

9 BTEC, NVQ, SVQ and BTEC Apprenticeship

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9 BTEC, NVQ, SVQ and BTEC Apprenticeship

I Registration

I.1 Registration deadlines

Enrolment is defined as

- for knowledge based programmes, the day on which delivery of the learner's programme/unit commences
- for competence based programmes, the day on which assessment of the learner's programme/unit commences.

BTEC programmes

For programmes that follow the academic year, ie enrolment in September/October and completion in June/July, the following deadlines for registration apply:

1 November 2011

Foundation Learning Tier Awards, Certificates and Diplomas
 BTEC Firsts and Nationals - Certificates and Diplomas
 BTEC Specialist & Professional Awards, Certificates and Diplomas
 BTEC Workskill Awards, Certificates and Diplomas

15 November 2011

BTEC Level 4 HNCs and Level 5 HNDs
 BTEC Level 3 & 4 Foundation Diplomas in Art and Design

15 December 2011

Edexcel Higher Education Licence Agreement registrations

For programmes that do not follow the academic year (ie programmes where learners have enrolled between November and August), or for any programmes of less than one academic year in length, and for individual units, registration is due within one month of enrolment.

Note: BTEC registrations received after the appropriate deadline will be subject to a late registration fee. (Please see the Fees Information issued separately.)

NVQ/QCF Competence programmes

Registrations are due within one month of commencing the assessment of the learners' programme/unit.

Apprenticeship Schemes

Registrations for the full Apprenticeship Scheme are due within one month of commencing the first component of the scheme. For Apprenticeship Schemes this may be when:

- learners start the knowledge based component
- assessment of the competence based component starts.

1.2 Certification deadlines

Last date for SRFs to be received by Edexcel	Last date for Edexcel Online certificate claims	Certificates will be in centres on
Wednesday 31 Aug 2011	Friday 09 Sep 2011	Friday 16 Sep 2011
Wednesday 07 Sep 2011	Friday 16 Sep 2011	Friday 23 Sep 2011
Wednesday 14 Sep 2011	Friday 23 Sep 2011	Friday 30 Sep 2011
Wednesday 21 Sep 2011	Friday 30 Sep 2011	Friday 07 Oct 2011
Wednesday 28 Sep 2011	Friday 07 Oct 2011	Friday 14 Oct 2011
Wednesday 05 Oct 2011	Friday 14 Oct 2011	Friday 21 Oct 2011
Wednesday 12 Oct 2011	Friday 21 Oct 2011	Friday 28 Oct 2011
Wednesday 19 Oct 2011	Friday 28 Oct 2011	Friday 04 Nov 2011
Wednesday 26 Oct 2011	Friday 04 Nov 2011	Friday 11 Nov 2011
Wednesday 02 Nov 2011	Friday 11 Nov 2011	Friday 18 Nov 2011
Wednesday 09 Nov 2011	Friday 18 Nov 2011	Friday 25 Nov 2011
Wednesday 16 Nov 2011	Friday 25 Nov 2011	Friday 02 Dec 2011
Wednesday 23 Nov 2011	Friday 02 Dec 2011	Friday 09 Dec 2011
Wednesday 30 Nov 2011	Friday 09 Dec 2011	Friday 16 Dec 2011
Wednesday 07 Dec 2011	Friday 16 Dec 2011	Friday 23 Dec 2011
Wednesday 14 Dec 2011	Friday 23 Dec 2011	Friday 06 Jan 2012
Wednesday 21 Dec 2011	Friday 06 Jan 2012	Friday 13 Jan 2012
Wednesday 04 Jan 2012	Friday 13 Jan 2012	Friday 20 Jan 2012
Wednesday 11 Jan 2012	Friday 20 Jan 2012	Friday 27 Jan 2012
Wednesday 18 Jan 2012	Friday 27 Jan 2012	Friday 03 Feb 2012
Wednesday 25 Jan 2012	Friday 03 Feb 2012	Friday 10 Feb 2012
Wednesday 01 Feb 2012	Friday 10 Feb 2012	Friday 17 Feb 2012
Wednesday 08 Feb 2012	Friday 17 Feb 2012	Friday 24 Feb 2012

Wednesday 15 Feb 2012	Friday 24 Feb 2012	Friday 02 Mar 2012
Wednesday 22 Feb 2012	Friday 02 Mar 2012	Friday 09 Mar 2012
Wednesday 29 Feb 2012	Friday 09 Mar 2012	Friday 16 Mar 2012
Wednesday 07 Mar 2012	Friday 16 Mar 2012	Friday 23 Mar 2012
Wednesday 14 Mar 2012	Friday 23 Mar 2012	Friday 30 Mar 2012
Wednesday 21 Mar 2012	Friday 30 Mar 2012	Friday 06 Apr 2012
Wednesday 28 Mar 2012	Friday 06 Apr 2012	Friday 13 Apr 2012
Wednesday 04 Apr 2012	Friday 13 Apr 2012	Friday 20 Apr 2012
Wednesday 11 Apr 2012	Friday 20 Apr 2012	Friday 27 Apr 2012
Wednesday 18 Apr 2012	Friday 27 Apr 2012	Friday 04 May 2012
Wednesday 25 Apr 2012	Friday 04 May 2012	Friday 11 May 2012
Wednesday 02 May 2012	Friday 11 May 2012	Friday 18 May 2012
Wednesday 09 May 2012	Friday 18 May 2012	Friday 25 May 2012
Wednesday 16 May 2012	Friday 25 May 2012	Friday 01 Jun 2012
Wednesday 23 May 2012	Friday 01 Jun 2012	Friday 08 Jun 2012
Wednesday 30 May 2012	Friday 08 Jun 2012	Friday 15 Jun 2012
Wednesday 06 Jun 2012	Friday 15 Jun 2012	Friday 22 Jun 2012
Wednesday 13 Jun 2012	Friday 22 Jun 2012	Friday 29 Jun 2012
Wednesday 20 Jun 2012	Friday 29 Jun 2012	Friday 06 Jul 2012
Wednesday 27 Jun 2012	Friday 06 Jul 2012	Friday 13 Jul 2012
*Thursday 05 July 2012	Friday 27 Jul 2012	Friday 03 Aug 2012
Wednesday 08 Aug 2012	Friday 17 Aug 2012	Friday 24 Aug 2012
Wednesday 15 Aug 2012	Friday 24 Aug 2012	Friday 31 Aug 2012
Wednesday 22 Aug 2012	Friday 31 Aug 2012	Friday 07 Sep 2012
Wednesday 29 Aug 2012	Friday 07 Sep 2012	Friday 14 Sep 2012

* End of academic year, peak results period

1.3 Key dates

1 November 2011	Registration deadline for the following programmes beginning in September 2011: Entry Level BTEC Awards, Certificates and Diplomas (Foundation Learning) BTEC Level 1 Awards, Certificates and Diplomas (Foundation Learning) BTEC Level 2 First Certificates, Extended Certificates and Diplomas BTEC Level 3 National Certificates, Extended Certificates, Subsidiary Diplomas, Diplomas and Extended Diplomas BTEC Short Course Specialist and Professional Awards, Certificates and Diplomas BTEC Awards, Certificates and Diplomas in WorkSkills
15 November 2011	Registration deadline for the following programmes beginning in September/October 2011: BTEC Level 4 HNCs and Level 5 HNDs BTEC Level 3 & 4 Foundation Diplomas in Art and Design
15 December 2011	Registration deadline for Edexcel Higher Education Licence Agreement registrations
31 January 2012	Deadline for requesting deletion of learners enrolled September/October 2011
30 April 2012	Submission deadline for vocational JCQ EDI results entry files
5 July 2012	Deadline for receipt of vocational results submitted by Student Report Forms (SRFs)
15 August 2012	Release of vocational EDI EDIFACT and JCQ format results files

2 Scope of this Section of the Information Manual

2.1 Vocational qualifications

This part of the manual gives instructions and information on the administrative procedures for learners on programmes leading to Edexcel/Pearson vocational qualifications. These include:

- BTEC QCF qualifications
- non-accredited Customised BTEC qualifications (CQF)
- NVQ/QCF Competence Awards, Certificates & Diplomas Levels 1-8
- BTEC Apprenticeship Schemes.

The following areas are covered:

- overview of registration
- quality assurance
- assessment
- overview of onscreen testing
- overview of reporting achievement
- overview of claiming certification.

Previous versions of current qualifications or qualification types are addressed, even where registrations are no longer permitted.

It is important that copies of this information are made available to the examinations officer/ administrator, all coordinators and members of staff responsible for the preparation of documents for enrolment, registration and reporting achievement of vocational qualifications.

Licence Agreement: BTEC qualifications offered through Higher Education Institutions

Universities and HEIs operating under the Edexcel Licence Agreement are required to follow the administrative procedures detailed in the Edexcel Licence Agreement Handbook (revised July 2007). The procedures set out in this section do not apply. Please note that registrations for licensed programmes must now be made through Edexcel Online. For help with Edexcel Online or EDI, contact 0844 576 0024.

However, the Edexcel Licence Agreement does not apply in the case of registration and reporting of achievement for BTEC nationally accredited qualifications (NQF/QCF).

For programmes not under the licence centres should follow the procedures set out in this Information Manual.

2.2 Collaborative arrangements and consortia

Where a centre works with other organisations or institutions to deliver programmes this is termed a collaborative arrangement (formerly referred to as a franchise). The lead centre has responsibility for the programme and is the only centre that can make registrations and receive communications about the programme. All collaborative arrangements must be approved by Edexcel prior to the commencement of programmes. The form can be found on the Edexcel website.

Where several centres work together to deliver a programme, which is jointly approved to all of them, this is termed a consortium. Each centre within a consortium registers its own learners using the single programme number assigned to all the member centres. However, quality assurance is carried out across the consortium as a whole, and centres will be reported on jointly with regard to programme quality and certification sign off.

It is important that copies of this information are made available to the examinations officer/ administrator, all coordinators and members of staff responsible for the preparation of documents for enrolment, registration and the certificate claims for BTEC qualifications.

2.3 BTEC qualifications delivered through external testing

Most BTEC qualifications are assessed through the centre, and the outcomes are then reported to Edexcel. For some qualifications assessment is through external testing. For some tests centres are required to install appropriate supporting software. For further details please refer to the onscreen testing guide available on the Edexcel website.

3 Notes on issues for Registration and Certification

Centres should note these important issues in relation to registration and certification.

3.1 Timing of registration

Programmes that do not follow the academic year

This refers to all programmes that:

- enrol learners at any time other than September/October (including roll-on roll-off and on-screen tested programmes)
- are of less than one academic year's duration.
- are competence based assessment programmes eg NVQs

Learners must be registered within one month of enrolment at the centre. Enrolment at the centre is defined as the day on which delivery of the learner's programme/unit of learning or assessment on competence based programmes commences.

Programmes that do follow the academic year

For programmes that follow the academic year, ie enrolment in September/October and completion in June/July, the registration deadlines are detailed in part 1.1. BTEC registrations received after the relevant deadline will be subject to late registration fees. (Please see the Fees Information on the Edexcel website.)

Note: Any delay in registration may affect our capacity to provide centres with the assessment and verification opportunities that they require and, therefore, certification may be delayed. Centres should note that this could cause problems for learners going through UCAS in order to enter higher education.

3.2 Registration: topping up

For nationally accredited qualifications, learners may achieve at one qualification level and top up to a further type (eg Edexcel Level 2 First Certificate to Edexcel Level 2 First Extended Certificate) provided that both qualifications are based on the same specification ie have the same unit identification codes.

However, a learner registered before September 2010 on a First, National or Higher National qualification may top-up onto **the same specification** Certificate or Diploma. Please note that centres must be aware of certification end dates for these qualifications (given on the website) and not make top ups unless learners will be able to complete programmes before the certification deadline.

Top ups are available for the following current qualifications:

- Foundation Learning Tier Awards, Certificates and Diplomas
- BTEC Firsts and Nationals – Certificates and Diplomas
- BTEC Level 4 HNC & Level 5 HND
- BTEC Level 3 Foundation Diploma in Art & Design & Level 4 Foundation Diploma in Art & Design
- BTEC Specialist & Professional Awards, Certificates and Diplomas
- BTEC WorkSkills Awards, Certificates and Diplomas
- Customised BTEC Short Course Awards, Certificates and Diplomas
- NVQ and QCF Competence Qualification Awards, Certificates and Diplomas Levels 1-8

3.3 Registration: estimated completion dates

At the time of registration centres are asked to give an estimated completion date. These dates are used in relation to the allocation of standards verifiers and external examiners and the delivery of assessment and verification/external examining for nationally accredited qualifications. It is important that centres give an accurate date (within two months) and that any changes are notified.

3.4 Registration: programme numbers

Centres should check that the programme numbers being used for all programmes are those which match the programmes being delivered, particularly if registrations are submitted electronically.

Note: Whilst learners who are incorrectly registered may transfer, this could delay assessment, quality assurance and certification. Centres are advised that it could also affect funding for the programme.

3.5 Unique Learner Number (ULN)

The ULN is a learner identifier that is allocated by the government agency LRS (Learning Records Service) and is used in the aggregation of learner results across awarding bodies for the new Diplomas.

Edexcel is able to accept the ULN in EDI entry, amendment and registration files and on any entries/registrations made through Edexcel Online. The ULN must be provided with any learner registrations or entries where the qualification or unit concerned is to be used as a component of a Diploma, in order that Edexcel can provide the learner's achievement data to the Diploma Aggregation Service (DAS).

It is not necessary for you to provide the ULN with entries or registrations for learners who are not taking Diplomas.

The ULN is a 10 digit number and it is important that you validate the ULN against the LRS (Learning Records Service) before submitting the learner's entry/registration to Edexcel. Please ensure that the personal details (name, gender and date of birth) being provided with the learner's entry or registration match exactly the details on the LRS. Edexcel will check the ULN against MIAP LRS and if there is a mismatch the ULN will not be accepted and a query will be raised with you.

For further information about the ULN, and to find out how to obtain ULNs for your learners, please refer to the LRS website at www.learningrecordsservice.org.uk.

Candidates undertaking an SVQ programme with an Edexcel approved centre may already have a unique Scottish Candidate Number (SCN) which may have been issued to them at school or at a Further Education institute. This number allows candidates to have a cumulative record of all their educational achievements from school and further education on a Scottish Qualification Certificate (SQC). Unfortunately, Edexcel achievements are not recorded on the (SQC) therefore the SCN must not be confused with, or used in preference to, the ULN.

3.6 Reporting success to Edexcel

There are three methods of reporting results, through Edexcel Online, EDIFACT EDI or by SRF. There are significant advantages in reporting results electronically through Edexcel Online or EDIFACT EDI in terms of the speed we can process the results (see certification deadline table in part 1.2 of this section of the Information Manual). SRFs will continue to be issued to centres unless otherwise requested.

Centres which intend to report all results electronically and do not wish to continue to be issued with SRFs should email the request to serviceoperations@edexcel.com.

In order to issue certificates in August, results should be reported by 5 July for every learner completing at the end of an academic year. Results must be reported for every learner who has achieved unit success and also where the learner has withdrawn from the programme. No action is required where a learner has not completed any units in year one of a two-year programme.

It is particularly important that, for learners who have made applications to HEIs through UCAS, results are reported by 5 July, even where the learner is retaking assessments and/or tests, so that HEIs have information on each applicant. A member of centre staff should be available during July/August in order to process any queries raised.

3.7 Certification

Certificates are issued weekly. Please refer to part 1.2 of this section of the Information Manual for the schedule of dates. Edexcel reserves the right to withhold certificates if fees are outstanding at the time of despatch.

Results should only be reported if the centre has clearance to certificate through reports from standards verifiers or external examiners. Subject to this, results must be reported immediately following programme completion so that certificates can be issued as soon as possible.

4 Registration Policies and Procedures

4.1 Responsibility for registration

When a centre has enrolled learners onto an approved Edexcel programme or individual units, the learners must then be formally registered with Edexcel so that quality assurance can be implemented, achievement can be reported and awards issued. Responsibility for the registration of learners and for the payment of fees lies with the approved centre.

Centres operating under a collaborative arrangement are not able to register learners directly, and the responsibility lies with the approved centre to register learners and identify the collaborative centre attended by each learner. (Please refer to the Collaborative Arrangements Vocational Qualifications Centre Guidance, available on the Edexcel website.)

Where two or more centres are operating as a consortium the approved centre within the consortium is responsible for registering learners with Edexcel. (Please refer to Edexcel policy: Consortium Arrangements for BTEC and NVQ Edexcel Qualifications, available on the Edexcel website.)

Timing of registration

For programmes which do not follow the academic year learners must be registered within one month of enrolment at the centre. Enrolment is defined as the day on which delivery of the learner's programme/unit commences. For roll-on roll-off and assessment-only programmes, such as BTEC Specialist and Professional courses and NVQ/QCF Competence qualifications, it is acceptable for registrations to be submitted monthly if it assists the centre's administration. All learners must still be registered within one month of enrolment.

Programmes that follow the academic year

For programmes that follow the academic year, ie enrolment in September/October and completion in June/July, the following deadlines apply:

1 November 2011

Foundation Learning Tier Awards, Certificates and Diplomas
BTEC Firsts and Nationals – Certificates and Diplomas
BTEC WorkSkills Awards, Certificates and Diplomas

15 November 2011

QCF Level 4 HNC & to Level 5 HND
QCF Level 3 Diploma in Art & Design & to Level 4 Diploma in Art & Design
(formerly Foundation Diploma in Art & Design)

15 December 2011

Edexcel Higher Education Licence Agreement registrations

A delay in registration may affect our capacity to provide centres with the assessment and verification/ external examining opportunities that they require and, therefore, certification may be delayed or withheld completely. Centres should note that this could cause problems for learners applying through UCAS in order to enter higher education. If you are unclear about the correct time for registrations please contact Customer Services. (See the Contact Information section of this Information Manual.)

Edexcel reserves the right to:

- refuse to accept new registrations from a centre if the centre has a debt outstanding to Edexcel at the due date of submission of new registrations
- withhold certificates if the centre has a debt outstanding to Edexcel at the due date of issue of certificates.

4.2 Periods of registrations

Registrations must be made before the end date given for qualification approval. Registrations are valid for a period of up to five years or until the issue of certificates, whichever is the earlier. A learner may only be certificated during the stipulated period. For qualifications accredited by QCDA the final date is specified as shown on the website.

Where registration lapses by the expiry of the period of registration, the learner must be re-registered on a currently approved programme.

4.3 Deletion of registrations

Learner registrations will not normally be deleted or fees refunded once registrations have been accepted by Edexcel. A new learner cannot replace an individual who has been registered and subsequently left the programme.

However, we are aware that there may be learners who drop out from academic year programmes over the Christmas period. Therefore, we will accept all requests for the deletion of learners registered from September 2011, provided we are notified by email to serviceoperations@edexcel.com before 31 January 2012 and the learners have not completed any units. Please give the learner name and registration number in the email. This provision does not apply to any other learner intake.

4.4 Withdrawal of learners

Centres should advise us of all learners who have withdrawn from programmes. Withdrawal can be done through Edexcel Online and can take place throughout the year. Withdrawal does not result in a credit back of any fees.

5 Reporting Learner Achievement

5.1 Responsibility

Centres are responsible for reporting on the achievement in internally assessed units for each learner, in respect of assessment requirements for the programme for which he/she is registered, and for reporting success to Edexcel for interim or final certification. Where programmes also include external assessment, the centre must ensure that appropriate assessments have been completed and that Edexcel has data related to achievement - please refer to qualification specifications for further guidance.

5.2 Unit grades

It is important that you report unit grades accurately according to the available assessment records for the programme and in accordance with the grading rules stipulated.

BTEC Level 2-5 qualification (First, National and Higher National) units are always subject to grading except where otherwise indicated in the qualification specifications. Achievement should be reported using the grades below:

P - Pass
M - Merit
D - Distinction.

Please refer to the specifications for each programme for full details. Centres must ensure that they correctly report grades according to the status of the unit.

5.3 Overall qualification grades of achievement

The following qualifications have overall grades based on reported unit achievement of Pass, Merit and Distinction grades:

NQF

- BTEC Introductory Certificates and Diplomas
- BTEC First Awards, Certificates and Diplomas
- BTEC Nationals, Awards, Certificates and Diplomas
- BTEC Foundation Diploma in Art and Design

QCF

- BTEC Firsts and Nationals – Certificates and Diplomas
- QCF Level 4 HNC & to Level 5 HND
- QCF Level 3 Diploma in Art & Design & to Level 4 Diploma in Art & Design

The overall grade is calculated automatically from the unit grades reported (except Level 3-4 Diplomas in Art & Design where you will need to report the overall grade through EOL, EDI or by SRF); the centre does not need to supply further information. Full details on how grades are determined are given in the specification for each programme.

5.4 National and Scottish Vocational Qualifications

The ten week rule has been removed from NVQ and QCF Competence Qualifications accredited under the Qualifications and Curriculum Framework (QCF). This means there does not have to be a ten week period between registration and applying for certification. This is in light of the smaller sized qualifications within the QCF and the potential for learners that are competent within the workplace to achieve these qualifications more readily. Edexcel will continue to monitor claims for certification that are made within the ten week period between registration and applying for certification, to guard against mistaken or fraudulent claims.

All claims should be validated by an occupationally competent and qualified internal verifier. Centres must ensure that all claims for certification are authentic and valid and can be supported by auditable records.

5.5 Confirmation of learner achievement

It is essential that all centres issue annual reports of success to learners.

Centres reporting grades by EDI should issue their own centre report for learners, and centres using Edexcel Online should issue the learners with the Edexcel Online report. It is most important that centres accept the responsibility to provide learners with evidence of portfolio achievement in order that they have early official evidence of their success.

5.6 Reporting success to UCAS

In March/April each year we undertake a matching exercise with UCAS to identify those BTEC Level 3-5 learners who have applied to UCAS for entry to higher education courses. During July/August we will provide UCAS with confirmation of these matched learners' achievements so that HEIs have the latest information on each applicant.

Where a match cannot be found, because of incorrect spellings or incorrect centre details, we will still be able to inform UCAS of these learners' achievements if you notify Edexcel of the learner's UCAS Personal ID number and UCAS Scheme Code by email to serviceoperations@edexcel.com

Red UCAS SRFs will be issued in May for matched learners who are applying for higher education places and are following BTEC Nationals, Higher Nationals, Level 3-4 Diplomas in Art and Design as well as any Level 2-3 Specialist courses accredited as part of the Diploma.

It is important that results are reported for these learners to Edexcel by 5 July. Where we receive results after 5 July, and before 31 July, we make every effort to confirm the results to UCAS.

If you are reporting results to Edexcel by EDIFACT EDI, we would ask that you send a file earlier in July for your UCAS learners only, rather than include these learners in a larger file later in July.

Note: We are concerned by the number of problems which arise where centres do not have staff available in August to resolve queries from universities concerning results. Centres should ensure that staff are available to respond to university queries during this period and that results are sent to Edexcel as soon as possible.

5.7 Submission of results to Edexcel

Interim reporting

Results must be returned or results reported via EDI, SRF or Edexcel Online for every learner registered who has achieved unit success, and also where he/she has withdrawn from the programme. If he/she has already been deleted you do not need to include them in the report. Success on units should only be reported where all requirements have been met. All units are reported on the SRF, by EDI or through Edexcel Online.

Note: In all cases of interim reporting a Notification of Performance will be produced automatically.

Dates for grade reporting

In order to ensure that certification is received as soon as possible please refer to part 1.2 in this section for the required dates.

For learners completing programmes at the end of the academic year, if results reach Edexcel by 5 July, awards will be issued by 15 August, unless there is an external verification certificate block or a query over the result. Certificates and results for success reported after 5 July may be issued after 15 August.

Note: Results should be submitted immediately at the end of each summer term, as the results

submitted to Edexcel are used, in some instances, to create the performance and league tables. If you have not reported early enough to enable Edexcel to process the results by the end of July you may find your outcomes are incorrect in these tables.

5.8 Methods of reporting

There are two electronic methods of reporting success:

EDIFACT EDI transmission
Edexcel Online.

Note: JCQ format EDI does not currently support the reporting of unit outcomes and award claims from centres to Edexcel. Centres using this format should use Edexcel Online or the student report form (SRF) to report success to Edexcel. (For example, SIMS uses JCQ format EDI.)

EDI transmission

Learners' unit results, certificate claims and withdrawals may be transmitted electronically by EDI. (See EDI results reporting: EDIFACT format on the EDI section of the website.)

Edexcel Online

Centres may report results, claim certification and notify withdrawals through Edexcel Online. (See the Edexcel Online section of the website for how to gain access to Edexcel Online.)

5.9 Timing of success reporting

Data should be submitted for all learners via EDI or through Edexcel Online on these occasions:

- at the end of each year/stage of the programme: by 5 July for programmes following a normal academic year, or as soon as possible thereafter, even where learners are retaking assessments or tests (especially important for UCAS applicants)
- immediately after completion for non-academic year programmes
- on transfer of the learner to another programme/centre
- for all learners who have withdrawn from the programme, even where no success has been achieved (especially important for UCAS applicants).

6 Completion of Quality Assurance Processes Required for Certification - BTEC

6.1 Summary

BTEC programmes are operated on the basis that appropriate quality checks are completed prior to certification. Certification claims should only be made when centres have authority to do so. Claims made without authority may be blocked from processing or may lead to subsequent action by Edexcel.

Edexcel reserves the right to suspend certification by a centre on a programme/unit if there are any concerns over standards, quality assurance or centre management.

Language of Assessment

The language of assessment is English unless agreed with Edexcel. Centres are required to notify VQ Assessment by the end of September 2011 where a programme is delivered solely in the medium of Welsh. Edexcel will endeavour to provide standard verification in Welsh for programmes notified by this date.

6.2 BTEC qualifications Entry Level & Levels 1-3

Quality Review & Development (QRD)

This process addresses quality and review across all the BTEC programmes of this type offered by a centre. Full details of the Quality Review & Development process are provided through guides to centres that are in the Quality Assurance Process area of the Edexcel website www.edexcel.com/quals/btec/quality. QRD is the central focus of our quality partnership and central to the shift to centre-driven quality assurance.

QRD takes the form of an annual visit to every centre delivering BTEC and vocational qualifications. During this visit our team of dedicated Centre Quality Reviewers will help centres focus on their quality systems and processes.

QRD will:

- enable each centre to manage and drive quality across all BTEC programmes
- provide support and development
- make full use of the role of the Quality Nominee and empower them to review and develop quality.

The outcomes of QRD are reported against criteria. If there are serious issues that require immediate corrective action, certification will be prevented and the relevant Regional Quality Manager will support the centre to address the issues.

Lead Internal Verifiers

A Lead Internal Verifier is a person designated in a centre who takes overall responsibility for assessment and quality assurance of a Principal Subject Area (for example BTEC Firsts and Nationals in Business, or BTEC First and Level 1 in Hospitality). There can only be one Lead Internal Verifier for each principal subject area. The Lead Internal Verifier is responsible for the co-ordination of internal verification and the standard of assessment.

A Lead Internal Verifier:

- is the named key person for a group of programmes
- has access to training and support materials from Edexcel
- has opportunities for personal recognition and development.

Lead Internal Verifiers have the important role of ensuring that qualifications with overlapping groups of units have consistent assessment, whilst building a team approach to internal verification.

Edexcel will provide free of charge, specific induction training for every Lead Internal Verifier that is related to the role and to the accreditation process. This will only need to be undertaken once.

Following induction the Lead Internal Verifier will undertake a standardisation activity through an online process; this will be available at varying times throughout the year to suit the individual and the centre. Success in this activity demonstrates understanding of the role and competence in maintaining assessment standards. There are two possible outcomes following completion of Lead Internal Verifier standardisation:

- The Lead Internal Verifier is given accredited status for the current year, plus 3 years. After that time a renewal of accreditation will take place. At some point during the accreditation period, confirmation sampling will apply

or

- A Standards Verifier will be allocated to undertake monitoring of assessment outcomes via postal sampling. If the first sample meets national standards, the Lead Internal Verifier is given accredited status for the current year, plus 3 years. After that time a renewal of accreditation will take place. At some point during the accreditation period, confirmation sampling will apply.

Full details of the Lead Internal Verifier role and the online standardisation process are given in the Quality Assurance Handbook: www.edexcel.com/quals/btec/quality .

Standards Verification (SV)

Standards verification is the way in which we check that centres are operating quality assurance and assessing to the right standards. It will focus on looking at both assessment outcomes and internal verification processes.

Standards verification takes place in two ways:

- Following Lead Internal Verifier standardisation, where it is deemed that the Lead Internal Verifier would benefit from Standards Verifier support in order to gain accreditation.
- Confirmation Sampling, through the monitoring of programmes, based on risk, where there is an accredited Lead Internal Verifier.

Standards verification is the method by which Edexcel monitors the maintenance of standards for all units on all approved BTEC Entry Level to Level 3 programmes. The standards verification of assessment decisions ensures that samples are consistent with the requirement of the QCF. Full details of the Standards verification process are given in the Quality Assurance Handbook: www.edexcel.com/quals/btec/quality .

6.3 Other BTEC Programmes

This includes qualifications approved prior to 2003 and those on the customised qualification framework (CQF). Programmes are subject to external verification. From September 2011, full details of the quality assurance process for these qualifications are given in the Quality Assurance Handbook: www.edexcel.com/quals/btec/quality .

7 Access to Assessment

Equality of opportunity is a tenet of our provision and is embedded in Edexcel's policies. There should be no artificial barriers to Edexcel BTEC programmes and awards, which must:

- be available to everyone who can achieve the required standard
- be free from barriers which restrict access to progression
- be free from overt or covert discriminatory practices with regard to age, colour, creed, ethnic origin, gender, nationality, marital status, race or sexual orientation
- pay due regard to the particular requirements of individuals, including those who may require support to undertake learning and assessment
- be free from any restrictions that are not legally required.

Edexcel's policy on access arrangements and special considerations for BTEC and NVQ qualifications aims to enhance access to the qualifications for learners with disabilities and other difficulties (as defined by the Disability and Discrimination Act 1995 and the Amendments to the Act), without compromising the assessment of skills, knowledge, understanding or competence being measured.

Note: For full information on equal opportunities, visit the Disability Rights Commission website: www.drc-gb.org and refer to the latest Draft Code of Practice: The Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

8 Recognition of Prior Learning

8.1 Recognition of prior learning and/or experience (RPL)

Centres may make claims for some units or a whole qualification based on recognition of prior learning and/or experience. Please refer to the policy on Recognition of Prior Learning which is on the Edexcel website: www.edexcel.com/policies.

8.2 Claiming a qualification by RPL

After accepting a learner for assessment of prior learning, registration should be made in the usual way and RPL achievement may then be reported and graded where appropriate using normal methods.

9 Equality of Opportunity

Equality of opportunity is a tenet of our provision and is embedded in Edexcel's policies. There should be no artificial barriers to Edexcel programmes and awards, which must be:

- available to everyone who can achieve the required standard and be free from barriers which restrict access to progression
- free from overt or covert discriminatory practices with regard to age, colour, creed, ethnic origin, gender, nationality, marital status, race or sexual orientation, and pay due regard to the particular requirements of individuals, including those who may require support to undertake learning and assessment
- free from any restrictions that are not legally required.

Every approved centre must have an equal opportunities policy and a strategy for monitoring and reviewing:

- access to assessment and learning
- prevention of discrimination
- provision for candidates with particular requirements

and a mechanism for dealing with candidate appeals.

It is essential that centres recruit with integrity and fully explore with applicants any issues which may prevent them from achieving in any areas of their proposed qualification.

Centres should assess each applicant's potential and make a judgement about his/her ability to successfully achieve the programme of study. This should include access to specialist resources and/or essential skills such as basic and key skills. Initial assessment is highly recommended, with particular regard to the Disability Discrimination Act as applicable.

Centres should refer to the appropriate Occupational Standards, the Evidence Requirements and, where available, the Assessment Requirements/Strategy, for the particular NVQ title when giving advice to prospective candidates. As part of this process centres should advise candidates if there is a more appropriate qualification, or if they would only be able to achieve unit certification, rather than the full qualification.

10 Candidates with Particular Assessment Requirements: Policies and Procedures

Specific assessment policy is detailed in the guidelines for each qualification. Centres should refer to the reasonable adjustment arrangements for Edexcel vocational qualifications which can be found on the Edexcel website.

10.1 Centre recruitment

While access to our awards should be as open as possible, it is not in the interests of the individual if centres encourage unrealistic candidate expectations or set unattainable goals.

Centres must ensure that their recruitment process is conducted with integrity. Counselling on the appropriateness and feasibility of a particular course or qualification is very important to ensure the best match with an individual's needs.

10.2 Assessment and reasonable adjustments

Centres can put in place reasonable adjustment arrangements for candidates with particular requirements if they have, for example:

- a permanent or long-term disability or learning difficulty
- a temporary disability, illness or indisposition.

These arrangements are intended to allow candidates to demonstrate their achievement. However, any reasonable adjustment arrangements must not:

- advantage or disadvantage the candidate
- alter the assessment demands of the qualification.

Centres should contact Edexcel by emailing qualitystandards@edexcel.com of any reasonable adjustment arrangements they are putting in place to support candidates.

Edexcel reserves the right to request further clarification or information in relation to any proposed arrangements.

10.3 Appeals by a candidate

As part of the approvals/centre recognition process, centres are required to provide evidence that they have a published internal appeals procedure which can be accessed by candidates.

From time to time candidates contact Edexcel directly about issues relating to the delivery and assessment of the programme they are following. On receipt of any such communication we would, in the first instance, refer the candidate back to the centre's own internal appeals procedure. Candidates are advised that they must fully exhaust this system before Edexcel can become involved.

If a candidate does access the centre's internal system and does not feel that the outcome is satisfactory, he/she can contact Edexcel again.

Candidates should provide the following information when making an appeal to Edexcel:

- an outline of the nature of the issue and details of communication with the centre
- evidence that they have fully completed the centre's internal appeals process
- clear details of why they feel the outcome to be unsatisfactory.

At this stage we would take the appropriate steps to investigate the complaint. The outcomes of any such reviews are confidential between Edexcel and the centre. Edexcel may charge for carrying out these reviews.

The external verifier's role is to monitor the conduct of the appeal in line with the centre's published appeals procedure. External verifiers are not permitted to arbitrate in appeals.

10.4 Centre assessment records

Centres are expected to make every effort to ensure the safety and security of candidate work which they are holding for assessment purposes. Centres must ensure that they have detailed and up-to-date assessment records for all candidates, which are kept separately from actual candidate work. Assessment and verification records left in candidate portfolios are likely to be unavailable when candidates leave programmes or complete certification. Centres need to retain assessment and internal verification records for three years, according to the NVQ Code of Practice and Edexcel Assessment Requirements and SQA Accreditation Awarding Body Criteria (2007).

Lost or destroyed learner work

If candidate work is lost or destroyed centres will need to provide those assessment records that will verify what has been achieved in order to ensure that certification can proceed.

Centres must notify BTEC Quality Standards immediately when candidate work is lost or destroyed, ensuring they provide the following information:

- circumstances in which the work was lost or destroyed
- programme title and number
- details of the candidate(s) affected
- details of which unit(s) are affected
- centre, programme and assessment records
- any evidence of internal verification
- any supplementary information, such as witness testimonies.

Each case will be considered individually and certificates may be granted if:

- sufficient centre records and supplementary evidence are available
- all other assessment on the programme has been subject to ongoing external quality assurance which identifies that national standards have been met.

II Completion of Quality Assurance Processes Required for Certification – NVQ, SVQ and BTEC Apprenticeships

Centres offering Edexcel NVQs will receive an annual visit for 'Quality Review & Development' by a 'Centre Quality Reviewer'. The annual visit by a single Centre Quality Reviewer will address the management of all the NVQs approved at the centre. In addition, centres will also receive a separate annual visit by sector-specific and occupationally competent 'Standards Verifiers' for each QCF NVQ sector who will sample candidates' work in the usual way. The Standards Verifier will review evidence to ensure that the National Occupational Standards for assessment, internal verification and for the occupational sector are met.

In order for certification to be released confirmation is required that the following are met:

1. the Quality Objectives for the effective management of the delivery of all Edexcel QCF qualifications, in particular the Quality Objective for internal verification
- and
2. the National Occupational Standards for assessment, verification and for the specific occupational sector.

Centres offering a full BTEC Apprenticeship (ie all elements of the Apprenticeship are with Edexcel) a single Standards Verifier will be allocated to verify all elements of the BTEC Apprenticeship programme. If a centre is also offering stand-alone NVQs in the same sector as a full BTEC Apprenticeship, the same Standards Verifier will be allocated. The BTEC Apprenticeship is not in scope for Quality Review & Development.

Where problems have been encountered with the assessment of the programme or with the assessment of individual candidates, the Standards Verifier will have reported this to Edexcel and certificates for candidates on these programmes may be withheld or blocked.

A block on certification may be the result of information received by Edexcel which raises doubt as to the validity of certificates issued, or a potential risk may have been indicated to, or identified by, Edexcel.

The decision to block certification may have been made by the regulator or by the funding providers. Centres are reminded of the NVQ Code of Practice and the Edexcel Assessment Requirements and of the role of the awarding body in ensuring the validity of certificates. There is an overriding implication that the regulator and/or funding providers may influence this decision.

Following a visit by an SV, he/she will complete a Qualification Report Form (QRF). The QRF authorises claims for certification by allowing direct claim status or allows limited certification to be claimed by using a Limited Certification form. Where a certification box is checked as 'No', a further SV visit will be required before certification can be released, and centres may be required to pay for this. Centres can keep track of the information on registrations and their associated certification through Edexcel Online.

Edexcel Standards Verifiers will provide support, advice and guidance to centres to achieve Direct Claims Status (DCS). Edexcel will maintain the integrity of NVQs through ensuring that the awarding of these qualifications is secure. Where there are quality issues identified in the delivery of programmes Edexcel will exercise the right to:

- direct centres to take actions
- limit or suspend certification
- suspend registration.

The approach of Edexcel in such circumstances is to work with the centre to overcome the identified problems. If additional training is required Edexcel will aim to secure the appropriate expertise to provide this.

When programme teams are contacted by their allocated SV they need to liaise with the SV to make the best use of SV time during visits, so as to ensure that the certification status of their programmes is upheld. Programme teams may use Edexcel Online to check their SV allocation.

QCA NVQ Code of Practice (2006), The Statutory Regulation of External Qualifications (2004) and The Regulatory arrangements for the Qualifications and Credit Framework (2008)

The above regulations specify the quality assurance and control requirements which apply to, and reflect the distinctive character of NQF NVQs, QCF NVQs and competence-based qualifications. All staff involved with the delivery of NVQs should be familiar with their contents. Copies of the documents can be found on the Ofqual website.

The NVQ code of practice will continue to apply to all NVQs in the NQF until their last certification end date. These NVQs will continue to be part of the NQF and therefore must meet the requirements that applied when they were accredited – The statutory regulation of external qualifications 2004 and the NVQ code of practice. This means that there will be a transition period during which awarding organisations and their centres, operating in both the QCF and the NQF, are required to work with two sets of regulatory requirements – one for QCF NVQs and competence based qualifications and one for NVQs in the NQF.

It is highly recommended that examinations officers and NVQ administrators are briefed on any issues which are affected by the above regulations. These could include (among others) the 10-week rule, direct claims status and record-keeping.

Also, all staff involved must be aware that centres need to have approval with Edexcel before they can register candidates and deliver NQF NVQ awards (see part 3 of this section of the Information Manual). Similarly, centres must have gained centre recognition before they can register candidates and deliver QCF NVQ awards. It is essential that the deadlines given in part 1 are strictly adhered to.

The NVQ Code of Practice and Edexcel Assessment Requirements, as specified in the Edexcel NVQ Handbook, stipulate that centre records, including all recording information, internal verification and assessment records, are retained for auditing purposes for a period of three years.

There is no penalty for withdrawing candidates if they are no longer on a programme or have transferred to another programme or centre.

Having accurate data enables us to provide appropriate solutions to centres' needs to meet their quality assurance obligations. We can also provide better responses to any queries they may have about administration.

12 QCF Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT)

Learners may transfer credit achieved with other awarding bodies to Edexcel QCF programmes provided the credits fall within the rules of combination for the qualification.

Transfer credit should be reported for each learner to Edexcel Customer Services in writing and will appear on certification.

Further information on the QCF is available at www.edexcel.com/qcf.

13 BTEC Qualifications Assessed by Computer-based or Onscreen Test

13.1 Centre and qualification approval

Please refer to the onscreen testing section of this Information Manual for guidance on gaining approval. Once the qualification is approved, we will contact you to arrange for the installation of our computer-based test software on your IT network.

13.2 Learner registration

Before they can take a test learners must be registered with Edexcel for the relevant qualification. Please refer to the Vocational Registration section of this Information Manual for details of our learner registration policies and procedures.

13.3 Test booking

For further details on onscreen testing, how to become an onscreen test centre and how to make test bookings, please visit <http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/default.aspx> and enter “onscreen”.

13.4 Test results

For further details on onscreen testing, how to become an onscreen test centre and how to access test results, please visit <http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/default.aspx> and enter “onscreen”.

13.5 Certification

Computer-based tested qualifications may either be assessed entirely by a test(s) or by a mix of tests and portfolio of evidence.

Where the qualification is assessed entirely by one or more computer-based tests there is no need for you to claim the certificate. We will issue the certificate as soon as the learner is eligible. However, where the qualification is also assessed by an externally verified portfolio of evidence you need to report achievement for the units concerned and claim the certificate for the learner. Please refer to parts 5 and 6 of this section of the Information Manual for guidance.

14 Onscreen Testing

Onscreen BTEC tests are available.

14.1 Benefits

- On demand testing
- Schedule up to 365 days in advance
- Pay for tests upon learner registration
- Portable
- Free installation
- No limit to number of re-sits
- Instant printable results

14.2 Results

Provisional results are available instantly to centre staff once the tests have been completed. These can also be printed out and given to candidates. Once all units within the BTEC programme have been completed then the certificate will be issued.

14.3 Invoices

Centres will be invoiced upon registration. No additional entry or certificate fees are charged.