



Student Handbook

The Ilfracombe Academy delivers a range of BTEC qualifications. Most of the guidance within this student handbook is applicable to all courses on offer:

	Information applicable to ALL courses
	Information specific to courses in years 12 and 13
	Information specific to courses in years 10 and 11

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Introduction to BTEC qualifications:

What are Vocational Qualifications?

Vocational qualifications are nationally recognised qualifications. They are different from traditional GCSE and A Levels because they are linked to a particular area of work.

What makes vocational qualifications different?

- Students develop skills, knowledge and understanding in the vocational area they are studying.
- Each vocational course is made up of a number of units, allowing students to build up their qualification in stages.
- Students are assessed mainly through coursework.
- Students produce evidence for their key skills qualification through their vocational course.
- Students take responsibility for their own learning by planning their work, doing research and regularly reviewing their progress.

Why do we offer BTEC courses?

- They prepare students for the world of work and provide a good starting point for other qualifications.
- Employers value the qualities that vocational students bring to the workplace e.g. organisation, time management, communication and research skills.
- Universities value the independent study skills that vocational students bring to their courses.
- The courses are flexible so that they meet the needs of a wide range of students. They are available at different levels in a variety of formats. They can be taken alongside other qualifications such as traditional GCSEs and A levels.
- They give students the opportunity to try a range of activities such as designing products, organising events, investigating how professionals work and working in teams.

BTEC delivery – what to expect during your BTEC course

Assignments/Tasks - Each BTEC qualification is broken down into distinct units/assignments/tasks. Whilst most assignments are set internally many BTEC qualifications now include an external assessment or exam. Your teacher should make you aware of the course delivery plan, which describes when you will complete each assignment. At the outset of each assignment your teacher will inform you of the 'hand-out' date and 'submission' date. It is essential that you meet submission deadlines; and as a result your teacher should be providing you with regular reminders of imminent deadlines.

Assessment Criteria/Mark Schemes - Each assignment is assessed using clearly defined assessment criteria, which your work will be judged against. The assignment briefs (or Pearson set assignments PSAs) provided by your teachers should contain all assessment criteria relevant to the assignment. Your assignment brief is your point of reference and should always be at hand, especially when writing your assignments. Each assignment brief is internally verified before distribution and will give you all the information you need to complete your assessments. Each assignment brief will include a list of useful websites and resources to support your work. The feedback you receive from teachers should focus on specific assessment criteria (or grading criteria) enabling you to improve your work.

How will I learn during a BTEC qualification?

Teacher input

At the start of a unit there will be a lot of teacher input; question and answer sessions, discussions, note taking and handouts. This may all happen at the beginning of a unit or at different points throughout the unit. It is important to note any information you are given, as it may be required at a later stage in the unit.

Learner investigation

Once the assignment has been explained and the tasks have been set, you will have to work on your own to find the information you need and then you will have to produce the information in a particular format to meet the requirements of the task. The work you produce must be your own; word for word copying from a textbook, or copying and pasting from the Internet **will not** be accepted nor will you be allowed to copy the work of other learners. You will have to check regularly with your teacher to make sure that your work is correct and to discuss any ideas that you want to develop.

Group work

For some tasks you may have to work in a group, either to find information or to produce evidence. This is quite acceptable providing that all learners take an equal share of the work and that individual contributions are identified.

Practical Work.

Practical activities which may include; Learning by experience.

Learning by experience and is usually done in the work place (e.g. work experience or work placement) or by setting up work situations in the classroom (e.g. a role play of a business interview or a health care worker communicating with a client). Whether real or pretend, a lot can be learned from this type of situation and it is important to make the most of it by preparing thoroughly beforehand and recording any information you find. Inviting visitors into school from the vocational area is another good way of linking your work with what really happens in the workplace.

What skills will I develop during a BTEC qualification?

- Communication skills
- Research skills using a variety of methods
- I.C.T. skills using a variety of programs
- Practical skills using different techniques and equipment
- Presentation skills using a variety of formats
- Organisational skills

How important is independent study on a BTEC qualification?

- You will be expected to do all of the following as part of your day-to-day work
- Read and research
- Keep a record of the information you find and the sources
- Plan your work in a logical order and keep a record of your progress
- Talk to your teachers about your ideas and how to achieve the best results
- Produce drafts and final copies of your work
- Produce good quality work with high standards of grammar and spelling
- Present your work in a suitable format according to the purpose and the audience
- Evaluate your work and make suggestions for improvement
- Meet deadlines
- Keep a record of the work you have completed, including the grades and points you have been awarded, ensuring this matches the assessment wall.

Understanding the assessment criteria

Command words are the words and phrases used within assessment criteria (and mark schemes) to explain to students how they should answer a question or complete a task.

It is important that you fully understand command words and target your responses accordingly.

Analyse	Identify several factors, show how they are linked, and explain the importance of each
Compare/Contrast	Identify the main factors in two or more situations, then explain the similarities and differences, and in some cases adapt your original ideas
Competently use	Take full account of information and feedback you have obtained to review or improve an activity
Demonstrate	Prove that you can carry out a complex activity taking into account information you have obtained or received to adapt your original ideas
Describe	Give a comprehensive description which tells a story to the reader and shows that you can apply your knowledge and information correctly
Evaluate	Bring together all your information and make a judgement on the importance or success of something
Explain	Provide full details and reasons to support the arguments you are making
Identify	Give all the basic facts which relate to a certain topic
Justify	Give full reasons or evidence to support your opinion
List	Write a list of the main items (not sentences)
Name	State the proper terms related to a drawing or diagram
Outline	Give all the main points, but without going into too much detail
Recommend	Weigh up all the evidence to come to a conclusion, with reasons, about what would be best
State	Point out or list the main features
Suggest	Give your own ideas or thoughts

Submission guidance and meeting deadlines

What will be expected of you?

High levels of attendance and engagement in lessons
Read and research
Keep a record of the information you find and the sources
Plan your work in a logical order and keep a record of your progress
Talk to your teachers about your ideas and how to achieve the best results
Produce drafts and final copies of your work
Produce good quality work with high standards of grammar and spelling
Present your work in a suitable format according to the purpose and the audience
Evaluate your work and make suggestions for improvement
Meet deadlines
Keep a record of the work you have completed, including the grades and points you have been awarded

The importance of meeting submission deadlines: YEAR 12 and 13 BTEC Courses

You must make every effort to meet original submission deadlines (these will be clearly shared on assignment briefs and through constant reminders within lessons):

If you **DO MEET** these deadlines you may be offered an extension (2 weeks) by your teachers, but you will need to complete this work without any guidance from them.

If you **DO NOT MEET** these deadlines you cannot obtain a pass on this assignment and staff cannot simply offer you an extension.

- You will need to apply for '*special circumstances*' which you will have to support with doctors notes, letters from home or other sources of evidence

If you are absent on the day of a submission deadline – email work to your teacher

Talk to teachers – particularly if you know that you will struggle to meet a deadline

The importance of supervised sessions: YEAR 10 and 11 BTEC Courses

You will complete all of your internal assessments within supervised sessions. These are identified lessons in a computer room with clear expectations for behaviour and conduct.

You cannot complete your work outside of these supervised sessions.

- Further guidance on supervised sessions is provided on pages 15 and 16

Resubmission of Evidence

Opportunities for resubmission of evidence

Every assignment contributes to the final qualification grade, it may be appropriate for the Lead Internal Verifier (or programme lead) of your course to authorise one opportunity for a learner to resubmit evidence to meet assessment criteria targeted by an assignment.

The Lead Internal Verifier can only authorise a resubmission if all of the following conditions are met:

- the learner has met initial deadlines set in the assignment, or has met an agreed deadline extension
- the teacher judges that the learner will be able to provide improved evidence without further guidance
- the assessor has authenticated the evidence submitted for assessment and the evidence is accompanied by a signed-and-dated declaration of authenticity by the learner.

If you are provided with the opportunity to resubmit your work it must be submitted by the date agreed by the lead IV for the qualification which will be a maximum of 15 days after you receive your feedback from your first submission. Any work submitted after this deadline will not be assessed.

Referencing/acknowledging sources of information

In order to achieve a BTEC qualification, you must produce your own work. You will not be allowed to:

Copy word for word from textbooks

Copy and paste from the Internet

Copy from other learners (past or present)

The examination board has a clear policy on how to deal with learners who copy other work. If you copy the work of another learner you will risk having your work cancelled and may achieve nothing. If you lend your work to others, you will also risk having your work cancelled. If you steal another learner's work and copy it, the exam board may cancel all of your courses.

Permitted and unacceptable uses of AI:

Permitted Uses:

- Brainstorming ideas
- Checking grammar and spelling
- Conducting background research
- Understanding complex topics
- Structuring ideas (with teacher approval)

Unacceptable Uses:

- Using AI to write final responses
- Copying or paraphrasing AI-generated content without giving credit
- Asking AI to evaluate and improve grades
- Submitting AI work as their own

Good practice – referencing your sources

It is important that you understand referencing and how to identify when you have used ideas and words from books or other sources in a way that clearly highlights they are not your own work.

General Quotations:

Using a quotation reproduces in your work the actual words a writer uses. You should therefore take care to copy accurately. If you copy the actual words a writer uses you should put the words in quotation marks “ ” and give a reference. For example:

Jack Frost wrote “Summer is not coming in” (Frost, A. 2005 p.14)

You would then at the end of your assignment include a bibliography detailing the full reference of all sources you have used to complete your assignment.

For example:

Frost, A. (2005) *A Diary of Seasonal Meltdown* Seasonal Publishers

Electronic information:

The in-text reference should follow the same format as for printed sources; however, the bibliographic information on your references page will be different and generally requires you to include the type of resource plus when it was accessed, as well as the URL for on-line sources.

For example (relating to a Business reference):

Cadbury World – What do they offer (Products sold on their website)

<http://www.cadburyworld.co.uk/products.htm> (downloaded 6 July 2012)

When you submit your work you will be required to sign a Learner declaration to confirm the work submitted is your own. Your teacher will also have to sign to confirm that they believe the work you have submitted is your own.

How will your work be marked?

YEAR 12 and 13 BTEC Courses:

Students' work is assessed during the course, with each individual unit graded as a Pass, Merit or Distinction. This on-going assessment means students can analyse and improve their own performance on a continuing basis, just as they would in the workplace.

Each grade at unit level is assigned a mark these marks are then added together to create the final grade for the qualification. Each individual specification contains details of how to grade each unit and calculate the overall qualification grade which will be provided to you by your BTEC Programme Leader.

YEAR 10 and 11 BTEC Courses:

In preparation for a supervised session your teacher will share and discuss the mark scheme for the assignment with you (understanding the mark scheme is an essential part of your preparation for every supervised session):

- Your teacher will mark your work at the end of the assignment. This mark will be in the form of a number of marks (and not a specific grade of Pass, Merit or Distinction).
- Your teacher will use the marking criteria from BTEC to award you marks.
- Your teacher will then add up the marks and give you a total.
- Your final grade for the assignment depends on your final total mark.

1. During teaching and learning stage of a unit feedback could include, for example:

- Teachers identifying areas for learner progression including further challenge
- Teachers explain how BTEC assessment works and what learners need to do in order to achieve a Pass, Merit or Distinction (or improved numerical marks) within an assignment
- Teachers could complete a mock assessment to learn the procedures and help prepare for the final assessment

2. During assessment completion stage the feedback could include for example:

- Guidance on how to approach the knowledge and skills requirements
- Guidance on appropriate behaviour and approach including confirmation of deadlines etc.
- Confirmation of which criteria the assessor is targeting and clarification of what the assignment brief requires

3. Following assessment feedback on the assessment record should include:

- The criteria the learner achieved (or the number of numerical marks achieved) (with explanation of the assessor's decisions)
- The criteria (or marks) not achieved and why (although not a list of instructions on how to get a higher grade)
- General comment on approach, conduct and grammar etc.

Appeals (when you don't agree with a grade or mark)

Learners must initiate an appeal. This would begin by contacting the assessor that marked the piece of work in questions.

Each stage on the appeals process described below should be followed by the completion of an appeals recognition form (these can be collected from the centre quality nominee – Mr Twomey)

Stage 1 – Informal:

Learner consults with Assessor (teacher) within 5 working days following the assessment decision, to discuss an assessment decision. If unresolved, then the issues are documented before moving to stage 2

Stage 2 – Review:

Review of assessment decisions by Quality Nominee and/or Internal Verifier/Lead Internal Verifier/programme lead. Learner notified of findings and agrees or disagrees, in writing, with outcome. If unresolved, move to stage 3

Stage 3 – Appeal hearing:

Senior Leadership Team BTEC Line Manager hears the appeal with the potential involvement of the head teacher: last stage by the centre.

Stage 4 – External appeal:

The grounds for appeal and any supporting documentation must be submitted by the centre to Pearson within 14 days of the completion of Stage 3: a fee is levied

What does the term '**Supervised Session**' mean:

Supervised sessions are lessons timetabled into computer rooms when you complete your BTEC assignments. You cannot complete your assignments outside of these supervised sessions.

Supervised sessions are **NOT EXAMS** but they are expected to run in '**EXAM-LIKE CONDITIONS**', for this reason there are expectations of how you must work within each supervised session:

- You must complete the assignment on your own.
Your teacher will have prepared you for each supervised session.
You are allowed support materials – these will be confirmed by your teacher..
- You must complete your work in silence (unless you are discussing your work with your teacher)
- If we think that you had extra help, your marks may be changed or reduced to zero.

Instructions for each supervised session:

	You must enter the computer room in silence.
First 5 minutes	Your teacher will outline the focus of the supervised session. Log into your personal BTEC computer account (username and password) and open the relevant document(s) that you will be working on during the supervised session.
50 minutes	You must work in silence to complete your assignments. (Some support from your teacher is allowed – see the guidance below)
Last 5 minutes	Your teacher will give you a 5 minute warning and instructions for ending the supervised session. You must save your work using the file name(s) suggested by your teacher and log out of your BTEC computer account.

What help can my teacher give me?

Your teacher can:

- ✓ read the assignment to you
- ✓ help you understand what you need to do
 - for example, remind you of the difference between **Describe** and **Evaluate**
- ✓ give you some general help if you get stuck
- ✓ tell you how long you have to complete the tasks
- ✓ explain the mark scheme
- ✓ give general advice and guidance
- ✓ remind you of the content expected.

Your teacher cannot:

- ✗ tell you what to do
- ✗ tell you how to do it
- ✗ structure your work for you
- ✗ give you solutions or answers
- ✗ say how to improve your work
- ✗ mark your work in sections and give feedback
- ✗ give you templates to use to complete your work unless they are provided by OCR in the set assignments.

What if I get stuck?

- You can ask your teacher to explain the task again.
- Move on to another part of the assignment.
- Come back again later to have another go.

How will my assignment be marked:

In preparation for a supervised session your teacher will share and discuss the mark scheme for the assignment with you (understanding the mark scheme is an essential part of your preparation for every supervised session):

- Your teacher will mark your work at the end of the assignment.
- Your teacher will use the marking criteria from BTEC to award you marks.
- Your teacher will then add up the marks and give you a total.
- Your final grade for the assignment depends on your final total mark.

Plagiarism and Referencing:

PLAGIARISM is when you take someone else's work or ideas, but do not say you have done so. Plagiarism is very serious. You must always say when you use someone else's work or ideas – this is called REFERENCING.

Examples of when you may need to reference are:

- Using ideas from a book
- Using ideas, research, data or an image from the internet
- Copying something someone says – like a quote

DO	DON'T
✓ Reference anything you've copied from websites, books or course notes ✓ Always use quotation marks ✓ Say where it's from and the date you got it ✓ Use your own words as well when asked to describe or explain something	✗ Just copy from websites, books or course notes use it to support your own thoughts and ideas and make sure you reference Consequences ✗ Copying without referencing looks like you're pretending it's your own words. This is known as plagiarism and you could lose marks

If you plagiarise, you may be given 0 marks for this unit, or fail the whole qualification.

Making a reference list:

You should create a reference list at the end of your assignment. This should list all the sources of information that you have used within your assignment.

For articles from magazines and newspapers: Make a note of the author's name(s), the year of publication, the title of the article, the title of the publication, the page number(s).

For electronic sources: As above, plus - the date you accessed the electronic text, the website or email address and identify the form of the resource (WWW page, email, blog etc).

For books: Make a note of the author's or editor's name(s), the publication date, the title of the book, the city the book was published in, the publisher's name, the pages you have quoted or paraphrased from.

Make sure it's clear in your work how you are using the material you have referenced to inform your thoughts, ideas or conclusions.