

16 October 2008/18

## Edexcel Thinks

### What's the issue?

Since 2005, there has been a year on year increase in the number of schools offering BTEC First provision at Key Stage 4. From autumn 2004, BTEC Firsts have attracted league table points for schools. Following analysis of data carried out by the Edexcel's MIS team, it is clear that those schools which have learners taking BTEC Firsts have improved their league table percentage (the number of learners gaining 5 GCSE equivalents at grade C and above) by an average of 6.88% over the period. What does Edexcel think?

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- Edexcel notes that there has been a statistically significant rise in schools' league table percentage scores when comparing scores in 2003, before BTECs were included, with scores achieved in 2007, after BTECs were included. The raised percentage scores in the same schools indicate that BTECs have considerable potential to improve their points in the SCAATs
- Edexcel welcomes the increase in completions of BTECs in schools as this demonstrates that BTECs provide appropriate learning programmes for a range of learners allowing them the choice of vocational courses
- Edexcel believes that the raised percentage score in league tables confirms that BTEC Firsts in schools have been established as the most appropriate successor to GNVQs since their staged withdrawal between 2005 and 2007 although this will be evidenced over the next few years as post-GNVQ learners complete their courses
- Edexcel welcomes positive comments from schools about BTECs and their impact on the performance of learners as teachers are the people who see first-hand the changes in learners as they achieve. Edexcel also notes the strong reputation BTECs have within the education and employment sectors. BTECs are appropriate qualifications recognised, understood and valued by employers and universities enabling learners to progress in their chosen field

### What is Edexcel doing?

Edexcel is working on a range of initiatives to help centres meet the National Challenge which will also enable them to improve their league table percentage scores.

Edexcel is working hard to support the development of 14-19 Diplomas. Edexcel is currently accredited to offer 8 of the first 10 lines of learning and hopes to be accredited to offer all 10 in



early spring 2009.

Edexcel will continue to monitor the percentage increase in the SCAATs for schools offering BTECs to see how they improve over time.

Edexcel's suite of Level 1 BTEC Introductory Certificates and Diplomas (including the BTEC Introductory Certificate and Diploma in Vocational Studies) has been extended in accreditation to 31 August 2009. The revised QCF equivalents - Foundation Learning Tier - will be in place from 1 September 2009.

From September 2008 Edexcel are piloting three new FLT qualifications, namely Business and Administration, Sport and Health and Social Care. From September 2009 revised versions in what is expected to cover all sectors will be available as Foundation learning Tier.

A number of BTEC Additional Specialist Learning (ASL) qualifications have been accredited, to enable these BTECs to be delivered alongside the new Diplomas or as separate qualifications in their own right. These "ASL BTECs" will continue to be developed and accredited onto the NQF at present before being moved across to the QCF in the future.

Edexcel is instigating more detailed research to track the onward progression and impact of BTEC qualifications for learners. This will continue on from previous research commissioned from Sheffield University which looked at the use of BTECs for progression purposes and at the labour market returns on BTEC qualifications.

## Background

The first secondary school performance tables were published in 1994 and included data on GCSE and GNVQ results. Since 2002, the tables have included the results achieved by fourteen year old pupils in the Key Stage Three tests. From 2004 BTEC qualifications have also attracted points.

SCAATs for each academic year are published in the January of the following academic year. The tables for 2008 will be published in January 2009.

Since the Distinction\* grade was introduced to most titles in the BTEC First portfolio, each grade scores the following number of points:

BTEC First Certificate		GCSE Single award	
Distinction *	116	A*	58
Distinction	104	A	52
Merit	92	B	46
Pass	40	c	40

There were 42,500 BTEC certificates/diplomas started in schools in 2007/8, with 87.4% completing their courses; an increase of 29,500 learners from the previous year.

BTEC qualifications have existed for 25 years and there are close to 1.7 million registrations made between 2005/06 and 2007/08. BTECs are available in 17 sectors from entry to level 7 of the NQF.

## Useful links

<http://www.edexcel.org.uk/about/policies/epw/pw-notices/not-41.htm> Link to Policy watch on SCAAT points

<http://www.edexcel.org.uk/about/policies/epw/pw-notices/not-451.htm> Link to Policy Watch on SCAAT points and the Diploma

<http://edit.edexcel.com/POLICIES/Pages/ResearchandSeminars.aspx> link to research report on 'The Labour Market Returns to BTEC Qualifications: An Analysis Using the UK Labour Force Survey – A Summary'

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/performance/tables/> Link to DCSF School and college achievement and attainment tables