

# BTEC HIGHER NATIONALS

**Building the right BTEC programme  
for your learners:**

- BTEC Level 4 Higher National Certificate
- BTEC Level 5 Higher National Diploma

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**Higher Education is evolving.** Due to the recent changes in funding, and the increasingly competitive jobs market, more learners are seeking to maximise the value of their HE qualifications. UCAS reported that in 2012, for the first time since 2006, the application rate of 18 year olds in England fell, suggesting that around 15,000 young applicants expected to apply for university did not do so.

The BTEC Higher Nationals suite of qualifications provides an excellent choice for FE colleges looking to broaden their vocational offering to meet the demands of young learners seeking a cost-effective, vocational pathway to HE.



## What are BTEC Higher Nationals?

BTEC Higher Nationals (HNs) provide a programme of specialist vocational learning at levels 4 and 5 which reflects the requirement of professional organisations and meets the National Occupational Standards for each sector or industry.

With their strong emphasis on developing practical skills alongside specialist knowledge and understanding for the sector, BTEC Higher Nationals are recognised internationally by employers as providing learners with the key concepts and practical skills for direct progression to – or within - employment.

### How are they delivered?

BTEC Higher Nationals are directly available from Pearson as QCF qualifications or indirectly in the form of franchised institutional awards via collaborative arrangements with Universities signed up to the Pearson Licence Agreement.

### What do I need to do to deliver Higher Nationals?

To offer BTEC Higher Nationals colleges must have both Centre and Qualification Approval. Although most FE colleges already have BTEC Centre Approval, they must secure specific approval for each BTEC HN - see the **Quality Assurance** section on page 25 for more details.



## Level 4: BTEC Higher National Certificate (HNC) 120 credits (QCF)

BTEC HNCs at level 4 offer an internationally recognised qualification with the potential for career progression and professional development for those already in employment, and opportunities to progress into higher education.

LEVEL  
**4**  
HNC

### *How long is the course?*

The study programme can be part-time or full time, and the framework gives centres the flexibility to develop engaging, relevant programmes to support their learners' professional development aspirations.

Most BTEC Higher Nationals at level 4 are taken by part-time learners studying over two years, although in some sectors there are opportunities to take a more intensive programme of study over a shorter period.

### *Where next?*

Learners who achieve their BTEC Level 4 Higher National Certificate can progress first to a BTEC Level 5 Higher National Diploma which offers a great degree of specialisation and then potentially to degree level.

Go to **Programme Design & Delivery** on page 5 to find out more about how to construct a full programme at level 4.



## Level 5: BTEC Higher National Diploma (HND) 240 credits (QCF)

BTEC level 5 HNDs offer greater depth and specialisation than the level 4 HNCs, providing a robust platform for progression into – or within – employment, or to further study at degree level.

LEVEL  
**5**  
HND

### *How long is the course?*

While retaining the same flexibility as the BTEC Level 4 HNC, BTEC Level 5 HND learners are predominantly following a full-time course of study, providing opportunities for them to apply their knowledge and practical skills in the workplace. If they are studying full time, they can take up formal work placements or part-time employment experience as part of their course.

### *Where next?*

Learners achieving a BTEC Level 5 HND can progress to – or within – employment in their sector, or continue their studies to degree level. A Level 5 HND provides opportunities to specialise within a sector, and learners can choose to use this as a starting point to work towards professional membership or study for entry to their specialist professional body.

Go to **Programme Design & Delivery** on page 5 to find out more about how to construct a full programme at level 5.



## BTEC Professional Courses

### *Developing the skills learners need for workplace progression*

Learners may be looking for a shorter course of specialist study to enhance specific skills, knowledge and understanding – or to improve professional practice – to support progression within their chosen career.

The BTEC Professional suite offers exactly the kind of flexibility they are looking for: a wide range of work-related qualifications from levels 4–7 directly related to their work experience or career progression. They can select the sector specialism, level and delivery method that best suits their individual needs.

### **BTEC Professional**

Find out more at  
[www.btec.co.uk/btecprofessional](http://www.btec.co.uk/btecprofessional).

## BTEC Level 6 Diplomas in Engineering

As part of our continuing commitment to higher education in further and higher education colleges we have developed a new suite of BTEC Level 6 Diplomas in Engineering in consultation with SEMTA, Engineering Council UK and a number of leading Professional Engineering Institutions.

These qualifications are designed to meet the “Further Learning” requirements for holders of BTEC HND or Foundation degree who wish to achieve professional Incorporated Engineering (IEng) status.

These qualifications also form an integral part of SEMTA’s new Higher Apprenticeship in Advanced Manufacturing Engineering at Level 6.

To find out more visit  
[www.btec.co.uk/engineering-level6](http://www.btec.co.uk/engineering-level6)

## HN eLearning for Higher Nationals in Business

### Enriching the experience, extending the reach

Online resources will be available from Autumn 2012 to support core units from the BTEC HNs in Business. This online resources will help you to:

- make the most of tutor time invested in planning, delivery and assessment
- support learners with an enriched, interactive learning experience
- reach wider audiences through blended or distance learning options.

To find out more visit  
[www.pearsonfe.co.uk/hn-elearning](http://www.pearsonfe.co.uk/hn-elearning)



## Programme Design & Delivery

### The Essentials

#### BTEC Higher Nationals on the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF)

BTEC Higher National qualifications are allocated a minimum credit value and Guided Learning Hours (GLH) at each level.



#### BTEC HNs on the QCF at a glance

Level	Credit values	Guided Learning Hours (GLH)
<p>BTEC Higher Nationals are available at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ <b>BTEC Level 4 HNC</b> (Higher National Certificate)</li><li>■ <b>BTEC Level 5 HND</b> (Higher National Diploma)</li></ul> <p>The Rules of Combination allow learners the flexibility to include units from the levels above and below their chosen level of study.</p>	<p><b>Each QCF unit normally earns 15 credits</b>, usually in multiples of 5 credits.</p> <p>Units can vary in size, and the credit allocation for each unit is explained in each individual course specification.</p>	<p>Providing a starting point for your resource planning, the Guided Learning Hours for each level are set at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ <b>Level 4 HNC</b> 480 GLH</li><li>■ <b>Level 5 HND</b> 960 GLH</li></ul> <p>Ofqual define GLH as “the number of hours of teacher-supervised or directed study time required to teach a qualification or unit of a qualification”.</p>

For more information on how to construct a BTEC HN course of study, see **Unit Selection** on page 7. To find out about unit grading see **Awarding Qualification and Unit Grades** on page 21.

How can we identify each individual qualification and pathway?

QCF qualification and pathway titling

The QCF has rationalised naming conventions to make each qualification as clear and distinctive as possible on the Register of Regulated Qualifications (RRQ) at <http://register.ofqual.gov.uk/>.

The full formal titles will be used on all official documentation (e.g. specifications); however we usually use shortened versions in general communications for ease of recognition.

Where qualifications offer defined pathways, these are also listed in the specifications, with the pathway name in parenthesis.



For example:

Qualification	Pathway
BTEC Level 4 HNC Diploma in Health & Social Care	BTEC Level 5 HND Diploma in Health & Social Care (Management)
BTEC Level 4 HND Diploma in Business	BTEC Level 5 HND Diploma in Business (Marketing)

Building a programme of study

BTEC HNs are developed in collaboration with centres, employers, professional bodies and the Sector Skills Councils (SSCs and SSBs) to ensure that the mandatory units for each qualification meet the skills requirements of the sector.

Programme of study	
Core Units (Mandatory)	Specialist Units (Optional)
Compulsory for all learners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>As listed in the specification and units.</li><li>The core units contain the essential underpinning knowledge required for this level by the sector, regardless of specialisation.</li></ul>	Combining credit values and levels as defined in the specification and by the Rules of Combination, learners can complete their course by selecting from: <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>Specialist units for the qualification.</li><li>Meeting Local Needs (MLN) units.</li><li>Locally-devised specialist units.</li></ol>

Unit selection

Core units (mandatory)

Each BTEC Higher National qualification has a specified credit value for the 'mandatory' units which provide the core knowledge, skills and understanding required.

The minimum number of credits required from mandatory units varies for each qualification. Mandatory units provide:

- a broad-based introduction and the essential components for the qualification
- the underpinning knowledge for the subject area
- a platform for further specialised study.

Specialist units (optional)

Specialist units offer the opportunity to tailor the learner's individual programme of study to match their professional needs and aspirations.

The selection of specialist units allows learners to:

- build on the fundamentals introduced in the mandatory units
- be more focused around an area of specialisation for a sector-specific field of employment
- allow greater depth and breadth of learning.

Rules of Combination (RoC)

The RoC provide the guidelines you need to build a valid programme of study.

Each centre is responsible for creating programmes of study which combine units correctly. If you need more information or advice, you can:

- download your specification today [www.btec.co.uk/highnationals](http://www.btec.co.uk/highnationals)
- ask Edexcel at [www.edexcel.co.uk/askedexcel](http://www.edexcel.co.uk/askedexcel) or contact specialist subject advisors at [www.btec.co.uk/contactus](http://www.btec.co.uk/contactus)



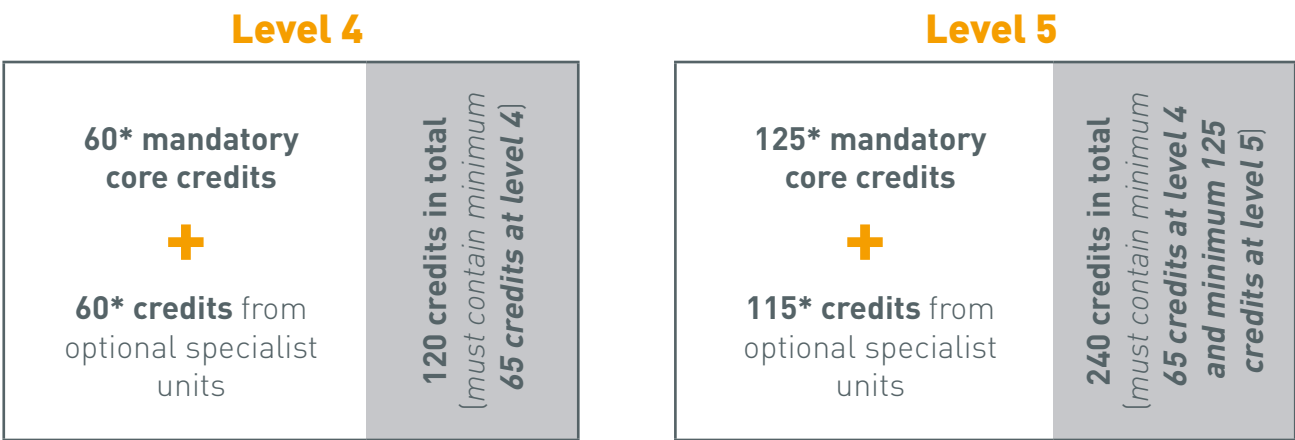


Combining mandatory core and specialist units

To achieve a full qualification at each level, learners must gain a minimum number of credits (**120 credits** at **level 4** and **240** at **level 5**), studying a mix of mandatory core units and their own selection from a range of optional specialist units.

These units can be at the same level as the qualification, or at one level above or below; the Rules of Combination, outlined in the specification, define how the units can be combined to create a valid qualification.

This flexibility ensures each programme of study provides the essential underpinning knowledge required for each level and sector, and delivers learning tailored to the individual’s professional needs and aspirations.



\*These are guidelines figures only – the breakdown between mandatory and specialist units is given in each individual specification at [www.btec.co.uk/highnationals](http://www.btec.co.uk/highnationals).

Building a programme of study - at a glance

Working within this framework, centres have 3 options for selecting the optional, specialist section in any programme of study:

- 1. Specialist units for the qualification.
- 2. Meeting Local Needs (MLN) units.
- 3. Locally-devised specialist units.

1. Specialist Units for the Qualification

You can select specialist units from the same qualification and level of study, combining level and credit values as defined by the Rules of Combination in the specification.

The full range of units for each qualification is listed online alongside the specification at [www.btec.co.uk/highnationals](http://www.btec.co.uk/highnationals).

These units should be the main source for building a programme of study.



2. Meeting Local Needs (MLN)

If your learners require a greater degree of specialisation than the standard units allow, you are free to select the specific units you need from any other accredited BTEC HN QCF qualifications.

The same guidelines about credit value and level apply as with the standard specialist units, and these will be outlined in the Rules of Combination detailed in the specification.

All units imported to meet local needs must be at level 4 or level 5 **only**, and cannot exceed the maximum credit value for imported units defined for the qualification:

- **BTEC Level 4 HNC Diploma:** centres can import a **maximum of 30 credits**.
- **BTEC Level 5 HND Diploma:** centres can import a **maximum of 60 credits**.

Centres traditionally use this option to tailor a programme to the individual requirements of local learners or employers, while ensuring it remains coherent and continues to reflect the standard and vocational purpose of the qualification.

Tailoring MLN to sector needs

Although the importing of MLN units is usually restricted to 30 credits at level 4 and 60 Credits at level 5, there are two exceptions:

- **BTEC HNC Level 4 in Construction and the Built Environment (Civil Engineering)** consists of 100% mandatory units. As there are no optional specialist units taken as part of this qualification, you cannot import any MLN units.
- **BTEC HNC Level 4 in Health and Social Care** qualifications restrict the credit value of any imported units to a maximum of 15 credits. This exception applies both to MLN and locally specified units (see below).



3. Locally devised specialist units

If any centre identifies a very specific local need which is not met by the existing range of QCF units, they can approach Pearson to discuss creating a new unit.

In a limited number of cases, where there is a clearly demonstrable need, Pearson will work with the centre to develop bespoke units, which have to be submitted to Ofqual for accreditation and inclusion on the QCF, and assigned a credit value. Delivery of the unit can begin only once the unit has been fully accredited and added to the qualification.

The length of time from submission to accreditation is not fixed; we advise centres to work with 6 months as a rule of thumb, although the writing and accreditation process varies significantly depending on the nature of the unit.

If you are interested in developing a locally devised unit, please contact your **curriculum development manager** in the first instance (see page 27 for full contact details).

We’ve expanded the range of BTEC HNs on the QCF, with courses available across 16 sectors:

You can browse through our full portfolio of BTEC courses at levels 4 and 5 in the following pages.

All our specifications and unit lists are available FREE online – go to [www.btec.co.uk/highernationals](http://www.btec.co.uk/highernationals) to view or download just the information you need.

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Advanced Studies in Early Years

Our BTEC Higher Nationals in Advanced Studies in Early Years at levels 4 and 5 equip learners with the knowledge, understanding, training and skills that are essential for finding employment in today’s highly competitive job market.

The strong vocational elements in the Early Years courses ensure learners have a chance to develop the personal qualities – and gain the experience – they need to make a valuable contribution as soon as they start work.

- **Progression to further study:** units achieved at level 4 HNC count towards the level 5 HNC qualification, making progression straightforward to higher higher level study, including degree-level courses.

Course Listings

Course Name	Level 4 HNC Diploma	Level 5 HND Diploma
Advanced Studies in Early Years	✓	✓

Applied Science

Our BTEC Higher Nationals in Applied Science offer vocational training and education in both Applied Biology and Applied Chemistry.

- **Success at work:** equip learners with the knowledge to succeed in biologically or chemically-based industries and help them develop the skills, techniques and attributes essential for successful performance in working life.
- **Core skills for technical work:** include units relating to the Laboratory and Associated Technical Activities (LATA) level 4 NVQ, providing basic skills needed for technical work such as quality control and laboratory management.

Course Listings

Course Name	Level 4 HNC Diploma	Level 5 HND Diploma
Applied Biology	✓	✓
Applied Chemistry	✓	✓





## Art & Design

With a choice of 14 BTEC Higher Nationals in Art and Design, learners have the opportunity to master the essential techniques of their craft and develop their higher-level skills in subjects as diverse as Fine Art, 3D Design, Interactive Media, Graphic Design, Fashion and Textiles, and Photography.

- **The skills for success:** broaden learners' experience and depth of knowledge, allowing them to develop a range of skills, techniques and attributes essential for successful performance in working life.

### Course Listings

Course Name	Level 4 HNC Diploma	Level 5 HND Diploma
Art and Design	✓	✓
3D Design	✓	✓
Fashion and Textiles	✓	✓
Fine Art	✓	✓
Graphic Design	✓	✓
Interactive Media	✓	✓
Photography	✓	✓

## Business



Our BTEC Higher National qualifications deliver the essential understanding and practical skills for success in business life.

- **Business skills:** sharpen cognitive skills, critical thinking, analysis and synthesis, problem solving and decision making; provide the core skills for business reporting, including communication and numeric skills; and develop people skills including negotiating, team-building, leadership and self-management capabilities.

### Course Listings

Course Name	Level 4 HNC Diploma	Level 5 HND Diploma
Business	✓	✓
Business (Accounting)		✓
Business (Human Resources)		✓
Business (Law)		✓
Business (Management)		✓
Business (Marketing)		✓



## Computing and Systems Development

Our BTEC Higher Nationals in Computing have been developed with input from the Information and Communications Technology sector to deliver the essential understanding and practical skills for a career in the IT sector.

- Course structure at both levels are unitised. All learners study the core units Business Skills for e-Commerce, Computer Systems and Employability and Professional Development while level 5 learners can also study Project Design, Implementation and Evaluation.

### Course Listings

Course Name	Level 4 HNC Diploma	Level 5 HND Diploma
Computing and System Development	✓	✓

## Construction and the Built Environment

Our Construction and the Built Environment Higher Nationals allow learners to specialise in either Construction, Building Services Engineering or in Civil Engineering at both levels 4 and 5.

- Providing a thorough grounding in the key concepts and practical skills required in their sector, they are an ideal choice for learners progressing from a level 3 Technical Certificate within or following an Advanced Apprenticeship.

### Course Listings

Course Name	Level 4 HNC Diploma	Level 5 HND Diploma
Construction and the Built Environment	✓	✓
Construction and the Built Environment (Building Services Engineering)	✓	✓
Construction and the Built Environment (Civil Engineering)	✓	✓





Engineering



For learners with an interest in pursuing any one of a broad range of engineering vocations - from car mechanics to space flight - our BTEC Higher Nationals in Engineering offer valuable experience leading to a qualification recognised by employers and professional bodies alike.

- **Professional recognition:** approval from professional engineering institutions means a BTEC HN, combined with appropriate further study to degree level, can satisfy registrations requirements as an Incorporated Engineer.
- **Core scientific principles:** learners gain a thorough grounding in the fundamental scientific and mathematical principles required to solve engineering problems.

Course Listings

Course Name	Level 4 HNC Diploma	Level 5 HND Diploma
Automotive Engineering	✓	✓
Electrical and Electronic Engineering	✓	✓
Electrical Engineering	✓	✓
Electronic Engineering	✓	✓
General Engineering	✓	✓
Manufacturing Engineering	✓	✓
Mechanical Engineering	✓	✓
Operations Engineering	✓	✓
Aeronautical Engineering	✓	✓
Marine Engineering	✓	✓
Nautical Science	✓	✓
Vehicle Operations Management	✓	✓
Incorporated Engineering		✓

Hair and Beauty



Our BTEC Higher Nationals in Hair and Beauty Management equip learners with an excellent grounding in the skills needed to run a successful beauty salon or to work at management level in a health spa.

- Course structure at both levels are unitised. All learners study salon management and are taught what they need to know about the health and safety, security and client care aspects essential for good salon management.

Course Listings

Course Name	Level 4 HNC Diploma	Level 5 HND Diploma
Hair and Beauty Management	✓	✓

Health and Social Care



Our BTEC Higher Nationals in Health and Social Care at levels 4 and 5 equip learners with the knowledge, understanding, training and skills that are essential for finding employment in today's highly competitive job market.

Course Listings

Course Name	Level 4 HNC Diploma	Level 5 HND Diploma
Health and Social Care	✓	✓
Health and Social Care (Applied Social Studies)	✓	✓
Health and Social Care (Care Practice)	✓	✓
Health and Social Care (Health)	✓	✓
Health and Social Care (Management)	✓	✓

Hospitality, Travel and Tourism Management

Our BTEC Higher Nationals in Hospitality Management and Travel and Tourism Management equip learners with the knowledge, understanding, training, skills and personal qualities they will need to make a useful contribution as soon as they start work.

- **Hospitality Management:** equips learners for employment in the licensed trade, specialist culinary arts or the leisure and tourism sectors. They can focus on their individual interests such as hotels, restaurants, hospitality servcies.
- **Travel & Tourism:** opens up opportunities for learners to work in tourism development, marketing and management, including specific interest areas such as visitor attraction management and the impact of tourism on developing countries.
- **Course Structures** at both levels are modular, with opportunities for specialism.

Course Listings

Course Name	Level 4 HNC Diploma	Level 5 HND Diploma
Hospitality Management	✓	✓
Travel and Tourism Management	✓	✓



Land Based

Our Land and Environment BTEC Higher Nationals cover four key areas at both level 4 and level 5.

- **Animal Management:** provide education and training for a variety of work roles such as animal health and welfare management, wildlife management, animal production and trade.
- **Environmental Conservation:** support progression into land and countryside management, rural production, environmental science and interpretation, and allow in-depth exploration of areas such as waste management, bio-surveying, game and wildlife management.
- **Equine Management:** provide education and training for a variety of work roles, including stud management, racing, horse health and medicine and equitation. Learners can also cover racehorse training, estate management and equine genetics.
- **Horticulture:** offers education and training to suit roles in amenity design, sports surfaces and design, plant production and landscape design and maintenance.

Course Listings

Course Name	Level 4 HNC Diploma	Level 5 HND Diploma
Animal Management	✓	✓
Environmental Conservation	✓	✓
Equine Management	✓	✓
Horticulture	✓	✓





Media

Our BTEC Higher Nationals in Creative Media Production equip learners with the knowledge, understanding and skills that are essential for those seeking employment in the highly competitive media industry.

- **Work-related expertise:** develop an effective platform for working in the media industry through the effective combination of core knowledge and skills gained across the learning programme in a wide range of creative and technical areas.

Course Listings

Course Name	Level 4 HNC Diploma	Level 5 HND Diploma
Creative Media Production	✓	✓
Creative Media Production (Radio)	✓	✓
Creative Media Production (Journalism)	✓	✓
Creative Media Production (Moving Image)	✓	✓
Creative Media Production (Computer Game Animation)	✓	✓
Creative Media Production (Computer Game Design)	✓	✓

Music

Our BTEC Higher Nationals in Music at levels 4 and 5 equip learners with the knowledge, understanding, training and skills that are essential for finding employment in today’s highly competitive job market.

- **Work-related skills:** the strong vocational approach supports learners in developing the personal qualities and experience they need to make a valuable contribution as soon as they start work.

Course Listings

Course Name	Level 4 HNC Diploma	Level 5 HND Diploma
Music	✓	✓
Music (Performance)	✓	✓
Music (Production)	✓	✓

Performing Arts

Our BTEC Higher Nationals in Performing Arts equip learners with the knowledge, understanding, training and skills that are essential for finding employment in the highly competitive performing arts and support industries.

- **Work-related expertise:** develop an effective platform for working in the industry through the effective combination of core knowledge and skills gained across the learning programme in a wide range of creative and technical areas.

Course Listings

Course Name	Level 4 HNC Diploma	Level 5 HND Diploma
Performing Arts	✓	✓
Performing Arts (Performance)	✓	✓
Performing Arts (Production)	✓	✓

Public Services

Our BTEC Higher National qualifications in Public Services deliver the essential knowledge, understanding, and practical skills for success in a range of careers in this sector.

- **Core skills:** sharpen learners’ thinking skills, analysis, problem solving and decision making, and develop communication skills.

Course Listings

Course Name	Level 4 HNC Diploma	Level 5 HND Diploma
Public Services	✓	✓

Sport

Our Higher Nationals in Sport offer vocational training and education in four specialist areas: Sport and Exercise Sciences; Coaching and Sports Development; Health, Fitness and Exercise; and Leisure Management.

- **Sport and Exercise Sciences:** Level 4 introduces the core knowledge required - including anatomy, physiology and psychology - as well as elements of training and fitness and essential research skills. Level 5 includes an additional mandatory unit covering biomechanics and a wider range of optional units.
- **Coaching and Sports Development:** Level 4 covers the sport and leisure industry, the evolution of sports development and applied sports coaching. Level 5 contains additional mandatory units in managing sports development, the principles of sports coaching and a research project.
- **Sport (Health, Fitness and Exercise):** Level 4 provides an understanding of the fundamentals including anatomy and physiology, physical activity, lifestyle and wellbeing, health promotion and training and fitness for sport and exercise. Level 5 contains an additional mandatory unit in nutrition for sport and exercise and a research project.
- **Leisure Management:** Level 4 covers the sport and leisure industry, marketing principles, operating and managing a sport and leisure facility and customer service. Level 5 contains an additional mandatory unit in managing in the health and fitness industry and a research project.

Course Listings

Course Name	Level 4 HNC Diploma	Level 5 HND Diploma
Sport and Exercise Sciences	✓	✓
Sport (Health, Fitness and Exercise)	✓	✓
Sport (Coaching and Sports Development)	✓	✓
Sport (Leisure Management)	✓	✓

Awarding qualification and unit grades

We encourage centres to use a wide range of assessment tools, drawing on their own experience to select the most appropriate, sector-specific methods to meet learning outcomes and assessment criteria.

How it works

The overall grade for a BTEC Level 4 HNC or level 5 HND is a transparent process calculated through a combination of:

- the **credits** allocated to each unit, and
- the **grade** (Pass, Merit or Distinction) achieved for that unit

using the top 75 credits from the learner’s highest-graded units.

As a learner progresses through their course, each individual unit is assessed and awarded a grade – Pass, Merit or Distinction.

Each unit grade then attracts points on a sliding scale – 2 points for a Distinction; 1 point for a Merit and 0 points for a Pass.

Once all units are completed, the learner’s overall grade for the qualification is calculated using:

- the learner’s **highest-graded units (the top 75 credits)**
- units **at the level of the qualification or the level above.**





Although the learner must complete **120** credits of study at **level 4 HNC** and **240** at **level 5 HND** to gain a full qualification, the final grade is calculated only using the top 75 credits from the learner’s highest performing units.

Calculating the Qualification Grade

Qualification Grade Points table

Points range	Grade
0-74	Pass (P)
75-149	Merit (M)
150	Distinction (D)

1. Multiply the number of credits achieved at each grade by the grade points (0 for Pass; 1 for Merit; 2 for Distinction) to calculate the **Qualification Grade Points** gained at Pass, Merit and Distinction.
2. Add up these **Qualification Grade Points** to calculate the **Total Qualifications Grade Points**.
3. Match the Total Qualifications Grade Points against the Qualification Grade Points table to calculate the final grade for the qualification.



Recognising Prior Learning (RPL)

Progression from level 4 HNC to level 5 HND on the QCF

If a learner progresses from a level 4 HNC to study a level 5 HND on the QCF, credits achieved at level 4 can contribute to the best 75 credits of the level 5 HND grade.

This is sometimes referred to as “nesting” the level 4 HNC within the level 5 HND, and is built into the BTEC HN grading system to ensure that existing learning and expertise is recognised when moving on to higher level study.

Examples of qualification grading tables

These examples show how a learner’s final grade would be awarded, using their highest-graded units (**the top 75 credits only**). The calculations are valid for qualifications at both level 4 HNC and level 5 HND.

Pass Qualification Grade (0-74 Qualification Grade Points)

Unit grade	Credits achieved at each unit grade (Top 75 credits only)	Grade Points per credit	Qualification Grade Points achieved
Pass	30	0	$30 \times 0 = 0$
Merit	30	1	$30 \times 1 = 30$
Distinction	15	2	$15 \times 2 = 30$
	<b>75 credits</b>	<b>Total Qualification Grade Points</b>	$0 + 30 + 30 = 60$
		<b>Qualification Grade</b>	<b>Pass</b>

Unit grade	Credits achieved at each unit grade (Top 75 credits only)	Grade Points per credit	Qualification Grade Points achieved
Pass	50	0	$50 \times 0 = 0$
Merit	15	1	$15 \times 1 = 15$
Distinction	10	2	$10 \times 2 = 20$
	<b>75 credits</b>	<b>Total Qualification Grade Points</b>	$0 + 15 + 20 = 35$
		<b>Qualification Grade</b>	<b>Pass</b>

Merit Qualification Grade (75-149 Qualification Grade Points)

Unit grade	Credits achieved at each unit grade (Top 75 credits only)	Grade Points per credit	Qualification Grade Points achieved
Pass	15	0	$15 \times 0 = 0$
Merit	45	1	$45 \times 1 = 45$
Distinction	15	2	$15 \times 2 = 30$
	<b>75 credits</b>	<b>Total Qualification Grade Points</b>	$0 + 45 + 30 = 75$
		<b>Qualification Grade</b>	<b>Merit</b>

Unit grade	Credits achieved at each unit grade (Top 75 credits only)	Grade Points per credit	Qualification Grade Points achieved
Pass	0	0	$0 \times 0 = 0$
Merit	15	1	$1 \times 15 = 15$
Distinction	60	2	$60 \times 2 = 120$
	<b>75 credits</b>	<b>Total Qualification Grade Points</b>	$0 + 15 + 120 = 135$
		<b>Qualification Grade</b>	<b>Merit</b>

Distinction Qualification Grade (150 Qualification Grade Points)

To achieve a distinction, a learner must achieve all of their top-performing 75 credits at Distinction level.

Unit grade	Credits achieved at each unit grade (Top 75 credits only)	Grade Points per credit	Qualification Grade Points achieved
Pass	0	0	$0 \times 0 = 0$
Merit	0	1	$0 \times 1 = 0$
Distinction	75	2	$75 \times 2 = 150$
	<b>75 credits</b>	<b>Total Qualification Grade Points</b>	<b>150</b>
		<b>Qualification Grade</b>	<b>Distinction</b>



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