# BTEC

# BTEC Centre Guide to Assessment (Entry Level to Level 3)

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# BTEC Centre Guide to Assessment: Entry Level to Level 3

# Contents

# Which qualifications does this guide cover?

This guide covers **BTEC** qualifications from **Entry Level to Level 3**. This includes:

- BTECs accredited on the Qualification Credit Framework (QCF) from 2010
- BTECs accredited on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) from 2012 and 2103.

## Important note: updated assessment requirements

From **1 September 2014**, we have introduced new rules for internal assessment for BTEC Firsts and Nationals. These rules will apply to all learners starting on a BTEC First or National programme from 1 September 2014.

They are not mandatory for BTEC learners who are already on programme on 1 September 2014 and this waiver extends to all learners currently on a 2-year course who:

- **started** a BTEC First or National qualification before September 2014 *(e.g. a 90-credit BTEC National Diploma)*
- **"top up"** to a larger qualification following year, 2014-2015 *(e.g. topping up to a BTEC National Extended Diploma).*

They apply to BTEC Firsts and Nationals on the Qualifications and Credit Framework (**QCF**) and the National Qualifications Framework (**NQF**) from 1 September 2014. For all other BTEC qualifications at Entry Level to Level 3, we recommend them as best practice, but they are not mandatory.

We have produced a **Guide to Internal Assessment for BTEC Firsts and Nationals** which contains detailed advice and guidance, along with **subject-specific guides** for the main BTEC sectors: www.btec.co.uk/keydocuments

# Introduction

This guide is designed for **BTEC programme teams** and provides essential guidance on planning and implementation of **internal assessment**.

The majority of BTEC units are assessed through internal assessment, which means that you can deliver the programme in a way that suits your learners and relates to local need. The way in which you deliver the programme must also ensure that assessment is fair and consistent as defined by the requirements for national standards.

To achieve this, it is important that your centre:

● makes sure that there is a Lead Internal Verifier who can undertake training and standardisation as provided by us and can support the whole programme team in understanding assessment standards
● makes full use of materials provided by us which define and exemplify assessment requirements such as qualification specifications, authorised assignment briefs, other support materials and guidance
● plans the assessment of units to fit with delivery: your plan should allow for the links between units, such as where one unit needs to build on another
● develops suitable assessments: either devise your own assignments or use authorised assignment briefs, adapting them as necessary
● plans the assessment for each unit in terms of when it will be authorised by your Lead Internal Verifier, when it will be taught and assessed, and how long it will take
● ensures each assessment is fit for purpose, valid, will deliver reliable assessment outcomes across Assessors
● ensures that each assessment is internally verified before use
● provides preparation and support for learners before assessment
● makes careful and consistent assessment decisions using the defined assessment criteria and unit requirements and the overarching approach to grading
● ensures that all learner evidence submitted for assessment is valid and authentic
● validates and records assessment decisions carefully and completely
● works closely with BTEC support materials and guidance from our assessment experts to ensure that your implementation, delivery and assessment are consistent with national standards.

For guidance on **externally assessed units**, please refer to the specific guidance on the relevant qualification page: www.btec.co.uk

# Other essential guidance

This guide has been developed with other guides, also available on the BTEC website: www.btec.co.uk/keydocuments

● BTEC Centre Guide to Internal Verification
● BTEC Centre Guide to Managing Quality
● BTEC Centre Guide to Assessment: Level 4-7.

### BTEC qualification specification

The specification for each BTEC qualification is the document that programme leaders and teams must use as first point of reference for all planning and assessment. Specifications are accompanied by important assessment and delivery guidance which provide instructions and advice for each unit in the qualification. All BTEC specifications are freely available on the BTEC website: www.btec.co.uk

**UK Vocational Quality Assurance Handbook**

We use quality assurance to check that all centres are working to national standards. It gives us the opportunity to identify and provide support where it is needed in order to safeguard certification. It also allows us to recognise and support good practice.

Every year we publish an updated **UK Vocational Quality Assurance Handbook** to explain our quality assurance processes for the coming academic year: www.btec.co.uk/keydocuments

**Forms and templates**

We publish a range of useful forms and templates for you to use in your centre: www.btec.co.uk/keydocuments. These forms are not mandatory, but we strongly recommend that you use them to help ensure that you are meeting requirements. They include:

- Internal verification of assignment briefs
- Assignment briefs
- Internal verification of assessment decisions
- Assessment tracking documents
- Tutor observation records and witness statements
- Learner declaration
- Lead Internal Verifier declaration.

# The programme team

The programme team consists of all the staff responsible for the delivery, assessment and verification of a BTEC qualification. It is extremely important that sufficient systems and procedures are in place prior to delivering a BTEC programme. BTECs are vocational qualifications. Therefore, in order to get the best out of the qualifications it is very important that the programme team includes individuals with up to date, relevant vocational experience or knowledge.

The roles undertaken by the programme team include the following:

## Programme Leader

A programme leader or programme manager is a person designated by a centre to take overall responsibility for the effective delivery and assessment of BTECs in their subject. The Programme Leader may also act as the Lead Internal Verifier.

## Lead Internal Verifier

The Lead Internal Verifier role is essential to manage your internal verification systems and processes to maintain national standards.

A key responsibility of the Lead Internal Verifier is to disseminate standardisation materials we provide via the OSCA system to their assessment team. There are several benefits of using OSCA materials to standardise staff. The materials:

- provide universal training to a national standard
- give confidence to Assessors and understanding of the processes required to run a successful BTEC programme
- demonstrate how to develop appropriate assignments
- explain the role and purpose of internal verification
- set the standard for judging evidence against the assessment criteria
- show how a systems based approach to delivery and assessment can improve efficiency.

### BTEC (QCF)

For BTEC (QCF), each Principal Subject Area (BTEC programmes grouped by subject, e.g. Business, Health & Social Care) is required to have an accredited Lead Internal Verifier. Successful achievement of accreditation through online standardisation allows the Lead Internal Verifier to retain this status in the centre for the current academic year, plus three years.

### BTEC (NQF)

For BTEC (NQF), a Lead Internal Verifier is required to register and access standardisation training materials, which they will use with their assessment team. However, because certification is released annually through successful sampling by a Standards Verifier, the Lead Internal Verifier is not required to complete an online standardisation exercise to gain accreditation.

Further guidance on internal verification is provided in the **BTEC Centre Guide to Internal Verification**, which can be found here: www.btec.co.uk/keydocuments

## Internal Verifier

Internal Verifiers conduct quality checks on assessment processes and practice to ensure that they meet national standards and that all learners have been judged fairly and consistently.

An Internal Verifier is involved in the delivery and assessment of the programme and is able to give an expert "second opinion". Where there is a team of Assessors, it is good practice for all Assessors to be involved in internally verifying each other. Please note that as an Internal Verifier you cannot internally verify your own assignments or assessment decisions.

## Assessor

An Assessor is responsible for the assessment of learners and acts under the guidance of the Lead Internal Verifier who will direct Assessors to appropriate training, support and standardisation. Typically, Assessors will devise assignment briefs, deliver the programme of study and assess the evidence produced by learners against the assessment criteria in the programme specification.

## Staff handbook

A handbook for the teaching and delivery team will give key messages and clarify the major differences between BTECs and other qualifications that they manage. A Staff Handbook is recommended to help support full and part-time members of a delivery team. This handbook may include the following:

- Programme title and how it fits in with the learner's progression and development
- Course structure
- Assessment plans, including dates, terms, semesters, assessment timings
- Internal verification, plans and timings, responsibilities, etc.
- Standards Verification sampling information and requirements.

For more guidance on developing handbooks and quality assurance procedures, please refer to the **BTEC Centre Guide to Managing Quality**, available here: www.btec.co.uk/keydocuments

For further guidance on specific roles and responsibilities, please refer to the **UK Vocational Quality Assurance Handbook**: www.btec.co.uk/keydocuments

# Roles and responsibilities

| Stage | Planning | Implementation | Internal Verification |
|---|---|---|---|
| Programme Team | • Discusses the specification to ensure a shared understanding and awareness of relationships between units<br>• Creates assessment plan<br>• Plans assessment activities and timescales<br>• Agree entry requirements for the programme<br>• Develops external links with employers and other sources of relevant vocational input<br>• Identifies staff development needs and opportunities<br>• Selects appropriate units relevant to learners' needs and the local context<br>• Considers resource needs for the programme including published, digital, staff, external inputs<br>• Develops programme handbooks. | • Delivers programme according to agreed assessment plan<br>• Ensures timescales are met. | • Adhere to agreed process for internal verification<br>• Ensures understanding of the documentation used, keeps it up to date, makes use of electronic and paper versions as agreed. |
| Assessor | • Completes standardisation training<br>• Applies assessment arrangements to deliver national standards<br>• Designs, adapts and uses assessment instruments. | • Delivers content using effective approaches and taking account of support materials<br>• Checks that all learner work is authenticated and that any evidence accepted for assessment is the learners' own work<br>• Assesses learner work according to the agreed assessment plan and against national standards<br>• Provides assessment decisions<br>• Tracks learner achievement and maintains accurate records<br>• Plans next steps with the learner<br>• Oversees any authorised retakes/resubmissions. | • Completes any remedial action identified by the Internal Verifier. |

| Stage | Planning | Implementation | Internal Verification |
|---|---|---|---|
| Internal Verifier / Lead Internal Verifier | Lead IV: <br>• Co-ordinates assessment arrangements including multi-sites if appropriate <br>• Approves and signs the programme assessment plan <br>• Registers and accesses standardisation materials <br>• Works through standardisation materials with assessment team <br>• Ensures that an assessment and internal verification plan is in place and operational <br>• Advises on the interpretation of national standards <br><br>• IVs confirm the quality of assessment instruments as fit for purpose. | • Ensures an effective system of recording learner achievement is in place <br>• Keeps records of the verification process <br>• Liaises with Standards Verifiers where appropriate <br>• BTEC (QCF) only – Lead IV completes online standardisation to gain accreditation <br>• Monitors course file <br>• Ensures appropriate corrective action is taken where necessary <br>• Takes part in the formal stages of any appeal <br>• Advises programme team on any training needs <br>• Lead IV approves requested additional assessment opportunities for learners <br>• Provides feedback to the programme team, senior management and Pearson as required. | • Provides advice and support to Assessors on a regular basis, <br>• Undertakes internal verification, covering all Assessors and all units, in line with the internal verification plan <br>• Checks the quality of assessment to ensure that it is consistent, valid, fair and reliable <br>• Confirms whether assessment decisions meet national standards <br>• Provides feedback to the Assessor, including action to be taken if assessment decisions are judged to be incorrect <br>• Arranges standardisation meetings across teams and multi-sites <br>• Ensures own assessment decisions are sampled if assessing on a programme. |
| Learner | • Completes induction to BTEC programme <br>• Agrees to abide by the centre's policy on assessment, including producing valid evidence for assessment. | • Produces work for assessment as set out in assignments <br>• Meets deadlines for assessment <br>• Confirms authenticity of own work <br>• Receives assessment decisions and feedback from the Assessor <br>• Plans next steps with the Assessor. | |
| BTEC Standards Verifier | • Allocated by us, according to BTEC programme requirements <br>• Contacts centre to negotiate arrangements for sampling learners' work. | • Prepares sampling schedule covering allocated programmes <br>• Undertakes sampling in line with current requirements <br>• Checks consistency of the interpretation of national standards by each Assessor <br>• Identifies whether assessment decisions meet national standards <br>• Confirms that learner evidence meets the assessment criteria awarded <br>• Confirms learner work has been accepted as authentic by the Assessor <br>• Checks timely and effective internal verification has been carried out on assignments, assessment decisions and feedback to learners <br>• Gives verbal feedback to the programme team or other centre nominated person on decisions made <br>• Completes online report clearly identifying whether national standards are being met <br>• Where required, identifies any remedial action required for resampling and conducts resample. | |

# Planning

Good planning is the first step to successful programmes. It is the best way of making sure everything is in place to ensure unit coverage is robust and achievable.

## Planning assessment

Plans should be developed jointly by the programme team and agreed by the Lead Internal Verifier. Key areas to consider are:

- unit sequencing or integration
- assignments and projects
- resource planning, such as when to deploy specialist staff
- timetabling, events, shows and trips
- schemes of work
- external resources available
- planning assignment deadlines across the programme to ensure that learners are not overwhelmed at key points
- feedback from learners and from external sources, such as progression providers
- ensuring authenticity of learner work.

If you deliver a programme where units are integrated, the plan will allow you to establish that assessment criteria can be applied. As a minimum requirement, the assessment plan must include:

- names of all Assessors and Internal Verifiers
- dates for:
  - assignment hand out and hand in
  - assessment
  - internal verification and opportunity for resubmission.

Only one resubmission of evidence is allowed following assessment. You should also consider our policies on assessment, which can be found here: www.edexcel.com/policies

## Conflict of interest

Assessment staff may encounter a potential conflict of interest in their work. Examples of these may include:

- a close relation, spouse or partner within the centre who is either a learner or another member of staff
- a close relation, spouse or partner acting as a Standards Verifier or other external quality assurance role.

A formal log of potential and actual conflicts of interest should be kept up to date within your centre, including actions taken to minimise risk. This record must be made available on request. Individuals must always disclose an activity if there is any doubt about whether it represents a conflict of interest.

## Planning internal verification

Internal verification is the quality assurance system you use to monitor assessment practice and decisions, to ensure that:

- assessment plans and schemes of work are in place to ensure full coverage of the qualification
- assessment instruments are fit for purpose
- assessment decisions accurately match learner evidence to the unit assessment criteria and assessment guidance
- Assessors are standardised and assessment and grading is consistent across the programme.

It is essential that internal verification is planned for at the start of a programme. An internal verification schedule must be agreed, ensuring that:

- all assignment briefs are internally verified before distribution to learners
- a sample of assessment decisions is internally verified, covering every unit, every Assessor and a range of learner achievement (e.g. Pass, Merit, Distinction).

Full guidance on internal verification can be found in the **BTEC Centre Guide to Internal Verification**: www.btec.co.uk/keydocuments

# Assessment planning process map

| Delivery and Assessment | Verification |
|---|---|
| • Agree annual assessment plan<br>• Develop assessment activities<br>• Standardise Assessors<br>• Review assignment deadlines | • Plan for Lead Internal Verifier registration (and accreditation - QCF only)<br>• Internal verification plan |
| • Design / import / amend assignments | • Check assignments to track unit coverage<br>• Internal Verifier checks assignment briefs prior to issue to learners |
| • Programme delivery<br>• Ongoing pastoral support<br>• Teaching & learning | • Lead Internal Verifier builds in team standardisation activities, using OSCA materials<br>• Lead Internal Verifier gains accreditation (QCF only) |
| • 1 x Assessment per assignment<br>• Unit grading<br>• Continuous update and tracking of learner achievement<br>• Learner may request resubmission if appropriate | • Internal Verifier samples assessment decisions<br>• Assessor undertakes action where required<br>• Lead Internal monitors internal verification activity<br>• Lead Internal Verifier authorises any resubmissions |

- Standards Verification sampling (where required)
- RELEASE or BLOCK certification
- 2$^{nd}$ sample if blocked
- Remedial action if blocked at 2$^{nd}$ sample

Learner achievement and certification

# Learner recruitment and induction

## Learner recruitment

It is crucial that learners are recruited with integrity onto the correct programme and level. There is a carefully designed progression route within the BTEC framework of qualifications. The appropriate levels are set against the equivalent expectations of achievement at Foundation Learning level, GCSE and GCE. Every BTEC specification has clear guidance on the level of the qualification.

## Learner induction

This is key to the success of the learner on their chosen qualification. Learners must understand the:

- programme structure including how and when units are assessed
- programme/unit content
- requirements for assessment
- level of programme and equivalency
- purpose of the assignment briefs for learning and assessment
- relationship between the tasks given in an assignment and the assessment criteria
- nature of vocational and work related learning
- responsibilities they have in the learning process (e.g. the importance of meeting assessment deadlines and using opportunities for wider attainment)
- importance of presenting authentic work and be clear on what constitutes plagiarism
- rules relating to submission and resubmission of evidence
- appeals procedure
- arrangements for any units that have external assessment or other exceptional assessment (e.g. through performances, trips, exhibitions).

## Learner handbook

These can provide valuable additional information for learners, allowing them to make an informed choice so that they know what particular expectations and demands following the BTEC route will make on them. This is recommended to give key messages about the programme and may include the following:

- Programme title, structure, course dates, terms or semesters
- Assessment plan, guidance and key learner activities
- Practical workshop rules, e.g. etiquette and health and safety details, etc.
- Centre policies and rules, e.g. Malpractice, Authenticity and Assessment, Appeals
- Information on attendance, late work policy, drugs, smoking, centre information, helpline details

- Information on external assessment where appropriate
- Programme team and other key personnel details where appropriate.

For more guidance on developing handbooks and quality assurance procedures, please refer to the **Centre Guide to Managing Quality**, available here: www.btec.co.uk/keydocuments

# Unit structure

BTEC units follow a standard structure. The wording and format of the BTEC (NQF) differs slightly from BTEC (QCF), but the basic principles remain the same. Where there are differences in terminology, they are identified below.

## BTEC (QCF)

| Unit structure | Guidance |
|---|---|
| Unit number and title | The unit title is accredited by Ofqual. The title reflects the content of the unit and this form of words will appear on the learner's Notification of Performance. Unit numbers are unique within the qualification. |
| Level | All units and qualifications within the QCF will have a level assigned to them, which represents the level of achievement. There are nine levels of achievement, from Entry Level to Level 8. The level of the unit has been informed by the QCF level descriptors and, where appropriate, the National Occupational Standards (NOS) and/or other sector/professional benchmarks. |
| QCF credit value | In BTEC (QCF) each unit consists of a credit value; learners will be awarded credits for the successful completion of whole units. A credit value specifies the number of credits that will be awarded to a learner who has achieved all the learning outcomes of the unit. |
| Guided learning hours | Guided learning hours are defined as all the times when a tutor, trainer or facilitator is present to give specific guidance towards the learning aim being studied on a programme. This definition includes lectures, tutorials and supervised study in, for example, open learning centres and learning workshops. It also includes time spent by staff assessing learners' achievements. It does not include time spent by staff in day-to-day marking of assignments or homework where the learner is not present. |
| Aim and purpose | The aim provides a clear summary of the purpose of the unit and is a succinct statement that summarises the learning outcomes of the unit. |
| Unit introduction | The unit introduction gives the reader an appreciation of the unit in the vocational setting of the qualification, as well as highlighting the focus of the unit. It gives the reader a snapshot of the unit and the key knowledge, skills and understanding gained while studying the unit. The unit introduction also highlights any links to the appropriate vocational sector by describing how the unit relates to that sector. |
| Learning outcomes | Learning outcomes state exactly what a learner should 'know, understand or be able to do' as a result of completing the unit. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Unit content | The unit content identifies the breadth of knowledge, skills and understanding needed to design and deliver a programme of learning to achieve each of the learning outcomes. This is informed by the underpinning knowledge and understanding requirements of the related National Occupational Standards (NOS). The content provides the range of subject material for the programme of learning and specifies the skills, knowledge and understanding required for achievement of the pass, merit and distinction assessment criteria. |
| | Each learning outcome is stated in full and then the key phrases or concepts related to that learning outcome are listed in italics followed by the subsequent range of related topics. |
| | The learner must have the opportunity within the delivery of the unit to cover all of the unit content. It is not a requirement of the unit specification that all the indicative content will need to be covered in a programme of learning in order for learners to be able to meet the standard determined in the assessment criteria. The merit and distinction criteria enable the learner to achieve higher levels of performance in their acquisition of knowledge, understanding and skills. |
| Assessment and grading grid | Each grading grid gives the assessment criteria used to determine the evidence that each learner must produce in order to receive a pass, merit or distinction grade. It is important to note that the merit and distinction assessment criteria require a qualitative improvement in a learners' evidence and not simply the production of more evidence at the same level. |
| Essential guidance for tutors | This section gives tutors additional guidance and amplification to aid understanding and a consistent level of delivery and assessment. It is divided into the following sections: <ul><li>Delivery</li><li>Outline learning plan</li><li>Assessment</li><li>Suggested programme of assignments</li><li>Links to National Occupational Standards, other BTEC units, other BTEC qualifications and other relevant units and qualifications</li><li>Essential resources</li><li>Employer engagement and vocational contexts</li></ul> |

## BTEC (NQF)

| Unit structure | Guidance |
|---|---|
| Unit number and title | The unit title is accredited by Ofqual. The title reflects the content of the unit and this form of words will appear on the learner's Notification of Performance. Unit numbers are unique within the qualification. |
| Level | All units and qualifications have a level assigned to them that represents the level of achievement. The National Qualifications Framework level descriptors and similar qualifications at this level inform the allocation of the unit level. |

| Unit type | This section shows if the unit is mandatory or specialist. |
|---|---|
| Guided learning hours | All units have guided learning hours assigned to them. This is the time when you (as a teacher, tutor, trainer or facilitator) are present to give specific guidance to learners on the unit content. |
| Assessment type | Units are either internally or externally assessed. Your centre designs and assesses the internal assessments. Pearson sets and marks the external assessments. |
| Unit introduction | The unit introduction is addressed to the learner and gives the learner a snapshot of the purpose of the unit. |
| Learning aims | 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. |
| Learning aims and unit content | The unit content gives the basis for the teaching, learning and assessment for each learning aim. Topic headings are given, where appropriate. Content covers:<br><br>• knowledge, including definition of breadth and depth<br><br>• skills, including definition of qualities or contexts<br><br>• applications or activities, through which knowledge and/or skills are evidenced<br><br>Content should normally be treated as compulsory for teaching the unit. Definition of content sometimes includes examples prefixed with 'e.g.'. These are provided as examples and centres may use all or some of these, or bring in additional material, as relevant. |
| 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. |
| Teacher guidance | While the main content of the unit is addressed to the learner, this section gives you additional guidance and amplification to aid your understanding and to ensure a consistent level of assessment.<br><br>Resources – identifies any special resources required for learners to show evidence of the assessment. Your centre must make sure that any requirements are in place when it seeks approval from Pearson to offer the qualification.<br><br>Assessment guidance – gives examples of the quality of work needed to differentiate the standard of work submitted. It also offers suggestions for creative and innovative ways in which learners can produce evidence to meet the criteria. The guidance highlights approaches and strategies for developing appropriate evidence.<br><br>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. |

## Planning units

How you plan assessment of units may differ from subject to subject, and relates to your timetable, Assessor expertise, resources available, etc. You should always take account of the take full account of the published guidance for each unit to ensure a coherent programme of study. For example, core units often provide a platform of underpinning knowledge for other units and you should think carefully about how these units fit together for delivery.

### Delivering and assessing unit-by-unit

A BTEC qualification comprises individual units that cover specific topics. For many sectors, a unit-by-unit approach to delivery is a valid and appropriate method. You may break a unit down into two or more assignments if appropriate. However, you should not split a Learning Aim/Learning Objective across assignments, or require extra assignments or tasks to meet the Merit or Distinction criteria within a unit. Tasks should be written to allow opportunities for the full achievement of Pass, Merit and Distinction criteria.

### Integrating units

In certain sectors the unit delivery can be integrated so that evidence can be mapped into two or more units. This approach may lead to a deeper understanding of the content and its application. It is important to map the assessment of evidence against unit criteria across units and keep accurate records of learner achievement.

# Learning strategies

Good learning is vocational, active, motivational and progressive. It will be closely linked to assessment; allowing development of skills, knowledge and attributes that will enable the learner to complete assessments. From the start, it is important to consider the most effective way of delivering and assessing a unit or assignment. Learning strategies may include:

- project work carried out as an individual or as part of a group
- work-based learning
- lectures and seminars
- facilitated activities
- visits to companies with a facilitator to structure the visit
- visiting speakers from the vocational sector.

The emphasis should be placed on active learning, drawing on materials gained from the working environment or industry wherever possible. This will help learners to develop the transferable skills necessary in a changing and dynamic working environment.

A large proportion of units are practical in nature giving learners the opportunities to tackle 'real life' examples to apply their skills and knowledge to case studies or projects. As well as Assessors in your programme team having vocational experience, having someone currently working in the sector providing an active role in an assignment will increase the relevance of the assignment and further motivate the learner.

## External links

Where possible, work related programmes will benefit from external links with those working in the vocational sector. These links could be provided in any of the following ways:

- Checking the vocational relevance of the assignments
- Provision of 'live' case study material that is company or organisation based
- Learner visits to companies and other vocational settings
- Professional input from companies and vocational practitioners, especially where vocational expertise is clearly identified in the delivery section of the units
- Work placement that is specifically related to the qualification
- Teacher/tutor placements to enhance vocational expertise.

# Assessment strategies

The purpose of assessment is to deliver valid, reliable, fair, and manageable assessment. The assessment programme must be designed so that skills and knowledge can be developed in line with the assessment criteria. There is a range of assessment methods that can be utilised, such as:

- presentations, written reports, accounts, surveys
- log books, production diaries
- role play
- observations of practical tasks or performance
- articles for journals, press releases
- production of visual or audio materials, artefacts, products and specimens
- peer and self assessment.

Using a variety of assessment methods enhances learning and should improve the validity of assessment. They improve the knowledge of the assessment criteria and what is required to gain higher grade achievement.

## Peer and self assessment

While self assessment is not sufficient on its own, it can provide valuable additional evidence of learning. Ask learners to self assess by providing them with self assessment criteria or helping them to develop their own.

Self assessment has been shown to improve attainment if it is used consistently. It encourages the reflective habit of mind essential for improvement; it ensures learners take responsibility for their own learning; it focuses attention on criteria for success and increases effort and persistence.

Where appropriate, peer assessment impacts on self assessment by enabling individuals to become self critical and evaluative. It can provide a useful first and second stage prior to tutor assessment.

Learners can generate personal action plans that are followed up prior to assessment. It also generates excellent evidence for Functional Skills, if you are delivering these alongside a BTEC.

## Group work

Working in groups is an accepted part of learning within vocational education. There are widely recognised benefits of collaborative group work in terms of learning and skills development. When groups work well, learners can produce quality learning outcomes and develop specific team work skills, as well as generic skills valued by employers.

Most learners can benefit from learning in groups, provided the groups are well managed and there are clear and fair assessment requirements. In a group assignment the learners require an assessment system that allows the opportunity to achieve that reflects the level of contribution made by individuals.

It is important that Assessors clearly identify the purpose of using group work within an assessment:

- Generally, it is not the group work activities themselves that will form the basis of the assessment activity
- It is essential that the individual assessment criteria for the unit identified and each learner's individual contribution in meeting these must be the basis of the assessment decision
- Group learning activities and skills, such as team building, leadership, etc. may be assessed towards gaining transferable skills and recorded as being achieved and feedback given, but they are not to form part of the assessment decisions for specific units.

Concerns about group assignments can be reduced by:

- helping learners to understand the criteria to be assessed for the group product and process, where process is being assessed
- informing them how individual contributions to the group will be measured and assessed against the unit specific learning outcomes and assessment criteria.

## Guidelines on assessing group work

- Group projects should be included in the assessment schedule for a unit only where one or more learning outcomes of the unit indicate that they might be appropriate. In other words, does the learning outcome naturally fit the device of a group assessment?
- Learners should be informed, in detail and in advance, of the basis for assessment of group projects, including the methods to be used to measure the extent of individual contributions
- If the group project or its assessment places on learners an obligation to exercise skills or judgements beyond those required for the subject (e.g. peer assessment), then adequate training should be provided to assist learners to exercise that judgement
- If there is to be peer assessment of the contribution of the learners to a group project, then the process for collecting feedback should be confidential between the individual learner and the Assessor. If peer assessment includes the measurement of the contribution, the method should be clear and simple to use and self assessment should also be included
- A common group grade must not be assigned to all members of the group; individual contributions should be measured and graded against the learning outcomes, the assessment and grading criteria
- Evidence of observation of presentations and discussions (with peers, with Assessors etc.) should be detailed and mapped to criteria in order to provide evidence of achievement of individual contributions
- It is good practice to encourage learners to reflect on what they have learnt from the group work experience and produce a written evaluation
- In some cases, presentations may provide evidence only sufficient for pass criteria, for example where a presentation contained no corroborated detail of individual tasks undertaken by members of the group. In such cases, evidence for higher grades may be achieved through formalised questioning of individual learners mapped to the assessment criteria, or having the learners produce a supplementary report of their activities
- Feedback can be directed to the group with reference to individual contributions and achievement.

## Authenticity and authentication

You can only accept evidence for assessment that is authentic, i.e. that is the learner's own and that can be judged fully to see whether it meets the assessment criteria.

You must ensure that authenticity is considered when setting assignments. For example, ensuring that each learner has a different focus for research will reduce opportunities for copying or collaboration. On some occasions it will be useful to include supervised production of evidence. Where appropriate, practical activities or performance observed by the Assessor should be included.

Learners must authenticate the evidence that they provide for assessment. They do this by signing a declaration stating that it is their own work when they submit it. Your Assessors should assess only learner evidence that is authentic. If they find through the assessment process that some or all of the evidence is not authentic, they need to take appropriate action, including invoking malpractice policies as required.

It is important that all evidence can be validated through verification. This means that it must be capable of being assessed in full by another person. When you are using practical and performance evidence, you need to think about how supporting evidence can be captured through using, for example, videos, recordings, photographs, handouts, task sheets etc.

The authentication of learner evidence is the responsibility of your centre. If during external sampling a Standards Verifier raises concerns about the authenticity of evidence, your centre will be required to investigate further. Depending on the outcomes, penalties may be applied.

## Plagiarism

There are many definitions of what constitutes plagiarism. All of them agree that plagiarism is a form of academic misconduct or, put more simply, a form of cheating. Plagiarism is much more than simple copying from another learner, or from books, or from the internet and can be taken to include paraphrasing, sub-contracting the work to someone else, submitting the same piece of work for two different purposes, etc. Ultimately, plagiarism is attempting to pass off other people's work and ideas as your own.

### Why is plagiarism wrong?

- It is fundamentally dishonest
- Learners who commit plagiarism are seeking an unfair advantage over other learners
- Learners who commit plagiarism are devaluing the value of the qualification they seek
- It is disrespectful to their Assessors, and a betrayal of their trust

**What are the undesirable consequences of plagiarism?**

● Learners who commit plagiarism learn far less than those who do not
● Assessment procedures are compromised if the work submitted is not the learner's own
● Assessors are unable to form correct decisions on the progress of individual learners
● It may result in legal action due to infringement of copyright laws
● It may be penalised by failure in one or more components of a course
● It could be unfairly interpreted as professional incompetence on the part of the Assessor.

**Why does plagiarism happen?**

There are many reasons. Learners may:

● not understand what is meant by plagiarism, because it has never been explained to them
● not believe plagiarism to be wrong: they download music, video clips and games all the time
● not understand the concept of individual ownership of ideas and words
● have misconceptions about the ownership of electronic material
● struggle to differentiate between intellectual property rights and common knowledge
● regard the conventions of academic documentation as unimportant or irrelevant to them
● lack referencing skills, and therefore be unable to record and cite sources correctly
● lack the study skills, research skills and writing skills needed to produce the work required
● not know how to adapt published literature sources so that they do not require citation
● regard plagiarism as a short cut to success.

**What can you do to help minimise the risk of plagiarism?**

The most important thing you can do is contribute to a culture in which learners do not consider plagiarism an option. You should:

● develop clear policies and procedures re plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct
● explain at induction what is meant by 'plagiarism' and how it will be monitored and policed
● explain, at an early stage of the course, the concepts of individual ownership of ideas and words, the ownership of electronic material and the difference between 'intellectual property' and 'common knowledge'

- provide instruction in study skills, research skills, writing skills, time-management skills and the use of a suitable referencing system to record and cite sources correctly
- insist upon the use of referencing bibliographies from day one
- act as a team, with every Assessor rigorously applying centre policies on referencing and bibliographies
- avoid the use of highly generic assignments and, instead, produce contextualised tasks that require the learner to research in depth and individually analyse and evaluate their findings
- include an authenticity statement with every assignment brief: learners must sign and date the authenticity statement to acknowledge that the work produced is their own and that they understand the penalties that will be imposed on learners who do submit plagiarised work
- provide learners with opportunities to discuss any problems they may encounter, support them at each step and provide them with the resources they need to do the work properly
- ensure that learners are not overloaded by providing them with an assessment schedule, agreed by all of the course team, and then ensure that the team adheres to the schedule.

## How can you identify plagiarism?

The expertise of individual Assessors is the best safeguard against plagiarism, supported by appropriate technology where available. Check learner work for:

- the use of unfamiliar words
- grammar and syntax of a standard far higher than that demonstrated previously
- a discontinuous rise in the quality and accuracy of the learner's work
- the use of texts familiar to the Assessor, but without appropriate referencing
- the use of American spellings and unfamiliar product names.

You might also:

- build an oral element into the assessment process, wherever appropriate, to check on understanding
- ask learners to elaborate on suspect passages within their work
- type a few selected phrases into a search engine such as Google: simple but effective
- employ a sophisticated electronic plagiarism detection device such as 'Turnitin'
- familiarise yourself with the more widely-used 'essay banks' to be found on the internet
- pay particular attention to those learners who perform well in coursework but much less well in examinations and tests
- share concerns with colleagues: if everyone has the same suspicions about a particular learner, it would seem appropriate to apply rigorous checks to all of his or her work.

### What kind of policies and procedures are needed to address plagiarism?

You will need to have policies and procedures in place to address this issue. These policies and procedures should include:

- a precise definition of plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct
- a statement of why plagiarism, and all other forms of academic misconduct, are wrong
- the actions that will be taken by the centre to address the culture of plagiarism
- the techniques that will be used to monitor learners' assessed work and detect plagiarism
- the procedures that will be employed to investigate allegations of plagiarism and the actions taken if plagiarism is found
- details of the appeals system for learners to use when appealing against decisions made.

## Observation records and witness statements

We strongly recommend the use of witness statements, tutor observation records or other paperwork. However, in order for these to be useful, they must record achievement at criterion level against the activity that is being observed. Checklists prepared against unit assessment criteria are one way of doing this.

Tutor observations and witness statements are very useful supplementary evidence of achievement. However, an observation sheet or witness statement on its own may not be considered sufficient evidence for assessment. It is important that it is supported by other evidence, such as audio/visual records of the activity, production reports, notes, self-evaluation by the learner, etc. that can substantiate that the activity took place as described.

### Observation records

An observation record is used to provide a formal record of an assessor's judgement of learner performance (process evidence e.g. during presentations, practical activities) against the target assessment criteria.

**Please note**: an observation record is a source of evidence and **does not** confer an assessment decision.

The record will:

- relate directly to the evidence requirements in the unit specification
- provide primary evidence of performance to support subsequent assessment decisions
- is sufficiently detailed to enable others to make a judgement about the quality and sufficiency of the performance.

Observation records should:

- be accompanied by supporting/additional evidence. This may take the form of visual aids, video/audio tapes, CDs, photographs, handouts, preparation notes, cue cards, diary record or log book and/or peer assessments records, etc.
- be completed by the assessor who must have direct knowledge of the specification
- record the assessor's comments
- also include the learner's comments
- be signed and dated by the assessor and the learner
- be included in the learner's portfolio, along with relevant supporting evidence, when submitted for assessment.

## Witness statements

A witness statement is used to provide a written record of learner performance (process evidence) against assessment criteria. Someone other than the assessor of the qualification/unit may complete it. This may be an assessor of a different qualification or unit, a work placement supervisor, a technician, learning resources manager or anyone else who has witnessed the performance of the learner against given assessment criteria. It can be someone who does not have direct knowledge of the qualification, unit or evidence requirements as a whole but who is able to make a professional judgement about the performance of the learner in the given situation.

The quality of witness statement is greatly improved, and enables the assessor to judge the standard and validity of performance against the assessment criteria, if:

- the witness is provided with clear guidance on the desirable characteristics required for successful performance
- the evidence requirements are present on the witness testimony (this may need further clarification for a non-assessor)
- the learner or witness also provides a statement of the context within which the evidence is set.

**Please note**: a witness statement is a source of evidence and **does not** confer an assessment decision. The assessor must:

- consider all the information in the witness statement
- note the relevant professional skills of the witness to make a judgement of performance
- review supporting evidence when making an assessment decision
- review the statement with the learner to enable a greater degree of confidence in the evidence
- be convinced that the evidence presented by the witness statement is valid, sufficient and authentic.

When a number of witnesses are providing testimonies:

- it may be helpful to collect specimen signatures
- all witness testimonies should be signed and dated by the witness
- information of their job role/relationship with the learner should also be recorded.

These details add to the validity and authenticity of the testimony and the statements made in it. Centres should note that witness testimonies can form a vital part of the evidence for a unit but they should not form the main or majority assessment of a unit.

# Assignment design

Assessment criteria within each unit require improvements in the quality of evidence from Pass to Merit and Distinction. Evidence produced is likely to be more detailed, analytical and evaluative at the higher levels. In the Creative Arts sectors, there will also be evidence of individuality, innovation and imagination. When setting tasks, you need to consider this carefully, within the nature of the evidence and the support and direction given to the learner.

Programme planning at the beginning of the year must include assignment mapping. This will ensure that you have fully met the content of the units in your delivery and that learners are able to provide evidence for assessment that demonstrates full achievement of all the learning aims/outcomes.

Assignments tasks will identify the criteria being assessed to meet unit coverage, as described in the mandatory Assessment Guidance within the unit. Assignment mapping will allow you to monitor:

- that all assessment criteria from every unit being delivered will be assessed
- arrangements for staffing and resourcing of assessment activities where criteria from two or more units might be integrated in one assignment
- the planning of the internal verification of assessment during the programme.

Contextualised assessment criteria for each unit are provided. These are the only criteria that are to be used to assess learner performance. They show the qualitative characteristics required in the evidence submitted by the learner.

Your assignments should provide opportunities for learners to achieve at the highest level and should promote stretch and challenge. Of course, not all learners will finally achieve a Distinction or a Merit, but it is important that they are provided with the opportunity to do so.

Where possible you should be looking to structure assignments so that learners can produce evidence that can be used across the grade levels – don't assume that learners have to 'get pass out of the way first'. To 'aim high' your learners

should be well prepared before they start the assignment and be encouraged to try to reach the highest standards.

Assessment materials, such as assignments and tasks, should be challenging for all learners, differentiated by outcome so that they stretch the most able but are open to lower achieving learners. This will be checked at standards verification. It is not appropriate to devise tasks that limit learners' opportunities for achieving higher grades.

Learners will need to be familiar with the assessment criteria to be able to understand the quality of what is required. They should be informed of the differences between assessment criteria so that higher skills can be achieved.

**Please note**, for the **BTEC (NQF) Firsts from 2012 and 2013**, the Level 1 criteria are a "fall back" position for learners who have not met all the Level 2 Pass criteria. Learners are not expected to "work through" the Level 1 criteria in order to reach Level 2. You should not recruit learners onto these programmes unless you consider them able to achieve at Level 2.

## Assignment briefs

The assignment brief is the document issued to learners at the start of the assessment process. Clear assignment briefs will:

- inform the learner of the tasks set
- inform the learner of the methods of assessment
- set clear deadlines for submission of work.

We provide assignment templates for you to use: www.btec.co.uk/keydocuments (see also the Appendix). If you wish, you are free to design your own. However, any assignment brief must contain the following information:

**Key information**
- Assignment title
- Assessor
- Date issued
- Hand in deadline
- Title and level of qualification (as published in the specification)
- Unit(s) covered (as published in the specification)
- Learning aims covered (NQF only)
- Duration (approximate time it expected that the assignment will take to complete).

## Purpose / Scenario

- Overview and aims
- Vocational scenario (if appropriate, giving you the opportunity to place the assignment within a vocational context).

## Tasks

- The detailed description of specific activities the learners will undertake in order to produce assessment evidence to address the criteria targeted by the tasks
- You must reference the tasks to the learning aim/objective and criteria they address
- A task should encompass the Pass, Merit and Distinction criteria within a learning aim/objective
- Higher level criteria should not be written as separate tasks: they are achieved through a qualitative improvement in the evidence submitted for a task
- Learning aims/objectives must not be split across different tasks or assignments
- Tasks should signpost the evidence required to which the criteria can be applied
- Tasks should be written in appropriate language for learners at the level of the qualification
- Include any specific preparation learners will need to make.

## Assessment criteria

- The brief must state exactly which assessment criteria are being addressed
- You must not rewrite any aspect of the published criteria, nor add your own centre-devised criteria

**Please note**: For BTEC (NQF) Firsts, tasks **must not** be designed for the level 1 criteria. Evidence which does not meet the Pass criteria at level 2 should only then be assessed against the level 1 criteria

## Forms of evidence

- A clear statement of what the learner is expected to produce as evidence
- Guidance on how the evidence will be assessed, including qualities such as length, coverage, scope, etc. as applicable

## Other information may include:

- Resources and reference materials
- Wider assessment opportunities built into the assignment or mapped within the specification
- Employer links

## Internal verification of assignment briefs

All assignment briefs, even those provided by published sources, must be internally verified, **prior to issue** to the learner. This is to verify the brief is fit for purpose, by ensuring:

- the tasks and evidence will allow the learner to address the targeted criteria
- the brief is written in a clear and accessible language
- learners' roles and tasks are vocationally relevant and appropriate to the level of the qualification
- timescales and deadlines are appropriate
- accessibility, equality and diversity are addressed, including:
- the setting of non-discriminatory assessments
- setting up fair access in line with centre policies and our requirements.

Internal verification of the assignments is carried out by a staff member who is familiar with BTEC assessment and has subject knowledge within the programme area. Internal verification should always be reported and recorded. If further actions are identified by the Internal Verifier, the Assessor is required to complete all actions and return it to the Internal Verifier for sign off. Once the assignment is verified as fit for purpose, it may be issued to the learners.

Further guidance on internal verification is provided in the **BTEC Centre Guide to Internal Verification**: www.btec.co.uk/keydocuments

## Designing assignments for retakes

For BTEC (QCF) there may be exceptional circumstances that require a learner to retake an assessment. See the **Assessment and grading** section for details.

In this instance, a new task or assignment must only target the Pass criteria that have not been met by the learner. Therefore, this is an exception to the normal rules relating to coverage of Merit and Distinction criteria.

You need to think carefully about designing a new task or assignment that is sufficiently different to the original assignment, allowing the learner to generate fresh evidence to meet the targeted Pass criteria. This may take the form of a controlled assessment or time constrained activity that will allow the learner to generate new evidence independently.

# Assignment planning process map

| | Use learning aims/objectives and criteria to identify a vocational scenario, theme or role at the appropriate level | Cross-reference to unit content and assessment guidance to ensure maximum opportunities to meet Pass, Merit & Distinction criteria |
|---|---|---|
| Check the focus against the learning aim/outcome to ensure full coverage | Select appropriate criteria to be assessed within each assignment, considering the number of units and criteria covered | |
| Check that tasks reinforce teaching and learning strategies | Develop assessment activity so that it can be mapped against the selected criteria, using tasks to cover the demands of the assignment | Consider the forms of evidence to be produced by the learners |
| Ensure that assessment activity is fit for purpose and uses methods that reflect the unit aims and objectives | Write the assignment for learners, mapping tasks against the specific criteria targeted, giving guidance on the forms of evidence they should provide | Ensure that learners have opportunities and resources to meet the targeted criteria |
| Check for and record assessment opportunities across units | Map the assignment against the course plan for unit achievement and coverage | Learners should take responsibility for their own learning. A clear deadline for assessment must be set |
| | Produce the final version of the assessment activity | |

# Assessment and grading

**Please note**:

From **1 September 2014**, we have introduced new rules for internal assessment for BTEC Firsts and Nationals. These rules will apply to all learners starting on a BTEC First or National programme from 1 September 2014.

They are not mandatory for BTEC learners who are already on programme on 1 September 2014 and this waiver extends to all learners currently on a 2-year course who:

- **started** a BTEC First or National qualification before September 2014 *(e.g. a 90-credit BTEC National Diploma)*
- **"top up"** to a larger qualification following year, 2014-2015 *(e.g. topping up to a BTEC National Extended Diploma).*

They apply to BTEC Firsts and Nationals on the Qualifications and Credit Framework (**QCF**) and the National Qualifications Framework (**NQF**) from 1 September 2014. For all other BTEC qualifications at Entry Level to Level 3, we recommend them as best practice, but they are not mandatory.

We have produced a **Guide to Internal Assessment for BTEC Firsts and Nationals** which contains detailed advice and guidance, along with **subject-specific guides** for the main BTEC sectors: www.btec.co.uk/keydocuments

## Providing feedback to learners

The tutor must decide when the learner is fully prepared to undertake the assessment. Once learners are working on assignments which will be submitted for assessment, **they must work independently** to produce and prepare evidence for assessment.

Before commencing an assessment, the tutor must ensure each learner understands the:

- assessment requirements
- nature of the evidence they need to produce
- importance of time management and meeting deadlines.

Once the learner begins work for the assessment, the tutor **must not**:

- provide specific assessment feedback on the evidence produced by the learner before it is submitted for assessment
- confirm achievement of specific assessment criteria until the assessment stage.

**Annotating learner work**

We recognise that it is good practice to make annotations on learner work during feedback. This helps the learner, Assessors, Internal Verifiers and Standards Verifiers identify where evidence towards specific assessment criteria can be found.

However, the annotations themselves do not constitute confirmation of achievement of specific assessment criteria; they are merely indicators to where the evidence can be found. Confirmation of achievement is recorded at the assessment stage, on the relevant Assessment Record only. This should be clearly understood by Assessors, Internal Verifiers and Standards Verifiers.

## Submission of evidence

Only **one submission** is allowed for each assignment.  The assessor must formally record the assessment result and confirm the achievement of specific assessment criteria.

Each learner must submit:

- an assignment for assessment which consists of evidence towards the targeted assessment criteria
- a signed and dated declaration of authenticity with each assignment which confirms they have produced the evidence themselves.

The assessor must:

- formally record and confirm the achievement of specific assessment criteria
- complete a confirmation that the evidence they have assessed is authentic and is the learner's own work.

The assessor must not:

- provide feedback or guidance on how to improve the evidence to achieve higher grades.

## Meeting deadlines

Deadlines for assessment are an important part of BTEC. Learners must be encouraged to develop good habits around timeliness and preparation that will stand them in good stead in future. It is important that learners are assessed fairly and consistently and that some learners are not advantaged by having additional time to complete assignments. You are at liberty to refuse to accept work that is late for assessment but must ensure that learners are made aware of the consequences of failing to meet deadlines.

Learners may be given authorised extensions for legitimate reasons, such as illness at the time of submission. It is best practice to have a clear assessment

procedure for a learner to formally apply for an extension if they have genuine reasons for not meeting a deadline. If an extension is granted, the new deadline must be recorded and adhered to.

Please note that once evidence is accepted for assessment, learners cannot be penalised purely for submitting work late, unless this is explicitly included in the Merit or Distinction assessment criteria and/or the associated assessment guidance. Criterion referenced qualifications demand that only the assessment criteria for the units can be used for assessment decisions. The **Pearson Policy for Assessment and Grading** can be found here: www.edexcel.com/Policies

## Opportunities for resubmission

Because every assignment contributes to the final qualification grade, it may be appropriate for the Lead Internal Verifier to authorise one opportunity for a learner to resubmit evidence to meet assessment criteria targeted by an assignment.

The Lead Internal Verifier **can only authorise a resubmission if all of the following conditions are met**:

- the learner has met initial deadlines set in the assignment, or **has** met an agreed deadline extension
- the tutor judges that the learner will be able to provide improved evidence without further guidance
- the assessor has authenticated the evidence submitted for assessment and the evidence is accompanied by a signed and dated declaration of authenticity by the learner.

If a learner **has not** met the conditions listed above, the Lead Internal Verifier **must not** authorise a resubmission.

### Procedure for resubmission

If the Lead Internal Verifier does authorise a resubmission, it **must** be:

- recorded on the assessment form
- given a deadline for resubmission within 10 working days* of the learner receiving the results of the assessment
- undertaken by the learner with no further guidance.

* 10 working days must be within term time, in the same academic year as the original submission.

Our Standards Verifiers will require you to include evidence of resubmitted work in sampling, including:

- evidence of Lead Internal Verifier authorisation, signed and dated, with the resubmission deadline clearly stated
- the initial assessment record
- the resubmitted learner evidence, accompanied by a signed and dated declaration of authenticity by the learner
- the resubmission assessment record, detailing the additional learner evidence submitted and showing any related changes to the assessment decisions
- confirmation from the assessor that the resubmitted evidence is authentic and is the learner's own work.

# Retakes for BTECs on the QCF

The Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) does not allow for compensation. This means that BTEC Firsts and Nationals on the QCF require learners to achieve every pass criterion in order to successfully achieve the qualification.

## Conditions for retaking a new assignment

If a learner has met all of the submission conditions, but still not achieved the targeted pass criteria following resubmission of an assignment, the Lead Internal Verifier may authorise one retake opportunity to meet the required pass criteria.

The Lead Internal Verifier must **only** authorise a retake in exceptional circumstances where they believe it is necessary, appropriate and fair to do so.

- The retake **must** be a new task or assignment targeted only to the pass criteria  which were not achieved in the original assignment.  Please see the BTEC Centre Guide to Assessment for further information on writing assignments for retakes (www.btec.co.uk/keydocuments)
- The assessor **cannot** award a merit or distinction grade for a retake
- The assessor **must** agree and record a clear deadline before the learner starts a retake
- The learner and the assessor **must** sign declarations of authentication as they both did for the previous submissions
- The learner **will not** be allowed any further resubmissions or retakes
- Standards Verifiers **will** require you to include evidence of any retakes in sampling.

## Retakes for BTECs on the NQF

Compensation **is** available for BTEC qualifications on the NQF.  This means that BTEC Firsts and Nationals on the NQF do not require learners to achieve every pass criterion in order to successfully achieve the qualification. Retakes are therefore **not** available to learners studying BTEC Firsts and Nationals on the NQF.

**Please note**: There are exceptions to this for some units in the Childcare sector, where compensation is not available. Please see the **Subject Guide to Internal Assessment for BTEC Firsts and Nationals in Early Years** for full details: www.btec.co.uk/keydocuments

## Marking spelling, punctuation and grammar

It is good practice for Assessors to "mark" spelling and grammar, i.e. correct mistakes on learner work and expect the learner to either correct them.

Mistakes in spelling and grammar should not influence assessment decisions unless:

- the mistakes are so problematic that they undermine the evidence of learner understanding, or
- specific assessment criteria require good communication, spelling and grammar and/or correct use of technical language.

If learner work has consistently poor spelling, grammar or language below the standard expected at the level of the qualification, it should not be accepted for marking, but should be returned to the learner to be corrected. The learner must be given a deadline by which to correct the work.

## Learners moving onto a larger qualification

The assessment requirements identified above have an impact on learners moving from a smaller BTEC qualification to a larger BTEC at the same level (for example, from a BTEC First Award to an Extended Certificate).

**Please note**: the guidance below relates to all learners on BTEC (NQF) and new learners on BTEC (QCF) from 1 September 2014.

The following does not apply to any BTEC (QCF) learners who are already on programme on 1 September 2014 and this waiver extends to all learners currently on a 2-year course who:

- **started** a BTEC First or National qualification before September 2014 *(e.g. a 90-credit BTEC National Diploma)*
- **"top up"** to a larger qualification following year, 2014-2015 *(e.g. topping up to a BTEC National Extended Diploma).*

### Top-up registration

Top-up registration reopens a learner's registration following the certification of a smaller size BTEC qualification. Top-up registration fees are proportionately lower than full registration for the larger qualification, reflecting the fact that a proportion of the larger qualification has already been achieved. After you have made a top-up registration for your learner, the achievement of the certificated units will be imported into your records on Edexcel Online.

There is no opportunity to retake the assessments in the internally assessed units via a top-up registration, so the imported grades are final. For BTEC (NQF) it is possible for a learner to retake externally assessed units.

### Re-registration

If your learner did not realise their full potential in a BTEC that they have been certificated for, and wishes to study a larger size BTEC at a new centre, then an entirely new registration may be more appropriate than a top-up registration to enable a fresh start. In this case the learner must produce entirely new evidence for assessment generated by your centre's assignment briefs.

**Remember**: Your groups may contain a mix of learners studying the qualification for the first time as well as learners who are topping up. Care should be taken to ensure that all members of these groups are equally engaged and challenged, for example by ensuring all team members in group activities have an opportunity to perform the leadership roles.

# Grading

For graded units, learners must demonstrate the following:

| To achieve a Pass for a unit | • Learners must evidence all Pass criteria for the unit |
|---|---|
| To achieve a Merit | • Learners must evidence all Pass and Merit criteria for the unit<br>• Partial achievement of the Merit criteria will result in a Pass grade only provided all of the Pass criteria have been achieved |
| To achieve a Distinction | • Learners must evidence all Pass, Merit and Distinction criteria for the unit<br>• Distinction criteria are qualitative extensions of the Merit criteria<br>• Partial achievement of the Distinction criteria will result in a Merit grade, provided all of the Pass and all of the Merit criteria have been achieved |

**Please note**: For **BTEC (NQF) Firsts,** there are Level 1 criteria. These are not targeted by the assignment, but should be used as a "fall back" position if a learner does not meet all the Level 2 Pass criteria.

Achievement for each unit will be recorded on the Notification of Performance which accompanies the qualification Certificate which will show the overall qualification grade.

# Internal verification of assessment decisions

Internal Verifiers will sample assessed work from every assignment to check the accuracy of assessment decisions.

Internal verification of assessment decisions should be carried out by a staff member who is familiar with BTEC assessment and has subject knowledge of the programme area. The sample should include Pass, Merit and Distinction criteria where possible and be sufficient to confirm achievement of national standards. A learner who has not yet achieved is also a valid selection for an internal verification sample.

Feedback from the Internal Verifier to the Assessor should comment on the quality of feedback given to the learner and the effective completion of documentation. Internal verification of assessed work should be clearly recorded. If action is required, the Assessor should complete this and return it to the Internal Verifier for sign off.

Internal verification of assessment decisions must not be end-loaded. It is important that it is undertaken as soon as possible after assessment as this will improve the quality of assessment practice and not disadvantage learners. Internal Verification should be undertaken before work is returned to the learners.

Further guidance on internal verification is provided in the **BTEC Centre Guide to Internal Verification**, which can be found on the BTEC website: www.btec.co.uk/keydocuments

# Learner appeals

You should have in place a means for ensuring all learners and staff are aware of:

- what constitutes an appeal and what is considered assessment malpractice
- the related processes for instigating an appeal or investigating malpractice
- the possible outcomes that may be reached
- the consequences of both internal and external outcomes
- the process that exists to enable learners to make an appeal with Pearson relating to the external or internally awarded assessment outcomes

Procedures should be known and understood by learners and staff. Malpractice issues can be minimised by ensuring learners/staff are aware of the issues: plagiarism, collusion, fabrication of results, falsifying grades, fraudulent certification claims; referencing skills; promoting a zero tolerance approach.

The appeals process must be understood by learners and staff. It should be transparent and enable formal challenges to assessment grades.

A thorough learner induction programme could cover this. The learner handbook is also a useful way to ensure the key information about your assessment and appeals policies are communicated.

## Recognition of prior learning

Recognition of Prior Learning is a method of assessment that considers whether learners can demonstrate that they can meet the assessment requirements for a unit through knowledge, understanding or skills they already possess and so do not need to develop through a course of learning. It is used sparingly and is likely to be applicable to adult learners returning to education.

Centres are expected to develop their own policy in line with Pearson policy. Further guidance on Recognition of Prior Learning can be found on the Policies section of the website: www.edexcel.com/policies

## Functional skills

Achievement of specific Functional Skills is not a requirement of BTEC qualifications. Where additional evidence is presented for Functional Skills, it should be clear that this is assessed against the criteria for Functional Skills units and all related comments should be explicit.

# Assessment tracking and recording

It is essential to track and record learner achievement throughout your BTEC programme. All assessment must be recorded in such a way that:

- assessment evidence is clearly measured against national standards
- learner progress can be accurately tracked
- the assessment process can be reliably verified
- there is clear evidence of the safety of certification

Therefore, you should plan a timetable of assessment activities with clearly identified evidence requirements and target completion dates. Include internal verification of:

- assessment plans
- assignment briefs prior to distribution to learners
- assessment decisions

This enables a holistic approach to assessment of the programme and organises the sequence of delivery and assessment of units.

Prepare assessment tracking to record all assessment activities for the qualification on a unit-by-unit basis, at criterion level.

Track learner progress, recording what each learner has achieved and what still has to be done. This helps to ensure full coverage of the units and provide opportunities for grading. It also helps enable internal verification and provide samples for Standards Verifiers and other external audits as required.

## Retention of learner evidence and assessment records

You must keep current learner evidence and assessment records safely and securely to ensure that they are available for verification. Up to date, securely stored assessment records also help to minimise the risk of assessment malpractice, or potential issues if an assessor leaves during a BTEC programme. You will need to:

- store all assessment records securely and safely relating to both internally and externally set assessments
- maintain records of learner achievements that are up to date, regularly reviewed and tracked accurately against national standards
- have all current learner evidence available for verification purposes. Once learners have received their BTEC certificates, you may return their work to them if you wish
- retain records of assessment decisions at criterion level for centre and awarding body scrutiny for a minimum of three years following certification

All assessment records must be secure against hazards like theft and fire, etc. The records must be of sufficient detail to show exactly how assessment decisions were made (i.e. to assessment criterion level). Data should only be accessible by relevant staff.

Up to date and accurate learner progress information must be recorded: registration; learner feedback and progress; achievement (at assessment criterion level). Staff must check accuracy of information recorded.

Learner records and monitoring information should be kept in an appropriate and accessible format. This may be electronic. Records must be available to Pearson for audit on request.

This is particularly important when there are changes to assessment staff. Experience tells us that this is a common cause of quality issues.

Internal verification and assessment records must be maintained and checked for all learners currently on BTEC programmes. These should be of sufficient detail to show exactly how assessment decisions were made (i.e. to assessment criterion level). Records must be securely kept for Pearson audit and in case of learner appeals, certification issues, etc.

Learner work must be made available to Pearson as required. On occasion, the regulator may also request portfolios of learner work and assessment records.

The format and storage of evidence must allow for this: security needs to be maintained. This is usually at programme team level.

It is a risk to allow learners to keep work long-term while on programme. Wherever possible, evidence produced by learners still on programme should be kept at the centre. Electronic archiving is acceptable, providing it is sufficient and accessible on request.

Following learner certification, you must keep records of assessment decisions at criterion level and the associated internal verification documentation for a minimum of three years. You don't need to keep learner work or individual feedback documents to learners.

# Forms and templates

The following forms and templates may be used to plan, deliver, assess and verify BTEC programmes. They are not mandatory, and may be amended to suit the requirements of your own centre. Blank templates of these documents are available on the BTEC website: www.btec.co.uk/keydocuments

- Assessment plan
- Assignment brief – BTEC (QCF)
- Internal verification of assignment brief – BTEC (QCF)
- Assignment brief – BTEC (NQF)
- Internal verification of assignment brief – BTEC (NQF)
- Observation record
- Witness statement
- Assessment record
- Internal verification of assessment decisions – BTEC (QCF)
- Internal verification of assessment decisions – BTEC (NQF)

# Glossary of BTEC terminology

### Edexcel Online

This is a multifunctional system for centres. Access is password protected and is managed by your examinations officer. Screens show programmes and learners within a centre, allow for new registrations or withdrawals. Lead Internal Verifier registrations and withdrawals will be done through this portal. Standards Verifier and Centre Quality Reviewer allocations and consequent standards and Quality Review and Development status can be viewed here.

### Guided Learning Hours (GLH)

Guided learning hours are a notional measure of the substance of a unit. It includes an estimate of time that might be allocated to direct teaching, instruction and assessment, together with other structured learning time such as directed assignments or supported individual study. It excludes learner initiated private study. Centres are advised to consider this definition when planning the programme of study associated with this specification.

### Internal Verification (IV)

This is a centre/team based process. Your Internal Verifiers check the quality of assignments before delivery to learners and verify the accuracy of assessment decisions to meet national standards. You should have an internal verification plan and a Lead Internal Verifier who will manage the process.

## Lead Internal Verifier (Lead IV)

You will need to appoint one Lead IV for each Principal Subject Area (PSA) being delivered across the levels up to and including level 3. The Lead Internal Verifier monitors internal quality assurance for their subject area. Lead Internal Verifiers must register on OSCA at the start of each academic year to access standardisation and training materials. For BTEC (QCF), the Lead Internal Verifier should complete online standardisation to gain accredited status. This is directly linked to certification and Standards Verification.

## NQF

National Qualifications Framework.

## Ofqual

The regulator of qualifications, exams and tests in England and vocational qualifications in Northern Ireland. The Welsh Government has responsibility for education in Wales.

## Online Standardisation for Centre Assessors (OSCA)

This is an online system that allows Lead Internal Verifiers access to standardisation and training materials. It is accessed via Edexcel Online. Exemplar work is available online for centre staff to use. OSCA is the portal for centre appointed Lead Internal Verifiers to access and complete accreditation practice materials and exercise.

## Principal Subject Area (PSA)

For quality assurance purposes, BTEC (QCF) from Entry Level to Level 3 are grouped into Principal Subject Areas (e.g. Business, Health & Social Care).

## QCF

Qualification Credit Framework.

## Quality Nominee (QN)

This is the person nominated by the centre who acts as main contact for BTEC.

## Quality Review and Development (QRD)

All centres delivering BTECs from Entry Level to Level 3 will receive an annual quality visit from a Centre Quality Reviewer. They will liaise with your Quality Nominee and look at centre systems and procedures for managing quality assurance.

## Regional Quality Manager (RQM)

There is a team of regionally-based Pearson personnel with a remit to ensure that centre quality standards meet awarding body requirements. They work alongside Vocational Assessment teams, Centre Quality Reviewers and Standards Verifiers to ensure that national and quality standards are met and maintained.

## Standards Verification (SV)

The standards verifier is a subject assessment specialist appointed by the awarding body who verifies that centre assessment decisions meet national standards. Standards verifier activities can be conducted electronically or by post as agreed by the centre and Standards Verifier.

Standards Verification is an annual process for BTEC (NQF). For **BTEC (QCF) only**, it is linked to Lead Internal Verifier accreditation:

- **Confirmation sampling**
  Principal Subject Areas can expect to be sampled at least once during their Lead Internal Verifier accreditation period to confirm that national standards are being maintained.

- **Accreditation sampling**
  If a centre Lead Internal Verifier for a Principal Subject Area is unsuccessful in achieving accredited Lead Internal Verifier status for a Principal Subject Area, they may achieve this via Accreditation Sampling, provided the sample is successful at the first submission.

- **Self assessment not attempted (SANA)**
  If a centre has not registered an individual as a Lead Internal Verifier to complete online standardisation via OSCA for their Principal Subject Area then they will automatically be selected for sampling. A positive outcome will not confer accredited Lead Internal Verifier status however, and the centre will be required to complete the accreditation process at the next opportunity.