Pearson
BTEC

Delivering BTEC
during Coronavirus (COVID-19)

September 2020 to August 2021

Applied Science and Forensic Science

Guidance for BTEC Nationals, Firsts and QCF Level 1

Teaching and learning guidance

Last updated 22 January 2021

Introduction

It is expected that COVID-19 will continue to impact upon teaching, learning and assessment through the academic year, impacting those learners who are part-way through their qualifications and those who are commencing this academic year. We are committed to ensuring that learners continue to benefit from the breadth of content of BTEC qualifications through adaptations in teaching and learning.

This document is intended to provide you with guidance for how you **might adapt delivery** for the sector's BTEC qualifications in the academic year of 2020-2021.

We continue to work with our regulators and relevant sector bodies on any possible adaptations or accommodations in line with the OFQUAL and DfE consultations.

Key aspects such as social distancing, safety, lost teaching time, subject content and practical activities have been considered from a sector perspective for your reference. However, it should be noted that all of the guidance provided here must only be followed within the context of the guidance issued by your own centre, relevant governing and industry bodies, local and national government.

For further advice and guidance, please refer to the Teaching, Learning and Assessment pages on Pearson's website or contact us via the Customer Support portal.

We look forward to continuing to support you and your learners throughout this challenging time and wish you well for the coming year.

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Last updated 22 January 2021

Overview: Applied Science

Adaptations to Assessments in 2021

Please refer to the assessment section on the **2020/2021 Teaching and Assessment page**, for adaptations to assessments and qualifications for the 2021 Academic Year. Here you will find:

- External Assessment Adaptations
- Tech Award Assessment Evidence Adaptations
- Work Experience and Employer Engagement
- Exam timetables
- FAQs

Please note that not all qualifications will be adapted, and it is important that you refer to the relevant adaptation guidance for 2021.

Some qualifications will not be adapted for one of the following reasons:

- An adaptation would impact the reliability and validity of the qualification
- The qualification is a licence to practice or primary purpose is progression to the workplace

Please note all adaptations apply to assessments completed by 31 July 2021.

Social Distance

The delivery and assessment of these programmes does occasionally require group work or close proximity between learners, especially when learners work in pairs/small groups for laboratory work. A small number of assessments do require close proximity (e.g. measuring cardiorespiratory parameters). Centres will need to have measures in place to enable these to be carried out safely. Where this is not possible, the use of simulations would be acceptable during the present COVID-19 situation. However, where assessment criteria require learners to undertake practical work (e.g. use of assessment command verb 'demonstrate' or 'carry out') a simulation is not acceptable.

Theory can be delivered by distance/blended learning methods and in some contexts (e.g. the Open University) this is the normal way of working.

Safety

Care is needed if an attempt is made to carry out practical work at home. This will not usually be possible. Laboratory work will probably require fewer learners in the lab, which may make the situation safer. However, lone working should not be attempted.

Lost time teaching

Centres must focus on ensuring that learners have an adequate foundation for the units that will be delivered in 2020-21. Learners will probably have missed some teaching during early to mid 2020 and tutors will need to in-fill as they deliver the programmes during 2020-21. This will require careful planning, particularly on programmes in which the learners were in other settings during 2019-20 and are likely to have had varied experiences (e.g. those who start BTEC level 3 in FE or sixth form colleges in September 2020).

Flexibility of delivery and assessment

There is considerable latitude for the use of diverse delivery models and assessment models. Most assessments can employ written reports, presentations, posters, video or audio recordings and other methods and these can be used in remote delivery. Visits to industries are valuable but not mandatory and work experience is not required in these programmes.

What is important to retain the validity of the sector's qualifications?

Laboratory work is fundamental to BTECs in Science. This is essential for developing the proficiency in laboratory skills which is required in these vocational qualifications. It is also valuable for demonstrating and illustrating theoretical concepts.

As contact time between staff and learners may be limited, centres should prioritise contact time for practical work, as theory can be delivered remotely. Centres may decide to deliver optional units which do not require practical work in assessment.

Are there other methodologies that can be used to support the purpose of the qualification?

As long as practical work is employed where required, a wide range of assessment methods can be used in these programmes. However, time-constrained assessments are likely to be a poor substitute for other methods as they present inappropriate barriers to the demonstration of required learning outcomes.

Teaching and learning guidance: Applied Science

Unit Title	Remote delivery (✔ X)	Socially distanced (✔ X)	Comments
BTEC Firsts (2012) - Applied Science			
1 Principles of Science	✔	✔	Assessed by written exam, no practical in assessment. Use of practical in delivery is advised, to illustrate concepts, but could be replaced by video and simulation.
BTEC Level 1/Level 2 First Award in Principles of Applied Science		**Centres do not need to assess a maximum of one learning aim per internally assessed unit (Units 2, 3 and 4) up to three learning aims in total.** **The learning aim(s) not assessed must be taught.**	
2 Chemistry and our Earth	✔	✔	Assessment criteria do not require practical. Under normal circumstances practical work should be used in delivery to illustrate concepts and develop bench skills. However, where this is impossible, in the short term video and simulations could be used.
3 Energy and our Universe	✔	✔	A largely theoretical unit although LA B (electricity) requires the learners to build simple electrical circuits and measure current and potential difference.
4 Biology and our Environment	✔	✔	This unit is often delivered with practical work, which is best practice. For example, the dichotomous keys should ideally be developed to identify organisms that they have collected (e.g. grasses, leaves, insects). However, practical work is not required in the delivery or assessment of this unit.

BTEC Level 1/ Level 2 First Award in Application of Science		**Centres do not need to assess a maximum of one learning aim per internally assessed unit (Units 5, 6 and 7), up to three learning aims in total.** **The learning aim(s) not assessed must be taught.**	
5 Applications of Chemical Substances	X	✔	This unit does require practical work. In LA A the learners must measure temperature changes associated with exothermic and endothermic reactions, In LA B they must identify an alkene, an alkene and a carboxylic acid. LAs A and B require learners to carry out the investigations and tutor demonstration would not meet these criteria.
6 Applications of Physical Science	X	✔	All learning aims require practical work. LAs A (motion) and B (forces) could be achieved at home or in a classroom whereas LAs C (optics) and D (electricity) require practical work in the laboratory.
7 Health Applications of Life Science	✔	✔	This unit is theoretical and practical work is not needed in delivery or assessment.
8 Scientific Skills	✔	✔	This unit is externally assessed using a written examination. There is no direct practical in the assessment however learners should have a good understanding of the practicals in Unit 5 and 6 as exam questions could be based on those practicals. Delivery is likely to be more effective if it takes place in the laboratory whilst planning and carrying out practical investigations. Without this it may be too abstract for the learners.

Applied Science and Forensic Science

RQF Nationals (2016) - Applied Science			
1 Principles and Applications of Science I	✔	✔	Assessed by exam. No practical in assessment. Normally would use practical during teaching but this could be replaced with video demo.
2 Practical Scientific Procedures and Techniques	X	✔	This is a practical unit and there is no option but to use practical in assessment. Unit adaptations are as follows: LA A – only need to carry out a titration or colorimetry. LA B – only need one cooling curve, but must include change of state (liquid to solid). LA C – only need to carry out Paper or Thin Layer Chromatography to identify unknown components in a mixture and measure Rf. LA D is a reflective account based on the practical work for adapted LA's A, B and C. Theoretical aspects can be delivered online, with use of video and simulations, especially to introduce techniques.
3 Science Investigation Skills	X	✔	External assessment usually requires use of practical work, **for 2021 please refer to the external assessment guidance**. New Sample Assessment Material will be provided to support preparing your learners for the assessment. Some aspects can be covered theoretically and so distance delivery will be OK. E.g. formulating hypothesis, planning, selecting equipment, presenting and analysing results, drawing conclusions and evaluating/suggesting improvements and extensions.
4 Laboratory Techniques and their Application	X	✔	LA A is theoretical and can be delivered by distance learning. Unit adaptations are as follows: LA B & C – only need to prepare and test the purity of a liquid or solid. LA D is theoretical and suited to distance delivery.
5 Principles and Applications of Science II	✔	✔	As unit 1, assessed by exam. No practical is assessment but would be useful in delivery. Could replace with video and simulations.

6 Investigative Project	✔	✔	Much of this unit is theoretical e.g. literature review, hypothesis and planning, H&S, analysing and presenting results) which could be delivered remotely. However LA C requires practical. It may be possible to carry out an investigation in an external environment e.g. ecological study, plant growth, however, the investigation must measure an outcome, not just demonstrate a phenomenon, as they need to investigate the effect of something on something.
7 Contemporary Issues in Science	✔	✔	External assessment and the unit is entirely theoretical
8 Physiology of Human Body Systems	X	✔	Practical investigation is not required for assessment except for C.P6. Practical can be useful in delivery but could substitute video and simulation.
9 Human Regulation and Reproduction	✔	✔	Assessment does not require practical. Practicals can be useful in delivery but could substitute video and simulation.
10 Biological Molecules and Metabolic Pathways	X	✔	The unit has practical in assessment although LA A is theoretical. LA B requires an investigation of factors affecting respiration in humans. This can be achieved by rate of oxygen consumption but cannot be carried out at home. It could be possible to use ventilation rate as proxy for oxygen consumption and this could be done at remotely. LA C requires investigation of factors affecting photosynthesis which does require practical and lab equipment.
11 Genetics and Genetic Engineering	X	✔	This unit requires practical work although LA A is theoretical. LA B involves microscopy and LA C investigates monohybrid and dihybrid crosses lab work. LA D requires three practicals (DNA extraction, PCR and gel electrophoresis) and will require lab work.
12 Diseases and Infection	✔	✔	Although practical work is very useful in the delivery and assessment of this unit, it is not a requirement. Could use video and simulation. Otherwise this is a theory unit.

13 Applications of Inorganic Chemistry	X	✔	This unit requires lab work in the assessment and therefore also in the delivery. Could use some simulation, for example buffers in LA A, but much of the assessment requires practical.
14 Applications of Organic Chemistry	X	✔	The unit is mostly theoretical. Simulations and video can be used in delivery. LA D requires practical work. The unit content lists a large number of reactions but not all of these need to be carried out. Could limit it to one each of non-carbonyl compounds, carbonyl compounds and aromatic compounds. Learners do need to demonstrate safe working.
15 Electrical Circuits and their Applications	X	✔	It may be possible to use video/simulation in teaching but learners will need practice in building circuits and measuring values before these are assessed for B.P2 and D.M5. Do need to follow assessment guidance here but do not need to work with more than three circuits, as long as these include parallel and series elements.
16 Astronomy and Space Science	✔	✔	A largely theoretical unit but use of video and simulation is very valuable. The assessment guidance specifies the use of practical in Learning Aim B (optics) and this LA does require observations and measurements from the night sky. This would not normally be done at a school/college. The other practicals specified in the Guidance (light boxes, mirrors, lenses) are not required by the criteria and at this time could be replaced by simulations.
17 Microbiology and Microbiological Techniques	X	✔	This unit requires a large amount of practical in the assessment. Learners should be able to practice techniques before being assessed in them.
18 Industrial Chemical Reactions	X	✔	This unit is largely theoretical although centre may use practical work to demonstrate some of the concepts. This can be replaced by video and simulation. However practical is required for LA A (measurement of enthalpy changes).
19 Practical Chemical Analysis	X	✔	This unit require a significant amount of practical work. However, the learners do not need to use GC or HPLC for LA C, they can interpret given chromatograms.
20 Biomedical Science	X	✔	This unit is largely theoretical but two criteria (A.P3 and C.P8) require practical work for which laboratory work is needed.
21 Medical Physics Applications	✔	✔	This is a theoretical unit and practical is not required. The delivery could be improved by the use of video and simulations as learners often have difficulty with the concepts explored.

QCF Level 3 (2010) - Applied Science			
1 Fundamentals of Science	X	✔	Requires practical including making up standard solutions, titration, light microscopy, calorific value of fuels and energy interconversions. These must all be carried out.
2 Working in the Science Industry	✔	✔	This unit could be delivered without any additional practical work. Criterion P5 does require laboratory work in order to demonstrate safe working but this can be obtained from practical work carried out for other units, including work carried out before the lockdown.
3 Scientific Investigation	X	✔	This unit requires the use of practical work in delivery and assessment. The learners are required to demonstrate the ability to carry out practical work and attaining the required standard is likely to require some practice. It is essential though, for this unit, that the learners plan and carry out their own practical investigation.
4 Scientific Practical Techniques	X	✔	Laboratory practical is a fundamental feature of this unit including various quantitative, qualitative and separative techniques. Quantitative could be limited to titration.
6 Using Mathematical Tools for Science	X	✔	This unit requires the learners to collect and record scientific data. However, this should be based on practical work for one of the other units.
7 Mathematical Calculations of Science	✔	✔	This unit is theoretical and can be delivered by distance learning. Care is needed to use suitable contexts and to emphasise the relevance of the mathematical techniques to science
8 Using Statistics for Science	✔	✔	This unit is also theoretical. It should use data collected by the learners from their own investigations and, as there will be practical work in other units, this should be the approach used. Alternatively, data collected by the learners before lockdown or given data could be used in the assessment.
11 Physiology of Human Body Systems	X	X	This subject could be taught remotely with videos and simulations used to provide illustration and examples. However practical work is needed for P3, P4 and P5.
12 Physiology of Human Regulation and Reproduction	✔	✔	This unit does not require practical in either the delivery or assessment. However, practical demonstrations are valuable in delivery (e.g. of homeostasis) but video or simulations could substitute at the present time.
13 Biochemistry and Biochemical Techniques	X	✔	Most of this unit is theoretical but there are two important practical components. These are the use of separative techniques (for P2) and the investigation of factors affecting enzyme action (for P5).

14 Energy Changes Sources and Applications	X	✔	This unit has a limited requirement for practical work although it is certainly valuable in delivery to enable learners to understand the concepts. Only P2 requires practical in assessment.
15 Microbiological Techniques	X	✔	Practical work is needed in this unit. The assessment of criteria P1, P3 and P4 specify the use of practical. P3 and P4 can be assessed in one practical assignment.
16 Chemistry for Biology Technicians	X	✔	This unit requires practical work in the assessment and should have practical work in the teaching (delivery). If necessary, video or simulation could be used in the teaching. Each learner must carry out the required practical work for P1, P2, P3, P5.
17 Electrical Circuits and their Applications	X	✔	Learners must assemble electrical circuits and take measurements from those circuits. Otherwise the unit can be delivered and assessed remotely. Each learner must use parallel and series circuit and must use circuits containing parallel and series elements.
18 Genetics and Genetic Engineering	X	✔	Much of this unit can be delivered remotely, making use of video and simulation. However practical is required in the assessment (P3, P6).
RQF Level 3 (2018) - Applied Human Biology			
1 Principles of Applied Human Biology	✔	✔	This unit is externally assessed (written exam). Practical is not used in the assessment. It would be useful to use practical word in the teaching (e.g. microscopy using prepared slides of mammalian tissues, and dividing cells; investigations of cardiorespiratory parameters, measurements of calorific value of foods and of nutritional content) but these are not mandatory. Videos or simulations could be used to complement traditional methods for the delivery of theory.
2 Practical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases	X	✔	Although the theoretical aspects of this subject can be delivered though distance learning, there is a significant component that requires laboratory work. This particularly relates to Learning Aim C (identification of microorganisms and use of aseptic technique to cultivate microbes) and Learning Aim D (effects of antimicrobials on growth of microorganisms). It should be possible to combine the practical work for Learning Aims C and D but meeting the criteria does require cultivation of microorganisms, Gram stain, and investigate the effects of antimicrobials. They also need to enumerate microorganisms.

3 Human Biology and Health Issues	✔	✔	This is an externally assessed unit. The assessment does not require the use of practical. It does build on knowledge and understanding from other units, including Unit 2 which does require practical work. The learners also need to be able to analyse and evaluate scientific data and the use of practical can help in the development of these skill, but it is not essential. Practical work is not essential for this unit.
4 Functional Physiology	X	✔	Most of this unit can be delivered remotely. However, criterion A.P2 requires the use of microscopy to examine muscle tissue, including producing drawings.
5 Diseases, Disorders, Treatments and Therapies	✔	✔	The use of practical work in this unit is not required and it could be delivered entirely by distance learning. However, the use of video, animations and simulations would be of value in illustrating the concepts.
6 Genetics and Genetic Engineering	X	✔	This unit requires practical work although LA A is theoretical. LA B involves microscopy and LA C investigates monohybrid and dihybrid crosses lab work. LA D requires three practicals (DNA extraction, PCR and gel electrophoresis) and will require lab work.
7 Biomedical Science	**X**	✔	This unit is largely theoretical but two criteria require practical for which laboratory work is needed. These are A.P3 and C.P6.
8 Human Reproduction and Fertility	✔	✔	This unit has no requirement for practical work in delivery or assessment. Many centres will use anatomical models for this unit but this is not absolutely necessary, images or videos could be a good alternative.

Applied Science and Forensic Science

Unit Guidance	Remote delivery (✔ X)	Socially distanced (✔ X)	Comments
BTEC QCF L1 – Applied Science			
Unit 1: Starting Work in the Science Sector	✔	✔	Assessed by coursework, no practical in assessment. Learners would benefit from industrial visits, but these could be facilitated by remote guest speaker, video conferencing or simulation.
Unit 2: Using Equipment to Make Scientific Observations and Measurements	Partially	✔	This is a practical unit and there is no option but to use practical in assessment. Learners could undertake biology outdoor field trip investigations if social distancing in a laboratory was problematic.
Unit 3: Skills and Techniques for Chemistry Investigations	Partially	✔	Three of the four learning aims are theoretical and could be delivered by remote learning. The 4th learning aim requires practical work and a laboratory in assessment.
Unit 4: The Study of Living Systems	✔	✔	This unit is theoretical and can be delivered by distance learning.
Unit 5: Physics and Our Universe	Partially	✔	6 of the 7 assessment criteria are theoretical and could be delivered by remote learning. One assessment criterion requires practical work although a laboratory is not essential.

Unit 6: Growing Plants for Commercial Use	✔	✔	This is a practical unit and there is no option but to use practical in assessment. Learners could grow plants outside of the classroom, even at home, if social distancing in a laboratory was problematic.
Unit 7: Causes of Disease and Maintaining Health	✔	✔	This unit is theoretical and can be delivered by distance learning.
Unit 8: Forensic Detection	Partially	✔	This is a practical unit and there is no option but to use practical in assessment. Learners need access to a simulated crime scene, however, this could be outside if social distancing in a classroom was problematic. Learners need access to a laboratory to analyse the collected forensic evidence.
Unit 9: Healthier Living	Partially	✔	This is a practical unit and there is no option but to use practical in assessment. Learners could carry out activities that contribute to healthy living at home, if social distancing was problematic.
Unit 10: Making and Testing Cosmetic Products	Partially	✔	Two of the four learning aims are theoretical and could be delivered by remote learning. The remaining learning aims require practical work and a laboratory in assessment.

Overview: Forensic Science

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Please note all adaptations apply to assessments completed by 31 July 2021.

Social Distance

Much of the theoretical aspects can be delivered remotely. Practical work can be carried out with social distancing by employing some of the strategies described below.

Safety

Safe working can be maintained providing work surfaces, stools, equipment etc are decontaminated after each session and equipment is not shared during a session.

Lost time teaching

Additional time will likely be required for practical work, but additional time can be gained by remote delivery of many of the theoretical topics.

Flexibility of delivery and assessment

Timescales for assignments that involve significant amounts of practical work may need to be customised for individual learners or groups of learners.

What is important to retain the validity of the sector's qualifications?

- **Unit 4: Forensic Investigation Procedures in Practice** - The practical activities for LA A and LA B are essential and cannot be removed.
- **Unit 9: Environmental Forensics** - The practical activities for LA C are essential and cannot be removed.
- **Unit 10: Forensic Fire Investigation** - The practical activities for LA A are essential and cannot be removed.
- **Unit 11: Forensic Traffic Collision Investigation** – The practical activities for LA A and LA B are essential and cannot be removed.
- **Unit 12: Forensic Photography** - The practical activities for LA B are essential and cannot be removed.
- **Unit 13: Forensic Genetics** – The practical activities for LA B and LA C are essential and cannot be removed.
- **Unit 14: Forensic Anthropology and Archaeology** – A large proportion of this unit requires practical investigation and so may be a difficult optional unit to pursue whilst maintaining social distancing throughout.

Teaching and learning guidance: Forensic Science

Unit Title	Remote delivery (✔ X)	Socially distanced (✔ X)	Comments
RQF Nationals (2016)			
4: Forensic Investigation Procedures in Practice	✔ in part	✔	Much of the unit content can be delivered remotely. Video material, either already available on the internet or centre-produced practical demonstrations, can be used to introduce some of the practical techniques that learners may be new to. Unit adaptations are as follows: Practical work is essential for Learning Aims A and B. LA: A - only one piece of biological, chemical and physics evidence must be collected. LA: B - only one piece biological, chemical and physical evidence must be analysed.
6: Criminal Investigation Procedures in Practice	✔ mainly	✔	The majority of this unit can be delivered remotely. For Learning Aims B and C where learners participate in a mock interview, this can be carried out remotely using video conferencing or in a classroom with social distancing.
9: Environmental Forensics	✔ in part	✔	Much of the unit content can be delivered remotely. Video material, either already available on the internet or centre-produced practical demonstrations, can be used to introduce some of the practical techniques that learners may be new to. Practical work is required for Learning Aims B and C. Small groups of learners could be timetabled in the field or laboratory setting to carry out their practical investigations, thus maintaining social distancing. Some equipment or materials may need to be decontaminated or replaced between sessions. The additional time taken to carry out practical work this way could come from the time savings from remote delivery of many of the theoretical aspects of this unit.

Unit 10: Forensic Fire Investigation	✔ mainly	✔	Much of the unit content can be delivered remotely. Practical work is essential for Learning Aim A. Small groups of learners could be timetabled in the laboratory to carry out their practical investigations, thus maintaining social distancing. Some equipment or materials may need to be decontaminated or replaced between sessions. The additional time taken to carry out practical work this way could come from the time savings from remote delivery of many of the theoretical aspects of this unit.
Unit 11: Forensic Traffic Collision Investigation	✔ in part	✔	Much of the unit content can be delivered remotely. Video material, either already available on the internet or centre-produced practical demonstrations, can be used to introduce some of the practical techniques that learners may be new to. Practical work is essential for Learning Aims B and C. For LA B, small groups of learners could be timetabled in the laboratory to carry out their practical analyses, thus maintaining social distancing. Some equipment or materials may need to be decontaminated or replaced between practical sessions. The simulated collision scene for LA C could be designed so as to be left in place for a number of days to allow individual learners, or small groups of 1 or 2 learners, to maintain social distancing whilst examining the scene and taking measurements, producing diagrams, etc. Alternatively, video material and case study data could be used (as outlined in the unit specification). The additional time taken to carry out practical work this way could come from the time savings from remote delivery of many of the theoretical aspects of this unit.

Unit 12: Forensic Photography	✔ in part	✔	Much of the unit content can be delivered remotely. Practical work is essential for Learning Aim B. The simulated crime scene used for Unit 4 could also be used for LA B of this unit. The scene could be designed so as to be left in place for a number of days to allow individual learners, or small groups of 1 or 2 learners, to maintain social distancing whilst examining the scene and taking the necessary photographs. If a "body" is to be used in the crime scene, then this should be a mannikin as opposed to a live person. Care should be taken to devise a scene using unstable or perishable materials if the scene is to be used over a prolonged period. Some materials may need to be decontaminated or replaced between examinations. The additional time taken to carry out practical work this way could come from the time savings from remote delivery of many of the theoretical aspects of this unit.
Unit 13: Forensic Genetics	✔ in part	✔	Much of the unit content can be delivered remotely. Practical work is essential for Learning Aims B and C. Small groups of learners could be timetabled in the laboratory to carry out their practical investigations, thus maintaining social distancing. Some equipment or materials may need to be decontaminated or replaced between sessions. The additional time taken to carry out practical work this way could come from the time savings from remote delivery of many of the theoretical aspects of this unit.
QCF Level 3 (2010)			
Units 32, 33, 36 & 38	✔ in part	✔	Please refer to the guidance given above for the corresponding RQF units.
Unit 40: Criminal Investigations in Practice	✔ mainly	✔	The majority of this unit can be delivered remotely. For Learning Outcome 1, a case study can be used in place of a simulated crime scene (as outlined in the unit specification). For LO 3, where learners much participate in mock interviews, these can be carried out remotely using video conferencing or in a classroom with social distancing.