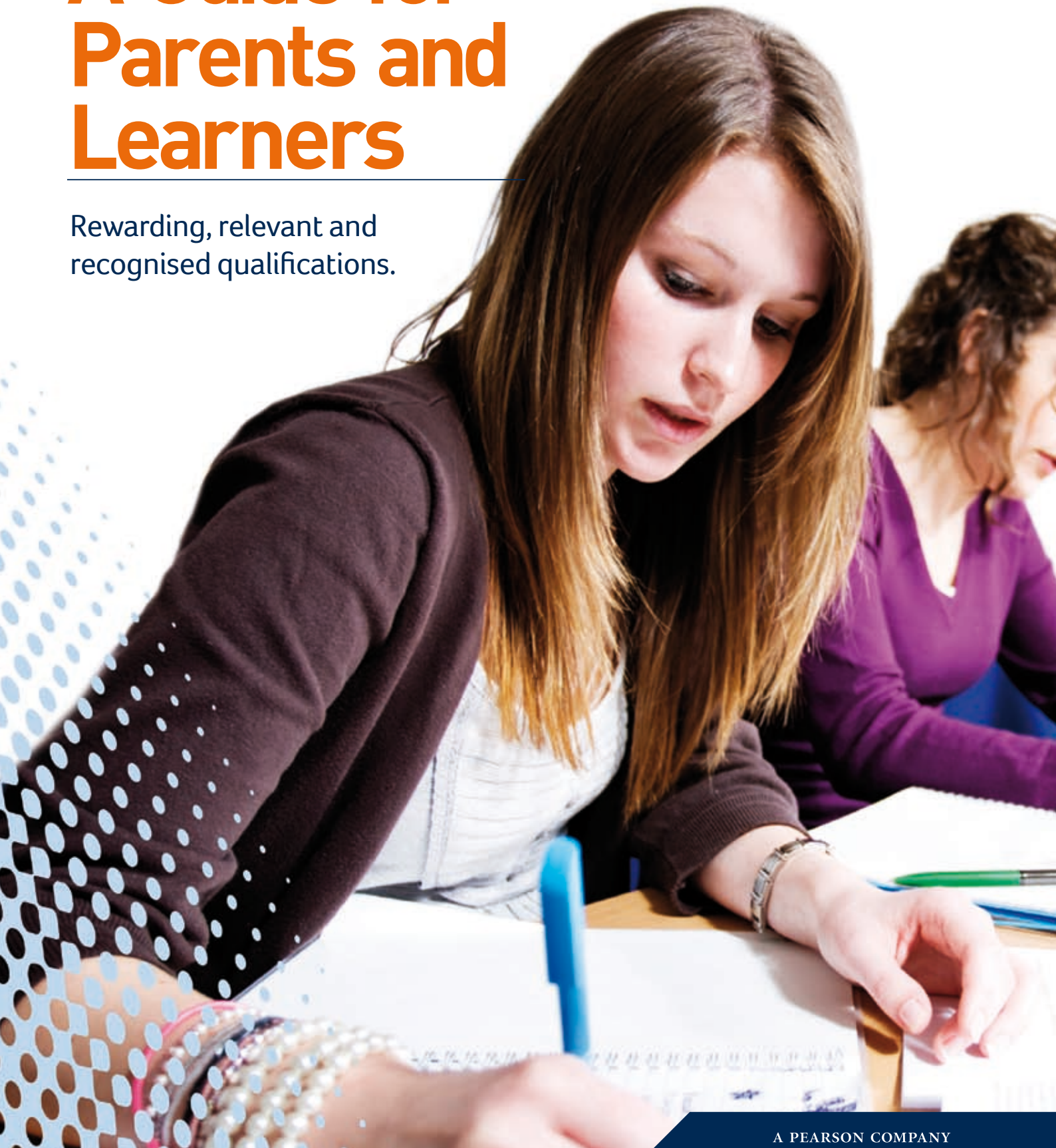


A Guide for Parents and Learners

Rewarding, relevant and
recognised qualifications.





Introducing BTECs

Over the last 25 years, BTECs have helped millions of people develop the skills they need to get on in life. Engaging and inspiring, these work-related qualifications are suitable for a wide range of ages and abilities. They provide a practical, real-world approach to learning without sacrificing any of the essential subject theory.

BTECs give students the skills they need to either move on to higher education or go straight into employment. For instance a Level 3 BTEC National Certificate in Business would cover all aspects of business including marketing, law, human resources and accounting. In addition, they also cover real life activities such as writing and presenting a business plan.

BTECs can be taken as well as, or in place of, GCSEs and A levels and alongside Diplomas in schools and colleges. They are valued by colleges, universities, employers and professional bodies across the United Kingdom and recognised throughout over 85 countries worldwide.

BTECs – the big benefits

As a parent you naturally want to advise your children as best you can, but things are bound to have moved on since you left school.

You'll need to know how BTECs differ from other qualifications. Let's look at these differences and the advantages BTECs bring.

A practical approach to study

BTECs offer practical experience that is often lacking in more traditional routes such as GCSEs. Students have to undertake a number of units for which they present evidence, based on real-life work and studies. This allows them to demonstrate their skill and knowledge in practical situations. If you think your child would succeed better working in this way, the BTEC route may be the one to take.

No exam pressure

Some students thrive during the pressure of exams; others often fail to achieve their potential due to worries or nerves. On a BTEC, progress is measured throughout their course, allowing the student to gauge their own performance on a continuing basis, just like in a real workplace. Students are more engaged and motivated as a result, as they can see their own progress through the course rather than waiting to the end to sit an exam. If you have concerns about exam performance, the BTEC route with all work assessed through the year and no final exams could be the better option.

Keep your options open

If you are not familiar with all of the many options available to school-leavers, like further education, apprenticeships and jobs that offer workplace learning and vocational degrees, you are not alone. Few parents are aware of, and understand all of, the many options. By all means seek advice from the school. BTECs offer students a full progression route from Entry level through to Level 5 Higher Nationals. But if your child is not sure about the path they will wish to take, BTECs with their built-in flexibility are a good choice as they offer useful practical experience as well as a recognised qualification.

Inspiring confidence

Learning should be fun, not daunting. In our experience, students enjoy BTEC programmes because they can specialise in areas of learning linked with work that they are interested in, like sport or the music business. Courses tap into what they enjoy, feel good at and find familiar. Students build their confidence because they are developing practical skills that will help them secure a job in the future. Answers to assignments may be in written form, but it's just as likely they will be in other forms – e.g. film clips, project proposals, business plans and structured databases. Students are always given clear guidelines so they know what they have to achieve and how to do this.





Rewarding effort

Students will have to meet deadlines set by teachers but can do this at their own pace rather than having to perform to the time constraints of an exam. Progress is monitored individually by teachers who provide personal support and guidance, helping students develop their learning skills and to reach their potential. They get to learn progressively starting from small-scale and simple topics, progressing to larger more complex themes.



A million BTEC students each year

In recent years, the popularity of BTECs has really taken off. We received close to 1.7 million BTEC registrations between 2005/06 and 2007/08, and in schools, BTEC uptake grew by 260% over the same period.

In the last year alone, more than a million students enrolled on a BTEC course to help them along the way to achieving their goals and their dreams.

What explains this dramatic rise in popularity of BTECs in schools? We believe it's because teachers, parents and students have come to recognise and appreciate these two main factors:

Firstly, academic study doesn't suit every student. BTECs offer a challenging and rewarding learning experience leading to a useful qualification that's also well regarded and respected. BTECs are valued highly by employers and higher education.

Secondly, some students choose the BTEC route because they have already decided on a career path and want to make an early start. BTECs offer relevant and practical experience, right from the word go.

Working together

Teamwork is an important aspect in the world of work. Not surprisingly it is also a key feature of BTECs. Students work on assignments both individually and in groups, such as a group drama production or manager-employee role-play. Some may take time to adapt to these new ways of working, but they gradually understand what is expected of them. They learn even faster if, at Key Stage 4, they take more than one BTEC course because they make connections and apply approaches to learning from one subject to another.



Fitting study around other things

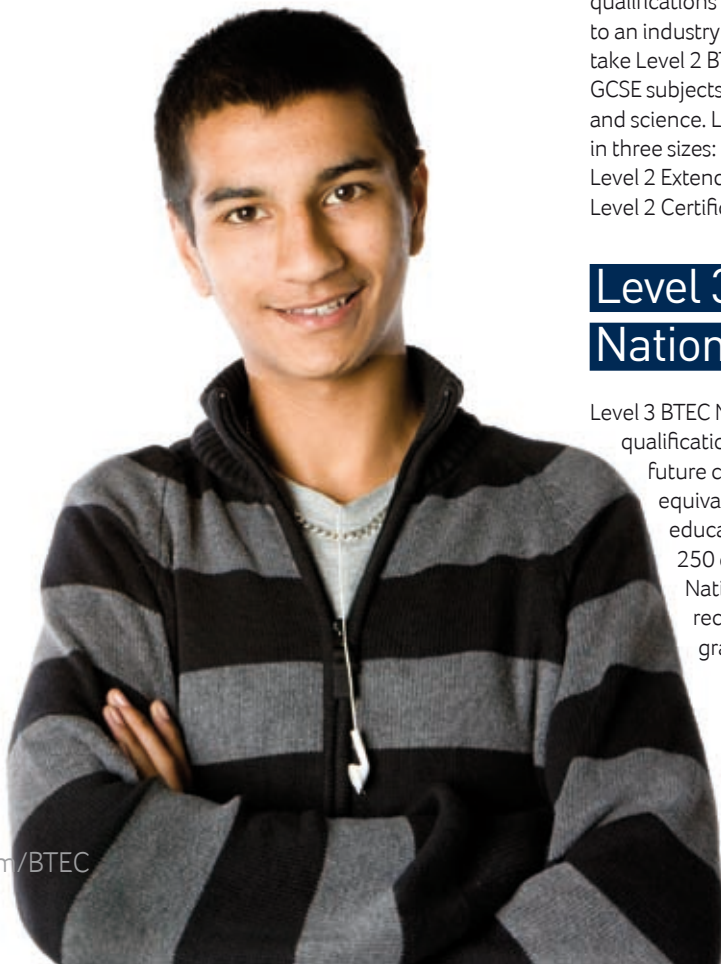
BTECs are flexible. They can be studied full-time or part-time. BTECs can be taken as part of an Apprenticeship programme or alongside work commitments and other qualifications.

Staying up to date

We are continually developing and updating BTECs in response to the needs and skills required by employers. This ensures that learners gain maximum benefit from their work whilst qualifying; and the qualifications stay up to date and relevant. Before deciding on a course to follow, it's worth considering whether the course has been revised recently and that the content is relevant. If it is a BTEC you can be assured that it has. All BTEC qualifications are now developed in co-operation with the relevant Sector Skills Council (SSC) ensuring they fit with the needs of employers.

BTECs in more detail

As we said, BTECs come in a number of different shapes and sizes, which can be confusing at first. So let's now take a look at the various options.



What does a BTEC 'look like'?

BTECs come in different levels, from Level 2 BTEC Firsts (equivalent to traditional GCSEs grades A*-C) up to Level 5 BTEC Higher Nationals (equivalent to Foundation Degree).

- Look inside a BTEC and you'll see it is made up of a number of units. This number is dependent on the level and size of BTEC being taken. To complete each unit, students' work is assessed along the way, linking theory with practical exercises. This ongoing assessment allows students to analyse and improve their own performance through their course in much the same way as they would in a real workplace.
- Unit results are graded as Pass/Merit/Distinction.
- The time taken to complete a BTEC is dependent on the size and level of the qualification. A BTEC will generally take one to two years to complete depending on whether the student is studying full or part time.

What is a BTEC 'worth'?

The qualifications are fully recognised as holding equivalences to GCSEs. For example, a Level 2 BTEC First Diploma is worth the equivalent of 4 GCSEs grade A*-C. This means a student can do a Level 2 BTEC First independently alongside GCSEs, or work towards them both in the same subject area.

Level 2 BTEC Firsts

These are Level 2 qualifications, the equivalent of traditional GCSEs grades A*-C. Over 60 Level 2 BTEC First qualifications are available, each linked to an industry sector. Students may take Level 2 BTEC Firsts alongside core GCSE subjects such as English, maths and science. Level 2 BTEC Firsts come in three sizes: the Level 2 First Diploma, Level 2 Extended Certificate and the Level 2 Certificate.

Level 3 BTEC Nationals

Level 3 BTEC Nationals are designed as specialist qualifications for those who have a clear view of their future career or want to progress to higher education. They are equivalent to A levels and are highly valued by universities, further education colleges and employers alike. There are more than 250 qualifications for students to choose from. Level 3 BTEC Nationals are suitable for students aged 16 upwards and are recommended for those who have achieved at least four A*-C grade GCSEs or have completed a Level 2 BTEC First.





Level 4/5 BTEC Higher Nationals

The BTEC Higher National Certificates (HNCs) and Higher National Diplomas (HNDs) are Level 4 and 5 qualifications, widely recognised by universities and professional bodies. The HNC is often studied part-time alongside full-time employment and an HND is studied full time. A Higher National student will develop management and other higher level technical skills required by employers. After a period of usually two years, students often progress to the final year of degree programmes. Higher Nationals can be studied in both FE colleges and universities.

The BTEC Foundation Diploma in Art and Design

This is a Level 3 programme, lasting normally a year, during which individuals are prepared for entry to higher education to study art and design.

BTEC WorkSkills

The purpose of WorkSkills is to enhance employability and encourage students to gain soft skills to help them with career progression. Learners wishing to gain a BTEC in WorkSkills can choose from a range of unit options. Many units build on existing life and workplace skills, while some develop skills integral to the school and college timetable. For more information go to www.edexcel.com/WorkSkills

BTEC Specialist Qualifications

These are a range of BTEC qualifications at all levels from 1-7. Each focuses upon the understanding, skills and knowledge needed for a particular sector, area of expertise or professional development.

Foundation Learning

If a student is studying at Entry or Level 1, they will be able to choose from one of the BTEC qualifications under the Foundation Learning suite of qualifications. This, combined with other Personal and Social Development qualifications, will allow them to work their way up to a Level 2 BTEC First or perhaps just find out a little more about working in a specific sector. For more information please visit www.edexcel.com/flt or speak to a course adviser at your child's school or college.



What subjects are available?

Currently BTECs cover the following subject areas:

Applied Science
Art and Design
Business and Services
Children's Care, Learning and Development
Construction
Education and Training
Engineering
Hair and Beauty
Health and Social Care
Hospitality
IT and Computing
Land and the Environment
Media
Performing Arts and Music
Public Services
Sport, Leisure and Recreation
Travel and Tourism

Equivalences & Progression

BTECs are equivalent to GCSEs and A Levels, so they are all your students' need to take them all the way to university, or into a career straight from school.

From September 2010 all the BTEC qualifications will move to the new Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF). This means that some of the actual qualification titles have changed but the equivalencies will remain the same.

This table shows the progression routes available to all BTEC students together with their more traditional equivalents.

Current NQF versions			QCF		
Level	Qualification title	GLH	Qualification title from September 2010	Credits	Equivalent to
Level 5 BTEC Higher Nationals					
4/5	Level 5 BTEC Higher National Diploma	960	To be confirmed (Level 5)	240	Foundation Degrees, Dip HE
	Level 5 BTEC Higher National Certificate	600	To be confirmed (Level 4)	150	Intermediate level qualifications
Level 3 BTEC Foundation Diploma in Art and Design					
3/4	Level 3 BTEC Foundation Diploma in Art and Design	600	To be confirmed (Levels 3 and 4)	150	2 GCE A Levels
Level 3 BTEC Nationals					
3	Level 3 BTEC National Diploma	1080	Level 3 BTEC Extended Diploma	180	3 GCE A Levels
	Level 3 BTEC National Certificate	720	Level 3 BTEC Diploma	120	2 GCE A Levels
	Level 3 BTEC National Award	360	Level 3 BTEC Subsidiary Diploma	60	1 GCE A Level
		180	Level 3 BTEC Certificate	30	1 GCE AS Level
Level 2 BTEC Firsts					
2	Level 2 BTEC First Diploma	360	Level 2 BTEC Diploma	60	4 GCSEs (A*-C)
	Level 2 BTEC First Certificate	180	Level 2 BTEC Extended Certificate	30	2 GCSEs (A*-C)
		90	Level 2 BTEC Certificate	15	1 GCSE (A*-C)
Level 1 BTEC Introductory and FLT					
1	Level 1 BTEC Introductory Diploma	variable	Foundation Learning Tier	variable	GCSE (D-G)
	Level 1 BTEC Introductory Certificate	variable	Foundation Learning Tier	variable	GCSE (D-G)
Entry Level BTEC/Certificates and FLT					
E	BTEC Entry Level Certificate in Life Skills	180	Foundation Learning Tier	variable	N/A
	BTEC Entry Level Certificate in Skills for Working Life	180	Foundation Learning Tier	variable	N/A

The revised Level 2 BTEC First and Level 3 BTEC National titles will be available for teaching following accreditation onto the QCF from September 2010.

UCAS Points

Students who gain BTEC qualifications will also earn UCAS points at the same time. Students completing the following BTEC qualifications can apply for university places through UCAS - the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service. Further information about UCAS can be obtained from their website www.ucas.com

This table shows the UCAS tariff points for GCE A and AS Levels, Edexcel Level 3 BTEC Nationals, the Edexcel Level 3 BTEC Foundation Diploma in Art and Design, and Key Skills qualifications.

This data is correct as of October 2009 and is liable to change in the future. UCAS points will still be available for specified Level 3 BTECs, check www.edexcel.com/btec for further updates.

UCAS points key:

D = Distinction

M = Merit

P = Pass

GCE Qualifications (including vocational subjects)			Level 3 BTEC Nationals			Points	BTEC Foundation Diploma in Art and Design	Key Skills
AS	A level	Double Award	Award	Certificate	Diploma			
					DDD	360		
					DDM	320		
						285	Distinction	
					DMM	280		
		AA		DD	MMM	240		
						225	Merit	
		AB				220		
		BB		DM	MMP	200		
		BC				180		
						165	Pass	
		CC		MM	MPP	160		
		CD				140		
	A	DD	D	MP	PPP	120		
	B	DE				100		
	C	EE	M	PP		80		
A	D					60		
B						50		
C	E		P			40		
D						30		Level 4
E						20		Level 3
						10		Level 2

Resources

Edexcel is part of the Pearson Education group, the world's leading educational publisher. Books and online resources are available to support your children throughout their BTEC courses.

- Edexcel's Study Guides. An invaluable start-up resource for students. These essential Guides support students in making their own decisions on how to approach their studies, identify what skills they need to succeed and select the broadest range of resources which best suit their learning style.
- Student books and resources. Pearson Education offers a wide range of student resources that provide in-depth coverage of both core and optional BTEC units, plus lively case studies and activities to stimulate students and help them apply the theory to real-life.
- BTEC Activators - helping learners make the most of work experience. These include a write-in guide for work placement, ready-made assignments, and exercises to prepare for work experience, activities for completion during placements and handy checklists and forms to make it easy for students to record their individual progress through the placement.

**This brochure offers only a
brief introduction to BTECs.
For more information, please
visit www.edexcel.com/BTEC
or call us on 0844 576 0026.**





A week in the life of a BTEC Student - Sport

01 Monday

Your teacher or tutor briefs you on planning an outdoor adventurous activity e.g. kayaking, rock climbing or windsurfing.

02 Tuesday

Start to prepare for the event in a controlled and supervised environment.

03 Wednesday

Review your ideas for full safety support and walk through a risk assessment on each activity.

04 Thursday

Discuss with the teacher and other students the impact of the selected activity on environmental damage. Try to identify key guidelines from relevant agencies and regulations to minimise this.

05 Friday

Present one of your chosen activities to the rest of the class describing your planning, safety and environment ideas.

NOTES

Level 2 BTEC First in Sport, Leisure and Recreation
Unit 7: Practical Outdoor and Adventurous Activities.

Please note this is an example only.
The above unit may run across several weeks.

“I’m extremely proud of Matt’s achievements; he’s got a great job and he’s very happy so I don’t think either his mother or I would have wanted to change the route he took to getting where he is today”

– John, father of Matt Lazenby (BTEC in Art & Design, York College) and co-founder of design & branding agency LazenbyBrown.

“After getting 12 GCSEs (10 with A and A* grades) I did a BTEC National Diploma for IT Practitioners. It was one of the best decisions I’ve ever made. I spent two years concentrating on a subject I really enjoy, and learning from a range of specialists. Since I earned UCAS points as I progressed through the course, I knew I had the grades for university. I applied to four and got four offers.”

– Emyr Thomas, currently studying Computer Science at Cardiff University.

“It is difficult to say at 16 where you want to spend your working life. A BTEC opens up avenues such as university whilst also being relevant to your profession. BTEC formed the basis of my engineering knowledge and proved to employers I had achieved an academic standard as well as obtained practical skills.”

– Ben Hughes (BEng I, Mechanical Engineering) has now accepted a PhD position with the Engineering Physical Sciences Research Centre (EPSRC).

About Edexcel

Edexcel is a Pearson company and the UK’s largest awarding body.

We offer academic and vocational qualifications and testing to schools, colleges, employers and other places of learning here and in over 85 countries worldwide.

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