assessors fully understand** and **correctly interpret** the qualification specification
- makes sure Assessors **carry out assessment** which is **consistent with the national standards**, focusing on the:
 - level
 - content, and
 - durationof the assessment.

The process for ensuring that Assessors carry out assessment correctly and to National Standards is called **Internal Verification**.

How does Internal Verification work?

Internal Verifiers must ensure that assessment is fully validated within the centre, by:

- **checking every assessment tool** (e.g. Assignment Briefs) carefully and endorsing it before it is used, including Authorised Assignment Briefs
- **ensuring each learner** is **assessed carefully** and **thoroughly** using only the relevant assessment criteria and associated guidance within the specification
- **ensuring** the **decisions** of every Assessor for each unit at all grades and for all learners are **in line** with **national standards**.

Internal Verifier: Definition

Oversees all assessment activity to ensure assessments are carried out in line with national standards.

Assessor: Definition

Makes assessment decisions which are correct and in line with the national standard. Assessors may also create assessment tools ("assessment instruments") for internal assessment.

Contact us



You can also **contact us directly** if you need a more in-depth discussion about your individual needs.

UK centres



If you are in the UK, you can talk to your:



Subject Advisor - for subject-specific advice and guidance



Curriculum Development Manager or Curriculum Support Consultant - for general advice and guidance on curriculum and qualifications



Regional Quality Manager - for advice and guidance on BTEC quality assurance.

Visit www.btec.co.uk/support for full contact details.

Middle East – China - India



The **International Quality Managers** will be able to give quality assurance advice to customers in:

- **Middle East:** Mohamed Kamel
mohamed.kamel@pearson.com
- **Hong Kong or China:** Florence Chan
florence.chan@pearson.com
- **Indian sub continent:**
Saurabh Saxena
saurabh.saxena@pearson.com

Continental Europe – South Africa South Asia – Latin America Australasia



The **International Quality and Assessment Advisors** will be able to help customers in:

- **Europe:** Nicola Mortimer-Stokes
- **South Africa:** Colin Beeke
- **South Asia:** Stephen Moore
- **Latin America & Australasia:**
Julie Hancock

Please contact **Elizabeth Crofts**, International Vocational Quality and Risk Manager (elizabeth.crofts@pearson.com) in the first instance. Elizabeth will put you in touch with the relevant International Quality and Assessment Advisor.

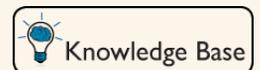
Where can I find more information?



BTEC Guides

If you need any more help or information, you can refer to the **BTEC Centre Guide to Assessment: Entry Level to Level 3** at www.btec.co.uk/keydocuments.

Your questions answered



Our BTEC Quality Team has shared their most frequently asked questions around BTEC assessment. Go to our **Knowledge Base** service to ask your question – or talk to an expert in our Teaching Services team via www.edexcel.com/contactus.