

BTEC LEARNER HANDBOOK

2018 - 2019



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What are Vocational Qualifications?

Vocational qualifications are nationally recognised qualifications. They are different from traditional *GCSE* because they are linked to a particular area of work.



What makes vocational Qualifications different?

- You will develop skills, knowledge and understanding in the vocational area you are studying.
- Each vocational course is made up of a number of units, allowing you to build up your qualification in stages.
- You will be assessed through coursework and 1 written exam.
- You should take responsibility for your own learning by planning your work, doing research and regularly reviewing your progress.



Why do we offer BTEC courses?

- They prepare you for the world of work and provide a good starting point for other qualifications such as BTEC Level 3 courses (equivalent to A Levels) and NVQs that can be studied in the workplace.
- Employers value the qualities that vocational students bring to the workplace e.g. organisation, time management, communication and research skills.
- Universities value the independent study skills that vocational students bring to their courses.
- The courses are flexible so that they meet the needs of a wide range of students. They are available at different levels in a variety of formats. They can be taken alongside other qualifications such as traditional *GCSEs*.

- They give you the opportunity to try a range of practical activities, investigate how professionals work and working in teams.



What are BTEC qualifications worth?

Award	Level	Year	Length	Units	Equivalent
Edexcel BTEC	2	9/11	2 years	4	1 x GCSE grades A*-C



Which BTEC course do we offer?

At school we offer the following BTEC courses:

- Level 1/ Level 2 First Award in Music
- Level 1/ Level 2 First Award in Construction and the Built Environment



About the BTEC Courses

BTEC (Key stage 4):

This course is made up of 4 units; each unit will take approximately 30 hours to complete, making a total of 120 glh (guided learning hours)

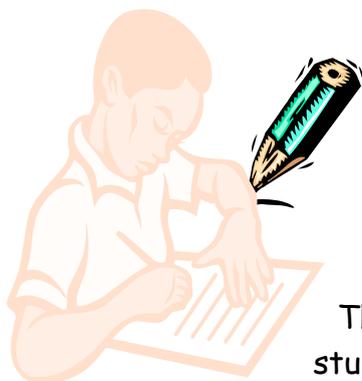
You may be working on two or even three different units at the same time. You will have to be well organised and remember to keep information in the right places in your folder.

You will be taught the background information by doing class activities and research tasks. Then you will be given an assignment to complete. The assignment will be written or practical with simple tasks first to give you the opportunity to achieve the basic pass level, then the more complex tasks that require more research and independence will allow you to achieve merit and distinction grades. It is important to

meet the deadlines so that you can get feedback from your teacher and understand how to reach the higher grades.

Will there be coursework?

Yes, you will complete 3 coursework units. There will also be 1 written exam and you will have 2 chances to take this exam in Year 11: In January and May.



What will happen in lessons?

The lessons will vary according to the subject and level but all students should experience most of these activities:

- Discussion - one to one or in groups
- Research - group or individual using a variety of methods
- Report writing - manually or using ICT
- Presentations - in groups or individually
- Practical work
- Display work



How will I learn?

Different styles of teaching will be required throughout the course. This will depend on the unit being taught, the stage of delivery and the type of assessment required for that unit.

□ **Teacher input**

At the start of a unit there will be a lot of teacher input; question and answer sessions, discussions, note taking and handouts. This may all happen at the beginning of a unit or at different points throughout the unit. It is important to note any information you are given, as it may be required at a later stage in the unit.

□ **Student investigation**

Once the assignment has been explained and the tasks have been set, you will have to work on your own to find the information you need and then you will have to produce the information in a particular format to meet the requirements of the task. The work you produce must be your own; word for word copying from a textbook, or copying and pasting from the Internet **will not** be accepted nor will you be allowed to copy the work of other students. You will have to check regularly with your teacher to make sure that your work is correct and to discuss any ideas that you want to develop.

□ **Group work**

For some tasks you may have to work in a group, either to find information or to produce evidence. This is quite acceptable providing that all students take an equal share of the work and that individual contributions are identified.

□ **Practical Work.**

There will be plenty of opportunity for practical work, both in lessons and for the coursework. This will vary depending on the subject. Learning practical skills is a valuable part of the BTEC qualifications.

□ **Learning by experience**

Learning by experience is usually done by setting up work situations in the classroom (e.g. setting up for an event or production, completing practical construction jobs). Whether real or pretend, a lot can be learned from this type of situation and it is important to make the most of it by preparing thoroughly beforehand and recording any information you find. Inviting visitors into school from the vocational area is another good way of linking your work with what really happens in the workplace.

□ **Developing skills**

During your course you will be taught many skills:

- communication skills
- research skills using a variety of methods
- I.C.T. skills using a variety of programs
- practical skills using different techniques and equipment
- presentation skills using a variety of formats
- organisational skills

You will be expected to practise these skills and apply them where appropriate throughout the course.



What will be expected of you?

You will be expected to do all of the following as part of your learning:

- Read and research
- Keep a record of the information you find and the sources
- Plan your work in a logical order and keep a record of your progress
- Talk to your teachers about your ideas and how to achieve the best results
- Produce drafts and final copies of your work
- Produce good quality work with high standards of grammar and spelling
- Present your work in a suitable format according to the purpose and the audience
- Evaluate your work and make suggestions for improvement
- Meet deadlines
- Keep a record of the work you have completed, including the grades and points you have been awarded



Who will be involved with the course?

Subject teachers (assessors)

Construction - Miss Gaiety

Music - Mrs Rolls and Mrs Hird-Edwards

They are responsible for planning lessons, preparing resources, assessing work and making sure that the units are completed on time.

Head of Department (programme leader)

Construction - Miss Gaiety

Music - Mrs Hird-Edwards

This is the teacher in charge of the course. She/He must make sure that the units are being taught correctly and that sufficient resources are available.

Internal Verifier

Construction - Miss Byrt

Music - Mrs Hird-Edwards

He/She will check (IV) the assessment of all teachers on the course: they sample the work of all students on the course and provides written feedback. The IV works with the external verifier.

Exams Manager (Quality Nominee)

Mrs Harris

This person oversees all of the vocational courses to make sure that standards are being met.

External Verifier

This person has knowledge of the subject and the course and will sample your work from each unit.

Exams Officer

Mrs Wilkins

The examinations assistant/ officer is responsible for registering students for the course and for claiming qualifications.



How will your work be assessed?

You will have to produce a portfolio of evidence and take an external examination. For each unit of work, you will be given a series of tasks to complete and it will identify what you have to do to achieve. You must submit your work by the deadline set by your teacher. Your teacher will check your work against the assessment criteria and let you know what grade you have achieved. Points will be awarded and added to your overall score with every unit that you complete. You will be expected to meet regular deadlines and a referral procedure will operate for students who fail to do this.



How to achieve the grades

The tasks at each level are graded according to how difficult they are to achieve. The key words used in the tasks will help you to understand what you have to do.

BTEC First

Obtaining a Pass Grade

KEY WORDS	DESCRIPTION
<i>Complete...</i>	Complete a form, diagram or drawing.
<i>Demonstrate...</i>	Show that you can do a particular activity.
<i>Describe...</i>	Give a clear, straightforward description which includes all the main points
<i>Identify...</i>	Give all the basic facts which relate to a certain topic.
<i>List...</i>	Write a list of the main items (not sentences).
<i>Name...</i>	State the proper terms related to a drawing or diagram.
<i>Outline...</i>	Give all the main points, but without going into too much detail.
<i>State...</i>	Point out or list the main features.

In order to achieve a pass grade you will have to identify information, such as making a list, producing a poster. You will be expected to put things into your own words from the information you have found.

Obtaining a Merit grade

KEY WORDS	DESCRIPTION
<i>Analyse...</i>	Identify the factors that apply, and state how these are linked and how each of them relates to the topic.
<i>Comment on...</i>	Give your own opinions or views
<i>Compare...</i> <i>Contrast...</i>	Identify the main factors relating to two or more items and point out the similarities and differences.
<i>Competently use...</i>	Take full account of information and feedback you have obtained to review or improve an activity.
<i>Demonstrate...</i>	Prove you can carry out a more complex activity.
<i>Describe...</i>	Give a full description including details of all the relevant

	features
Explain...	Give logical reasons to support your views.
Justify...	Give reasons for the points you are making so that the reader knows what you are thinking.
Suggest...	Give you own ideas or thoughts.

To achieve this grade you will have to work independently and find information using different methods. You will have to write in detail and give examples to show that you have understood the information well. You will have to explain in details using your own words and give reasons for the points that you make. You will have to review what you have done and give reasons for the choices you made.

Obtaining a Distinction grade

KEYWORD	DESCRIPTION
Analyse...	Identify several factors, show how they are linked, and explain the importance of each.
Compare... Contrast...	Identify the main factors in two or more situations, then explain the similarities and differences, and in some cases adapt your original ideas.
Demonstrate...	Prove that you can carry out a complex activity taking into account information you have obtained or received to adapt your original ideas.
Describe...	Give a comprehensive description which tells a story to the reader and shows that you can apply your knowledge and information correctly.
Evaluate...	Bring together all your information and make a judgement on the importance or success of something.
Explain...	Provide full details and reasons to support the arguments you are making
Justify...	Give full reasons or evidence to support your opinion.
Recommend...	Weigh up all the evidence to come to a conclusion, with reasons, about what would be best.

To achieve this grade you will have to be completely independent, using your own ideas, giving your opinion and justifying the points that you make. You will be expected to link ideas together and evaluate your work by identifying the strengths and weaknesses and giving ideas for improvement. You will use your teachers mainly for support and guidance, as the ideas will be yours.

Plagiarism and Malpractice

In order to achieve a BTEC qualification, you must produce your own work. You will not be allowed to:

- Copy word for word from textbooks
- Copy and paste from the Internet
- Copy from other students (past or present)

The examination board has a clear policy on how to deal with students who cheat. If you copy the work of another student you will risk having your work cancelled and may achieve nothing. If you lend your work to others, you will also risk having your work cancelled. If you steal another student's work and copy it, the exam board may cancel all of your courses. Do not cheat, remember your teachers are very good at detecting work that has been copied!



How will student progress be monitored?

INTRODUCTION

You will be assessed through teacher marked assignments. You need to be aware of the volume of work that needs to be generated on an on-going basis to complete these assignments and the importance of getting that work handed in by the given deadline.

You will be closely monitored throughout the course and your subject teachers will keep detailed records of your progress. This information will be used for reports and parents evenings and regular updates will be sent to Heads of Year to follow up where necessary.

You will be required to keep a record of your own achievement as follows:

- Work handed in for assessment
- Unit grades achieved

If you keep your record sheets up to date you will be aware of your current achievement the grade that you are working towards and what you have to do to improve

ASSESSMENT ENTITLEMENT

If you are a student of the school, you are entitled to:

- Fair and open assessment practices.
- An assignment indicating the criteria against which you will be assessed, assessment plan, unit specification, and a scheme of work.
- Regular advice, counselling and guidance through tutors.
- Access to an open and fair appeals procedure
- Assessments being carried out regularly and outcomes reported with written and/or verbal feedback

ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES

Handing in Assignments

- You will be given a deadline for each assignment
- You will be given oral/written feedback on your work.

Failure to meet deadlines

- If you fail to hand in work by the agreed deadline you will need to provide evidence of extenuating circumstance e.g. a Doctor's Certificate. It will not be acceptable to say to your teacher that you did not have time to complete the assignment
- A failure on your part may result in you not having the opportunity to upgrade your work for a merit or distinction level

Can you appeal against a grade?

Once your work has been assessed and a grade recorded, that grade will stand, unless the internal verifier requires that the grade be changed. Students can appeal against a grading decision made by the teacher/assessor. There is a 3-stage appeals procedure as follows:

APPEALS PROCEDURE

Stage 1 Teacher/assessor and candidate

If you disagree with an assessment you must discuss your reasons with the assessor concerned as soon as possible. Normally this will be immediately after you receive the assessment decision. If this is not convenient, you should arrange an appointment with the teacher/assessor.

The teacher/assessor will consider your reasons and look again at your work. S/he must then give you an immediate response, which must be:

- a) a clear explanation backed up in writing, of the assessment decision and
- b) a new decision or confirmation of the original decision.

If you agree with the teacher/assessor's response then the appeal stops at that point.

You must tell the teacher/assessor if you are still unhappy with the decision, your appeal will then go to stage 2.

Stage 2 Internal Verifier

If you are still dissatisfied after stage 1, you must ask the internal verifier for a re-assessment in writing within 10 working days of the original assessment.

The internal verifier will reconsider the assessment decision taking into account the following:

- a) the candidate's reason for appeal
- b) the candidate's evidence and associated records
- c) the teacher/assessor's reason for the decision

The internal verifier and quality nominee will try to seek a solution between the teacher/assessor and candidate. You must tell the internal verifier if you are still unhappy with the reconsidered assessment decision. The appeal will then go to stage 3.

Stage 3**Internal Verification Appeals Panel**

The Internal Verification Appeals Panel will normally meet within 2 weeks of the receipt of the appeal by the Internal Programme Verifier, with re-assessment, if deemed necessary by the panel, taking place within 15 working days of the appeals panel meeting.

The decision made at stage 3 is final