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
1. **Assessment tools and assignments**
   - Introduction to this section
   - What tools can I use to assess my learners?
   - What does a high quality assessment tool look like?
   - How can I ensure I’m creating high quality assessment tools?
   - What are assignments and Assignment Briefs?
   - Next generation Assignment Briefs at a glance

2. **Step-by-step guide to assignment briefs**
   - Introduction to this section
   - Titles, dates and deadlines
   - Qualifications, units and learning aims
   - Scenarios, evidence, tasks and assessment criteria
   - Tasks checklist
   - Level 1 criteria and sources of information
   - More about... assessment criteria and guidance
   - More about... assignment outlines
   - Authorised Assignment Briefs
   - Internal verification explained
   - Your BTEC support team
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.
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.
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:

- **Valid**: the evidence is robust and genuinely meets the learning aim
- **Sufficient**: there is enough evidence to demonstrate the knowledge, skills and understanding required
- **Authentic**: the evidence the learners produce is genuinely their own
- **Appropriate**: it is in line with the level the learner is studying and is evidence which is relevant to a learner at that level
- **Relevant**: it is in line with the topic, subject area and content the learner is studying and is set in a vocational, work-related context.

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.

Learn more in the specification: www.btec.co.uk/2012
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:

- **Evidence**: the tasks allow the learner to provide evidence that meets the learning aim, and that evidence can be assessed clearly using the assessment criteria.

- **Clarity**: there are clear instructions to the learner about what they need to do.

- **Timing**: you have clearly defined the amount of time allowed for the assessment, and that timeframe is appropriate for the knowledge, understanding and skills you are assessing.

- **Resources**: you have made available and accessible the resources your learners need to complete the assignment fairly, and in full.

One of the most commonly used assessment tools is an **Assignment** – learn more about assignments and Assignment Briefs [here](https://www.btec.co.uk/2012).

Learn more in the specification: [www.btec.co.uk/2012](https://www.btec.co.uk/2012)
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**.

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### Assignment brief – BTEC (NQF)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment title</th>
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<tr>
<td>Assessor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date issued</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Hand in deadline</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Duration (approx)</td>
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<th>Qualification covered</th>
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<tr>
<td>Units covered</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning aims covered</td>
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**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:

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<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Criterion reference</th>
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**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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Criterion reference</th>
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**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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Criterion reference</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

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**Download your Assignment Brief template at** [www.btec.co.uk/keydocuments](http://www.btec.co.uk/keydocuments)

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Learn more in the specification: [www.btec.co.uk/2012](http://www.btec.co.uk/2012)
What is an Assignment Brief?

Next generation Assignment Briefs at a glance:

- Assignment title
- Assessor name and issue date
- Deadline for assessment
- Duration

- Qualification covered
- Unit(s) covered
- Learning Aim(s) covered

Titles, Dates and Deadlines

Qualifications, Units and Learning Aims

Vocational Scenario, Evidence and Criteria

Resources

- Scenario
- Task(s)
- Evidence (e.g. leaflet; presentation; handout, etc.)
- Assessment criteria (Distinction; Merit; level 2 Pass)

Sources of information (websites; textbooks, etc.)

Learn more in the specification: www.btec.co.uk/2012
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.

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.
### Titles, dates and deadlines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment title</th>
<th>Confirm the name of the assessor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assessor</td>
<td>Record the date you issue the assignment brief</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date issued</td>
<td>Confirm how many hours learners are expected to spend completing the assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hand in deadline</td>
<td>Set a date for assessment, when your learners will hand in their assignments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration (approx)</td>
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</table>

- 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.

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Learn more in our [Guide to Internal Assessment for BTEC Firsts and Nationals](https://www.btec.co.uk/2012). 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.
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.
**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.

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<th>Scenario</th>
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<tr>
<th>Task 1</th>
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**Evidence you must produce for this task**

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<th>Criteria covered by this task:</th>
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<tr>
<th>To achieve the criteria you must show that you are able to:</th>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Criterion reference</th>
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**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**.
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.
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

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.
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
More about … assignment outlines

In your qualification specification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria covered</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Scenario</th>
<th>Assessment evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1A.1, 1A.2, 1B.1, 1B.2, 2A.M1, 2A.H1, 2A.M2, 2A.D1</td>
<td>Prades et al.</td>
<td>Malaria in a mouse matrix of the endosome</td>
<td>Pulverar donec.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1B.3, 1B.4, 1C.5, 2B.P1, 2B.P4, 2C.H1, 2C.H2, 2C.M1, 2B.D2, 2C.D3</td>
<td>Malaria in a mouse matrix of the endosome</td>
<td>Be summa ac sem in ums. Malaria in a mouse matrix of the endosome ut</td>
<td>Pulverar donec.</td>
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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 (NQF) 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.
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](http://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).
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
  - duration
  of 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.

Learn more in the specification: www.btec.co.uk/2012
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](http://www.btec.co.uk/support) for full contact details.

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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](mailto:elizabeth.crofts@pearson.com)) in the first instance. Elizabeth will put you in touch with the relevant International Quality and Assessment Advisor.

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**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](mailto:mohamed.kamel@pearson.com)

- **Hong Kong or China**: Florence Chan
  [florenc.chan@pearson.com](mailto:florenc.chan@pearson.com)

- **Indian sub continent**: Saurabh Saxena
  [saurabh.saxena@pearson.com](mailto:saurabh.saxena@pearson.com)

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**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](http://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](http://www.edexcel.com/contactus).