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THE GAME ASSEMBLY- LIVERPOOL, NORTHWEST



About the experience of your learners

Can you talk about your centre's experience of teaching BTEC Higher Nationals?

At The Game Assembly UK, our experience of delivering BTEC Higher Nationals has been extremely positive, particularly because the qualification structure aligns closely with both our studio-based learning model and the realities of modern game development production.

What works especially well for our students is the balance between practical project work, professional behaviours, and academic underpinning. The flexibility within the Higher National framework allows us to build learning around real development pipelines, agile production methods, milestone reviews, and collaborative game projects while still ensuring learners achieve strong academic outcomes.

The games industry is highly portfolio and team focused, so learners benefit from an environment where they are constantly applying their skills in production settings that mirror professional studios. Students quickly begin to see themselves as developers, artists, designers, or technical specialists contributing toward a shared production goal rather than simply completing classroom assignments.

What elements of BTEC Higher Nationals do learners find engaging and motivating?

Learners are particularly engaged by the project-based nature of the qualification and the opportunity to work in collaborative studio teams that replicate professional game development environments. The ability to create playable games, build portfolio projects, pitch ideas, participate in sprint reviews, and work toward production milestones makes learning feel directly connected to their future careers. We can clearly see engagement through attendance, participation, and the amount of independent development students undertake outside of scheduled hours.

What are the strengths of BTEC Higher Nationals?

One of the greatest strengths of the BTEC Higher National is its ability to develop both technical and professional skills simultaneously in a way that reflects how modern game studios operate.

The qualification supports strong development in collaboration and interdisciplinary teamwork, communication and presentation skills, critical thinking and creative problem-solving, and project planning and agile production workflows.

The assessment model also encourages continuous iteration and improvement rather than relying solely on high-pressure examinations, reflecting the realities of game development. ►

How do these skills prepare learners for work?

The skills developed through Higher Nationals are highly transferable to modern workplaces because they combine technical competency with professional studio practice. Learners leave with a much stronger understanding of working effectively within production teams, managing workloads and deadlines, communicating professionally, and adapting to changing project requirements. The course also helps students build confidence and professional identity, making the transition into employment significantly smoother.

Do BTEC Higher Nationals improve achievement?

Yes, we believe BTEC Higher Nationals significantly improve learner achievement because they provide a more applied, engaging, and industry-relevant model of higher education.

The practical and continuous nature of assessment allows learners to demonstrate achievement in ways that better reflect the creative and technical demands of the games industry.

We also see improvements in learner confidence, attendance and engagement, retention and progression, portfolio quality, and industry readiness. Importantly, students develop a stronger understanding of professional expectations and workplace behaviours, becoming more accountable, more resilient, and more proactive in their own development.



At The Game Assembly, BTEC Higher Nationals give us the flexibility to deliver higher education through a studio model that feels authentic to the games industry. The project-based structure allows learners to apply knowledge in meaningful professional contexts while building confidence, professional identity, and industry-ready skills simultaneously.”

The future of BTEC Higher Nationals in your centre

Are there misconceptions about BTEC Higher Nationals?

Yes, we do occasionally encounter misconceptions, particularly from those who may still view vocational education as less rigorous or less valuable than traditional academic routes. Our experience has been the opposite.

Modern game development is an applied, collaborative, and production-focused industry where practical skills, communication, teamwork, and portfolio quality are critical. We address these misconceptions by focusing on outcomes, industry engagement, and the quality of student work.

Do you plan to keep teaching BTEC Higher Nationals?

Yes, absolutely. We see Higher Nationals as a very strong fit for both our educational philosophy and the needs of the games industry.

Would you recommend BTEC Higher Nationals to another centre or teacher, and why?

Yes, we would strongly recommend BTEC Higher Nationals, particularly for centres and educators looking to create more industry-connected and applied learning experiences.

One of the key strengths of the qualification is its flexibility. It allows centres to contextualise learning around industry practice while maintaining clear academic standards and structured outcomes. Importantly, BTEC Higher Nationals help bridge the gap between education and employment, with learners gaining experience that closely reflects real workplace expectations. ►

The Game Assembly (TGA)

What makes your studio model different?

What makes The Game Assembly different is that we operate much closer to a professional game studio than a traditional classroom environment. Our students work to a full-time 9–5 studio schedule, collaborating daily within multidisciplinary teams on shared game productions where communication, iteration, planning, and accountability become part of everyday practice.

Students participate in agile production workflows including sprint planning, milestone reviews, and iterative development. By embedding those behaviours into the day-to-day learning environment, students begin developing professional habits and studio awareness long before they graduate.

How do industry partners influence learning?

Industry involvement is deeply integrated into how we deliver the programme, ensuring the learning experience remains current and aligned with professional expectations. Partners contribute through guest lectures, portfolio reviews, mentorship, workshops, and feedback sessions.

The impact on quality and relevance is substantial, helping ensure projects remain aligned with current industry practice and reinforcing the professional standards expected within the sector.

Why did you choose to deliver Pearson's BTEC Higher Nationals?

The BTEC Higher National framework aligned strongly with our educational philosophy because it supports applied, project-based, and industry-focused learning exceptionally well.

The structure gives us the flexibility to deliver learning through studio production while maintaining strong academic rigour, quality assurance, and clear progression routes. The qualification also provides students with recognised higher education credentials while developing industry-relevant practical experience.

What outcomes show this approach is working?

The strongest long-term evidence comes from The Game Assembly's track record in Sweden, where approximately 10% of the Swedish games industry are former TGA students.

In the UK, we are already seeing strong indicators including high levels of learner engagement, strong attendance, positive industry feedback, and the quality of collaborative student work being produced. Students quickly begin to think and operate more like junior developers working within production teams rather than simply students completing isolated assignments. ■