Pearson

# V Level in Digital Systems and Data

A quick guide for educators



2026

# V Levels: key features at a glance

| Feature | What a V Level is |
|---|---|
| **Purpose** | A broad, classroom-based vocational qualification for students who want to explore a range of routes – the third level 3 pathway alongside A Levels and T Levels. |
| **Size** | 360 GLH, the same size as one A Level, taken over 2 years and studied alongside other V Levels, A Levels or an English or maths retake. |
| **Content** | Set nationally and linked to occupational standards, blending applied learning with practical assessment. |
| **Structure and assessment** | Modular with a terminal examination and mandatory synopticity. 40% examination, set and marked by the awarding organisation; 60% non-exam assessment (NEA), marked numerically and moderated. One NEA window and one examination a year. First NEA submission May 2028. First external assessment summer 2029. |
| **Grading** | A*–E plus a P 'pass' grade below E, and U for unclassified. Comparable grade boundaries maintain standards over time; UCAS tariff matches A Level grades, with P at 12 points. |
| **Progression** | Supports progression to related higher education, apprenticeships or employment. |

Source: Post-16 pathways: implementation plan – GOV.UK; V Levels: requirements and guidance – Ofqual

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# V Level in Digital Systems and Data

360 GLH • 2-year programme • one optional unit • terminal examination

UNIT 1

**Presenting Data Effectively**

**20% • 72 GLH**

NEA

Centre marked and

Pearson moderated.

Duration: 15 hours

NEA release: 1 Sep 2027

UNIT 2

**Securing Digital Systems**

**20% • 72 GLH**

NEA

Centre marked and

Pearson moderated.

Duration: 15 hours

NEA release: 1 Sep 2027

UNIT 3 OR 4 (OPTIONAL)

**Configuring Digital Systems**
**or**
**Digital Solution Design & Development**

**20% • 72 GLH**

NEA

Centre marked and

Pearson moderated.

Duration: 15 hours

NEA release: 1 Sep 2028

UNIT 5

**Understanding Digital Systems**

**40% • 144 GLH**

Terminal examination

Pearson marked

Duration: 2 hours 30 minutes

Taken in the final assessment series

First availability: May/June 2029

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

40% Pearson-set and marked examination

**Students take either Unit 3 or Unit 4, so the programme contains four units in total.**

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

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# V Level units and assessment types

Four non-exam assessment (NEA) units and one examined unit.

UNIT 1

## Presenting Data Effectively

Non-exam assessment (NEA)

Students develop knowledge and understanding of how data can be collected, prepared, analysed, and presented to support decision-making in the workplace.

UNIT 2

## Securing Digital Systems

Non-exam assessment (NEA)

Students develop knowledge and understanding of the threats and issues that affect digital systems, and of the protocols and technologies used to protect them.

UNIT 3

## Configuring Digital Systems

Non-exam assessment (NEA)

Students prepare and configure digital systems in response to defined user and system requirements.

UNIT 4

## Creating Digital Solutions

Non-exam assessment (NEA)

Students define the problem and its scope, identify requirements and constraints, structure solution logic, develop interface and low-fidelity representations, and produce a proposal suitable for development.

UNIT 5

## Understanding Digital Systems

Examined assessment

Students examine system components, operating systems, access control, configuration and fault diagnosis. They explore data structures, formats, quality, validation and analysis, considering how uncertainty, bias and governance affect conclusions and how visual communication supports understanding.

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# Overview of Assessment

From first teaching to certification, with retakes available if needed.

## 1. Teach

Build the knowledge and applied skills in the specification, with synoptic content signposted along the way.

## 2. Complete NEA

NEA can be completed in both years of the qualification as students develop their applied knowledge and skills.

## 3. Enter for final exam

Students are entered to take the terminal examination in the series that they will certificate.

# 5 steps

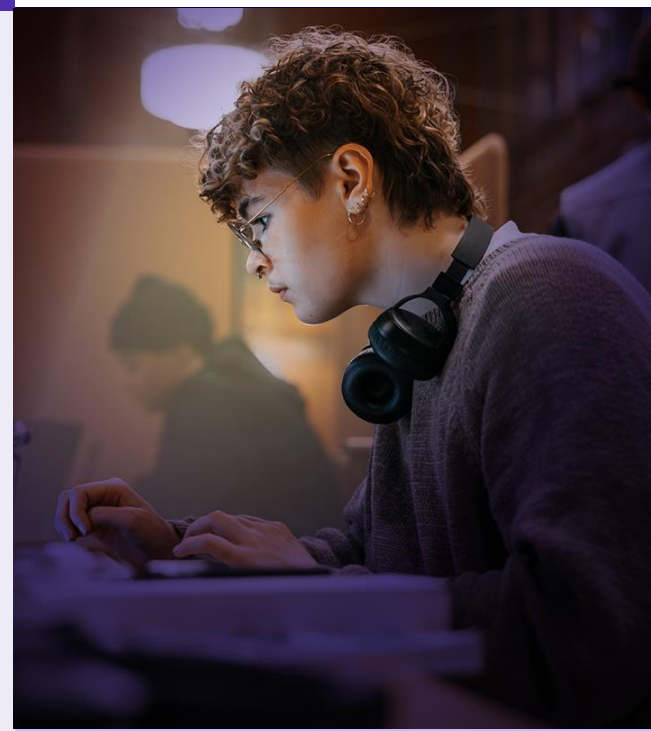
from first teaching to certification

## 4. Take the examination

Students take the Pearson-set examination at the timetabled date and time.

## 5. Certificate

Pearson combines unit UMS marks to determine the qualification grade.



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# V Levels: assessment rules



NEA results can carry forward to a new registration if a student needs to retake the exam.

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## Examinations

**Availability:** One May/June series each year

**First assessment:** May 2029

**First Results:** August 2029

**Terminal rule:** the examined assessment must be taken in the students' final assessment series.

**Entries:** Enter students for the relevant assessment series.

## Non-exam assessment (NEA)

**Availability:** One annual window.

**First-year NEAs released:** September 2027.

**All NEAs released from:** September from 2028.

**Submission deadline:** 15 May each year.

Centres must use the current year's Pearson NEA without adaptation.

## NEA Resubmission and retakes

**Resubmission:** Programme Lead may approve one per unit before moderation. Complete and re-mark by 15 May. No cap on marks.

**Retakes:** Enter for the next series, use the retake series' NEA for that academic year. Grades are uncapped. The highest NEA outcome counts towards the qualification grade.

# Fully compensatory assessment

Subject to accreditation, final specifications and funding confirmation.

## V Levels and Foundation Certificates recognise achievement across units



### 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, terminal and certification rules still apply. Pearson guidance explains these.

# V Level UCAS Tariff points

| Grade | A Level – UCAS Tariff points | V Level – UCAS Tariff points |
|---|---|---|
| A* | 56 | 56 |
| A | 48 | 48 |
| B | 40 | 40 |
| C | 32 | 32 |
| D | 24 | 24 |
| E | 16 | 16 |
| P | Not available | 12 |
| U | 0 | 0 |



**What the P grade is:** Ofqual has confirmed V Levels are graded A*–E plus a P 'pass' grade, with U for ungraded. P sits below E as the lowest passing outcome – a genuine pass, not an unclassified result – and has no A Level equivalent, which is why UCAS gave it its own value of 12 points.

Source: UCAS Tariff points allocated for V Levels – UCAS (V Levels first taught September 2027)

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# Study Programmes: Pearson Level 3 V Level in Digital Systems and Data

Level 3 reform takes place over several years, which means we can expect to see study programmes up to 2030 that combine:

- V Levels
- A levels
- AAQs (BTEC Nationals 2025)
- BTEC Nationals

Here are some examples of mixed study programmes for the 2027/28 academic year.

There are no rules of combinations of subjects, and students should combine subjects based on their intended progression.

Explore Programmes of Study examples

| New qualification | Available combinations to build a study programme | |
|---|---|---|
| Pearson Level 3 V Level in Digital Systems and Data | Pearson Edexcel A level in Mathematics | Pearson Edexcel A level in Physics |
| Pearson Level 3 V Level in Digital Systems and Data | Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Diploma in Creative Media Practice (540 GLH) | |
| Pearson Level 3 V Level in Digital Systems and Data | Pearson Edexcel A level Business Studies | Pearson Edexcel A level in Economics |
| Pearson Level 3 V Level in Digital Systems and Data | Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Extended Certificate in Esports (360 GLH) | Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Extended Certificate in Digital Games Production |

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# V Levels: support for confident delivery

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### 1. Two-year structure

A two-year structure gives students time to develop and connect their knowledge and skills.

### 2. Delivery support

Delivery Guides and schemes of work support teaching, NEA and final examination preparation.

### 3. Assessment guidance

Clear assessment guidance explains entries, the terminal rule and how results combine.

### 4. Training

Pearson training supports numerical marking and moderation, with less administration and paperwork.

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# Get in touch

Speak to us about your curriculum

