

# Policy for age of learners on a BTEC programme

## Of interest to:

- Admissions staff
- Curriculum managers
- Exam officers
- Heads of departments
- Programme leaders
- Teaching staff
- Training staff

## Qualifications:

- BTEC First Diploma
- BTEC First Certificate
- BTEC Level 2 qualifications
- BTEC Introductory Certificate and Diploma
- BTEC Level 1 qualifications
- Entry Level Certificate (Life Skills/Skills for Working Life)

## Policy for age of learners on a BTEC programme

Since their introduction into the NQF in 2002 BTEC programmes have become increasingly popular with schools and their contribution to enriching the school curriculum and improving learner achievement is increasingly recognised.

In working towards qualifications such as GCSEs, there is no restriction within schools on when learners commence studies formally based on the specifications as these build directly on learning in earlier years. Centres may also choose to accelerate assessment for more able learners.

The purpose of this policy is to:

1. To clarify for centres the age at which learners may commence study for BTEC programmes and when to make registrations to gain certification.
2. To support centres in making appropriate choices for their learners.

## Scope

- BTEC First Certificates and Diplomas (and their successor qualifications in the QCF) and any other BTEC programmes approved for delivery to learners at Key Stage 4.
- BTEC and Edexcel vocational qualifications at Entry Level and Level 1 (e.g. BTEC Introductory Certificates and Diplomas).

BTEC National Awards, Certificates and Diplomas and successor qualifications are not in scope, neither are any other qualifications restricted to learners aged 16 and over (e.g. BTEC First in Children's Care Learning and Development). NVQs are not in scope.

## Background

**Policy review:**  
Review date Sept 2012

### Useful contacts

For more information on Edexcel qualifications please contact Edexcel Customer Services  
Tel: 0844 576 0026  
E-mail: [enquiries@edexcel.com](mailto:enquiries@edexcel.com)  
You can also visit the Edexcel website: [www.edexcel.com](http://www.edexcel.com)

Centres needing advice in case of non-compliance with this policy should write to [qualitystandards@edexcel.com](mailto:qualitystandards@edexcel.com)

In respect of BTEC qualifications there is a general stipulation that these are aimed at learners aged 14 years and over, i.e. learners who are studying in Year 10 and above. This stipulation is in place because:

- learners have an entitlement to a broad curriculum maintaining a full range of qualification opportunities at age 16
- younger learners have little appreciation of the world of work and may not be able to respond positively to work-based contexts
- younger learners may not have access to appropriate practical experience, for example because of health and safety concerns or access to work experience.

### Guidance on age of learners on a BTEC programme

There is no minimum starting age for qualifications that are permitted at Key Stage 4 and the commencement of programmes is at the discretion of approved centres. Therefore centres may deliver programmes to:

- groups of learners still in Key Stage 3, such as those having chosen a BTEC programme and beginning soon after Key Stage 3 assessment
- individual learners, such as those who are the oldest within their age range or more able learners seeking a challenge.

Centres considering making programmes available must ensure that learners will have the capability and full opportunity to achieve the qualification. For example, learners must be able to:

- plan and study independently to complete their assignments
- undertake required practical activities
- gain access to relevant work-based contexts such as work experience.

Edexcel will not consider applications for special arrangements or considerations for learners made on grounds related to the learners' age, such as those given above.

Centres may wish to consider whether learners who may want to select a BTEC programme would be best suited on a preparatory programme of study below Year 10. This could include the opportunity to observe or participate in activities drawn from different vocational areas in order to make an informed selection of vocational programme in Year 10. A preparatory programme

could also include familiarisation with assessment methods and practice in planning assignment completion, e.g. how to plan time, to research, to make notes.

### **Guidance on registration of BTEC learners**

Centres delivering a BTEC programme must register learners at the outset as assessment and learning are closely related to each other. Centres should register learners:

- by 1 November if they commence in September
- one month from the commencement of programmes at all other times of the year
- exceptionally, for centres starting after Key Stage 3 assessment only, registration may be deferred until the subsequent 1 November deadline.

Centres should not assess against BTEC specifications without complying with the above as only registered learners can be considered for BTEC quality assurance purposes.

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