Pearson

Foundation Certificate in Education

Your quick guide



2026

Foundation Certificates: key features at a glance

Feature	What a Foundation Certificate is
Purpose	A classroom-based level 2 further study pathway for students who want to, and are capable of, progressing to a level 3 pathway – T Levels, V Levels or A Levels – after one additional year at level 2.
Size	240–300 GLH, sat over 1 year, providing a balance of breadth and depth in a broad vocational area.
Content	Set nationally, focused on applied and practical learning, with content aligned to the level 3 options it supports progression onto. Strong focus on English and maths, alongside enrichment and exposure to level 3 study.
Structure and assessment	Modular with mandatory synopticity and mixed methods – exam, practical or performance, and projects were valid. Two assessment windows across a one-year study programme.
External and internal split	40% external, set and marked by the awarding organisation (exam or other timetabled assessment). 60% internal, set by the awarding organisation graded by the centre and moderated by the AO.
Grading	Pass, Merit and Distinction plus U, with compensatory aggregation allowed.

Source: Post-16 pathways: implementation plan – GOV.UK; Regulating post-16 vocational and technical qualifications at levels 2 and 3 – Ofqual

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Pearson Foundation Certificate in Education

240 GLH • one-year programme

UNIT 1

Planning for Inclusive Learning

30% • 72 GLH

NEA

Centre marked and

Pearson moderated.

Duration: 12 hours

NEA release: 1 Sep 2027 for Jan submission

UNIT 2

Communication and Safe Learning Environments

30% • 72 GLH

NEA

Centre marked and

Pearson moderated.

Duration: 10 hours

NEA release: 1 Sep 2027 for Jan submission

UNIT 3

Assessment, Progress and Responsible Practice in Education

40% • 96 GLH

Examination

Pearson marked.

Duration: 1 hour 45 minutes

First assessment: January 2028

60% Pearson-set NEA, centre marked and Pearson moderated

40% Pearson-set and marked examination

Assessment durations and NEA release dates are subject to confirmation pending regulatory approval.

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Foundation Certificate units and assessment types

Three units: two non-examined and one examined

UNIT 1

Planning for Inclusive Learning

Non-examined assessment

Students will develop knowledge across different stages of education and be given opportunities to apply their understanding and skills in a range of contexts, including EYFS, primary school, secondary school and post-16 provision.

UNIT 2

Communication and Safe Learning Environments

Non-examined assessment

Students will be given opportunities to apply knowledge, understanding and skills in a range of contexts, including EYFS, primary school, secondary school and post-16 provision.

UNIT 3

Assessment, Progress and Responsible Practice in Education

Examined assessment

Students will develop the knowledge and skills needed to understand how assessment is used to support learning, achievement and progress. You will explore how different types of assessment are used to establish starting points, monitor progress, identify strengths and areas for development, and inform next steps in learning.

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Overview of Assessment

From teaching to examination, with Pearson setting and moderating the assessment.



5 steps

from first teaching to certification

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1. Teach

Build the knowledge and applied skills in the specification.

2. Pearson sets NEA

Centres must enter students for the series in which they wish to take the NEA unit.

The assessment released for the relevant series must be used.

3. Centre marks

Apply the published numerical marking grids.

4. Pearson moderates

Checks that marks align with the national standard.

5. Examination

Centres must enter students for the series in which they wish to take the exam.

Pearson sets and marks the 40% examined unit.

Draft for training

Subject to accreditation, final specifications and funding confirmation.

Foundation Certificate: centre readiness

What centres should take away

1. Build a coherent one-year programme around the three-unit structure.

2. Plan entries, NEA delivery, marking and submission around the January and May/June windows.

3. Prepare staff for numerical marking and Pearson moderation.

4. Use progression guidance early so students understand the Level 3 routes available.



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Fully compensatory assessment

Subject to accreditation, final specifications and funding confirmation.

V Levels and Foundation Certificates recognise achievement across units



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No must-pass unit

Students can achieve the qualification without passing every individual unit.

No external hurdle

A low or unclassified exam result can be balanced by stronger performance elsewhere if the overall UMS threshold is met.

Every mark matters

Performance across all components contributes proportionately to the total outcome.

A complete programme

A valid unit combination and the entry and certification rules still apply. Pearson guidance explains these.

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Get in touch

Speak to us about your curriculum

