



Level 3 reform Options Guide for the Health and Social Care sector

Helping educators navigate updated
Health and Social Care qualifications



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What is changing in Health and Social Care sector?

Overview of Level 3 qualification reform in Health and Social Care

The UK government is reforming Level 3 qualifications in England, meaning the Diploma and Extended Diploma in Health and Social Care will be subject to defunding in 2028.

[Refer to Pearson's funding guidance.](#)

Pearson offer the full range of Health and Social Care qualification options at Level 3, including:

- BTECs
 - BTEC Nationals
 - BTEC Nationals from 2025 (AAQs)
- T Levels

Other vocational and academic qualifications, including apprenticeships in healthcare and care services.



[Click for updates on Level 3](#)

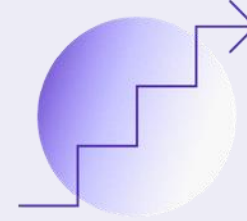
What this means for centres

Note: Pearson are the only Awarding Organisation that offer the full range of options at Level 3.



T Levels as primary option

The T Level in Health becomes the primary large funded option.



Transition from BTECs

From the 2028/29 academic year, centres offering existing BTECs will need to transition to T Levels or Mixed Programmes of study which include V Levels, other funded BTECs, and A Levels.



Effective communication

Transition planning and confident communication with students will be essential.

Overview of Pearson Health and Social Care qualifications (2026 onwards)

In relation to the level 3 reforms

BTEC Nationals

(Nationals and National AAQs)

Available qualifications:

- [BTEC Nationals in Health and Social Care](#)
- [Level 3 Alternative Academic Qualification BTEC National in Health and Social Care](#)

[Explore BTEC Nationals](#)

Flexible

Offer flexibility in mixed programmes by combining mandatory content, external exams, and internally assessed assignments.

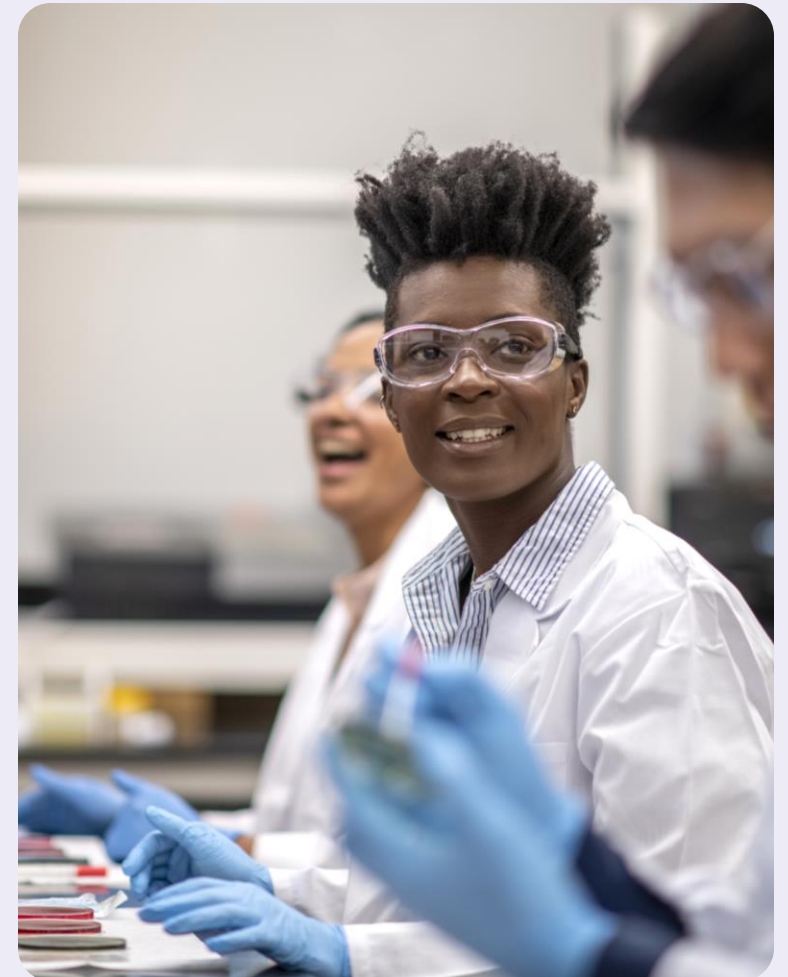
Complementary to other qualifications

Designed to be taken alongside A Levels, small or medium vocational qualifications.

Pathways to Higher Education

Provide strong progression routes into higher education, supporting student advancement and career opportunities.

[Explore BTEC Nationals AAQs](#)



T Level in Health



Two-year full-time programmes

T Levels are two-year, full-time programmes equivalent to three A Levels for students wishing to focus exclusively on their technical subject.

Consisting of:

- Core component (2 exam papers)
- Employer Set Project (ESP)
- Occupational Specialism
- Core OS (Supporting Healthcare)
- 5 occupational specialist pathways
- Industry placement (minimum 315 hours)
- Assessment through exams, ESP, core OS and OS pathway assessment, which include practical assessments, and a portfolio

[Find out more](#)

Other vocational and academic qualifications

A levels qualifications

A Levels courses in subjects like Biology, Sociology and Psychology provide advanced academic knowledge for further education or careers.

Vocational qualifications

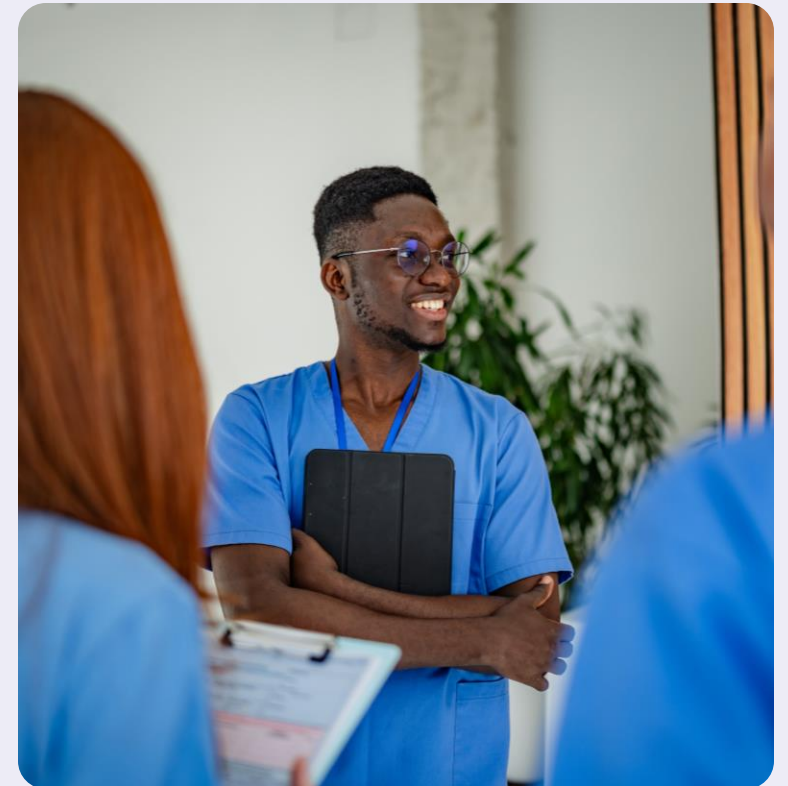
Vocational qualifications such as Medical Science and Sport offer practical skills and enhance employability in specific fields.

GCSE resits

GCSE English and Maths resits help students improve essential skills necessary for academic progress where needed.

Extended project qualification

Level 3 stand-alone qualification equivalent to half an A Level.



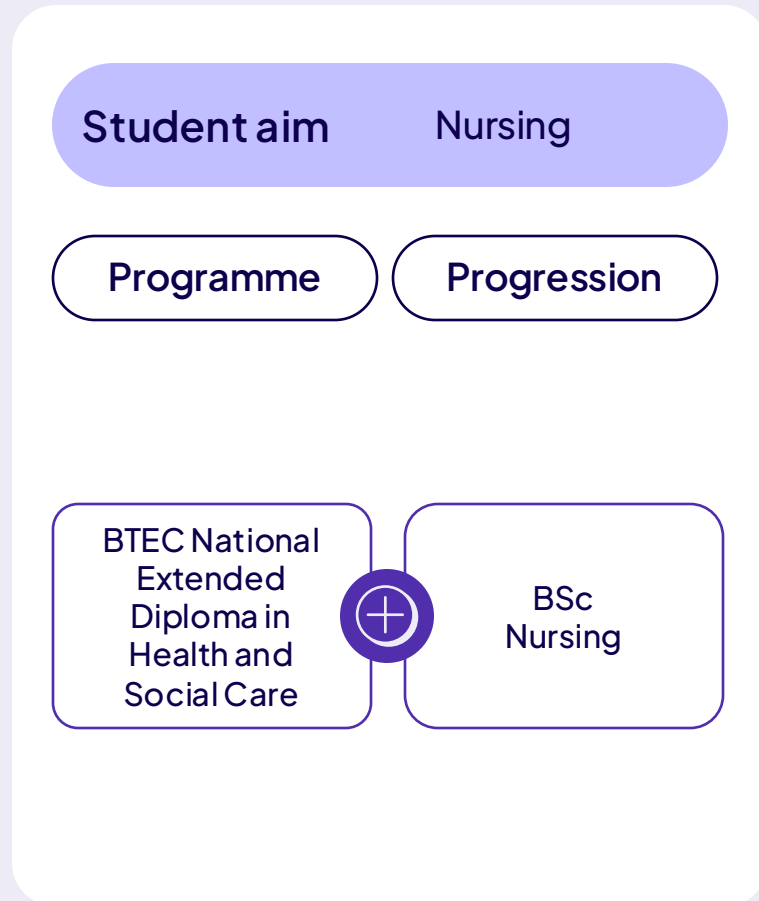
Key similarities and differences: BTEC vs T Level

FEATURE	BTEC NATIONAL IN HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE	BTEC IN HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE (AAQ)	T LEVEL (HEALTH)
Level	3	3	3
Size (GLH)	720 and 1080	180 and 360	1080
Duration	2 years	2 years	2 years
Industry placement	None	None	315 hours
Assessment	4 exams, 9 NEAs	2 exams, 2 Pearson set assignment briefs	2 exams, 1 ESP, 1 portfolio, 1 core OS, 5 specialist pathway assessments
Progression routes	University and apprenticeships	University and apprenticeships	Employment, apprenticeships and university
Employer engagement	Yes, in development	Yes, in development	Required during development and ongoing placement support
Flexibility	Can be taught alongside a mixed study programme to support student destination aims	Can be taught alongside a mixed study programme to support student destination aims	TQ forms the whole study programme

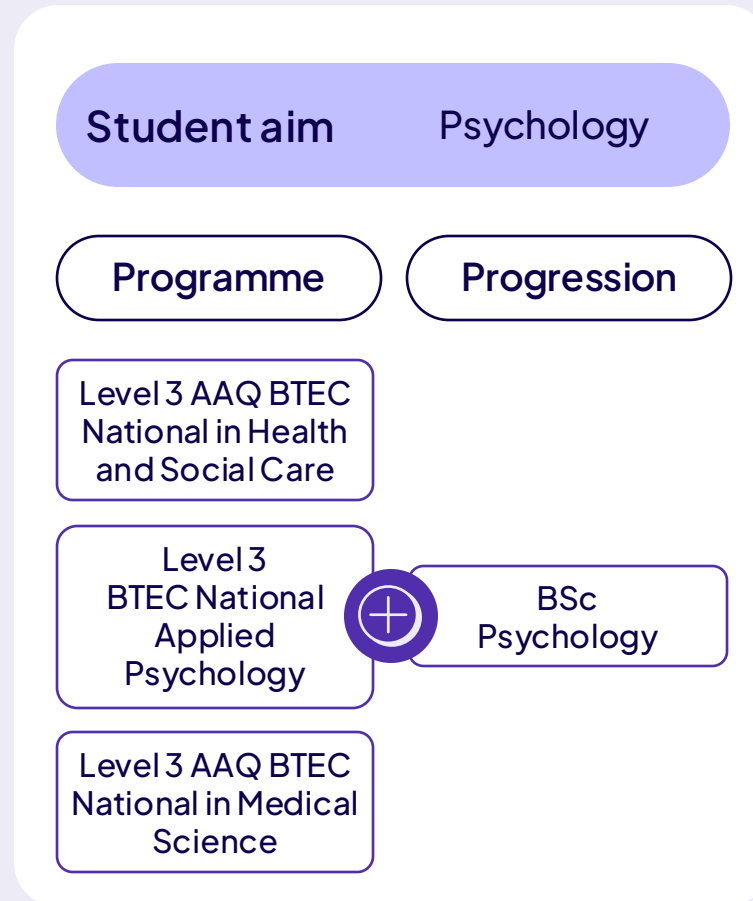
Programme of study scenarios

Study programme examples

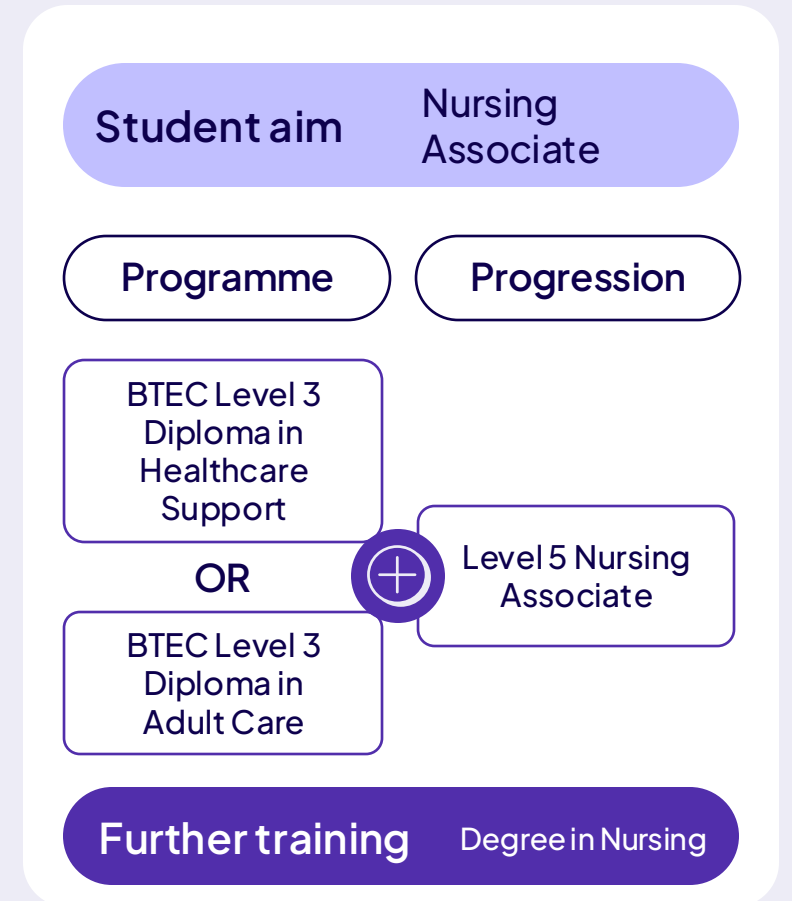
Pathway A: BTEC National in Health and Social Care



Pathway B: BTEC Nationals mixed programme

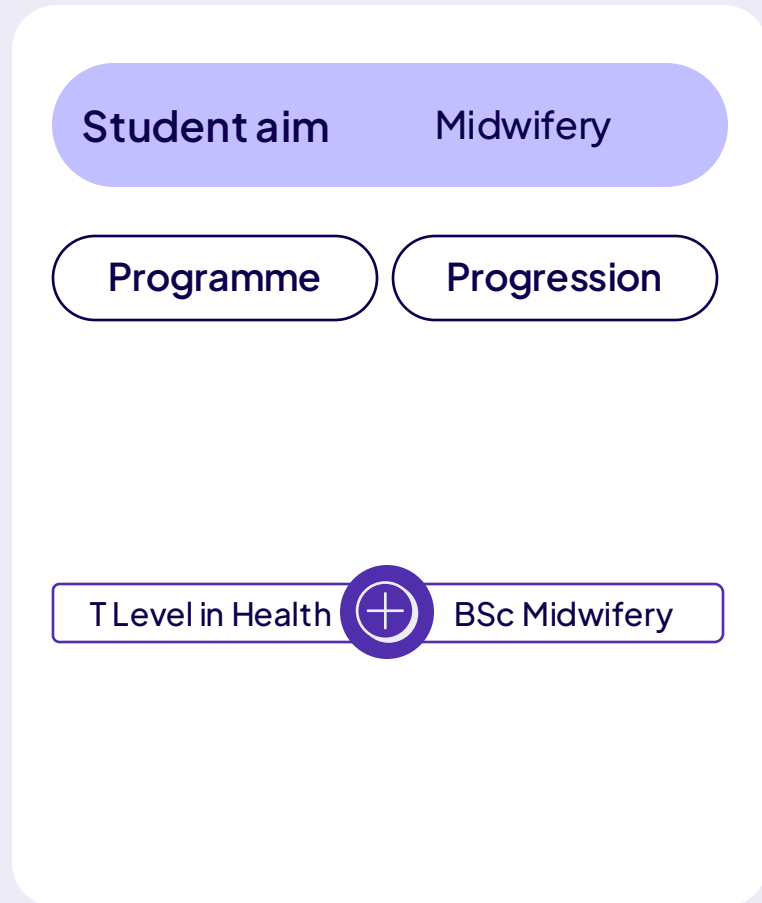


Pathway C: BTEC professional courses

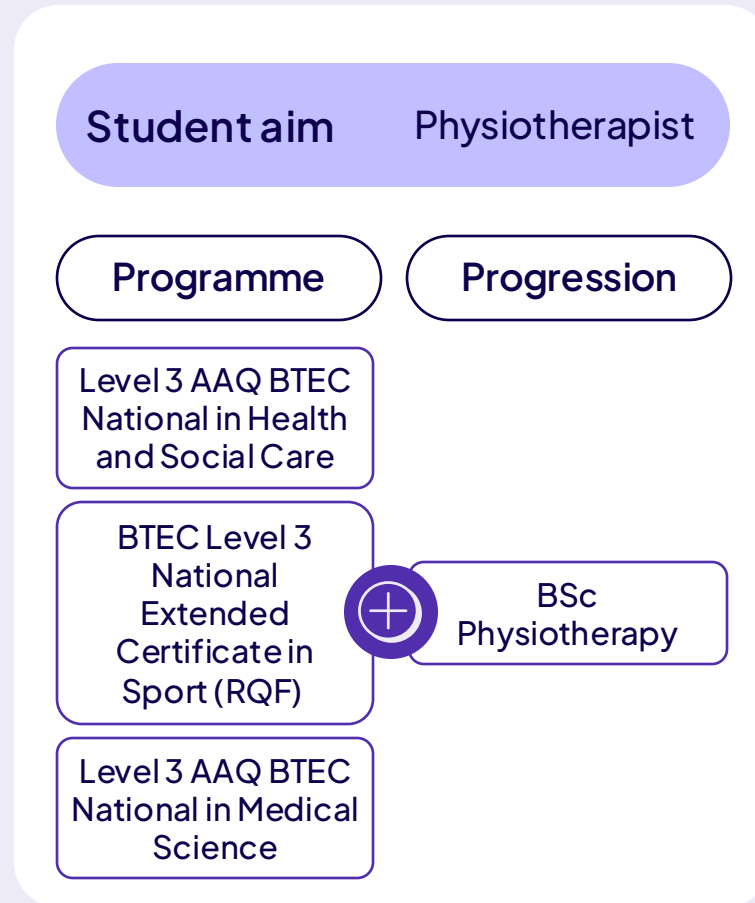


Study programme examples

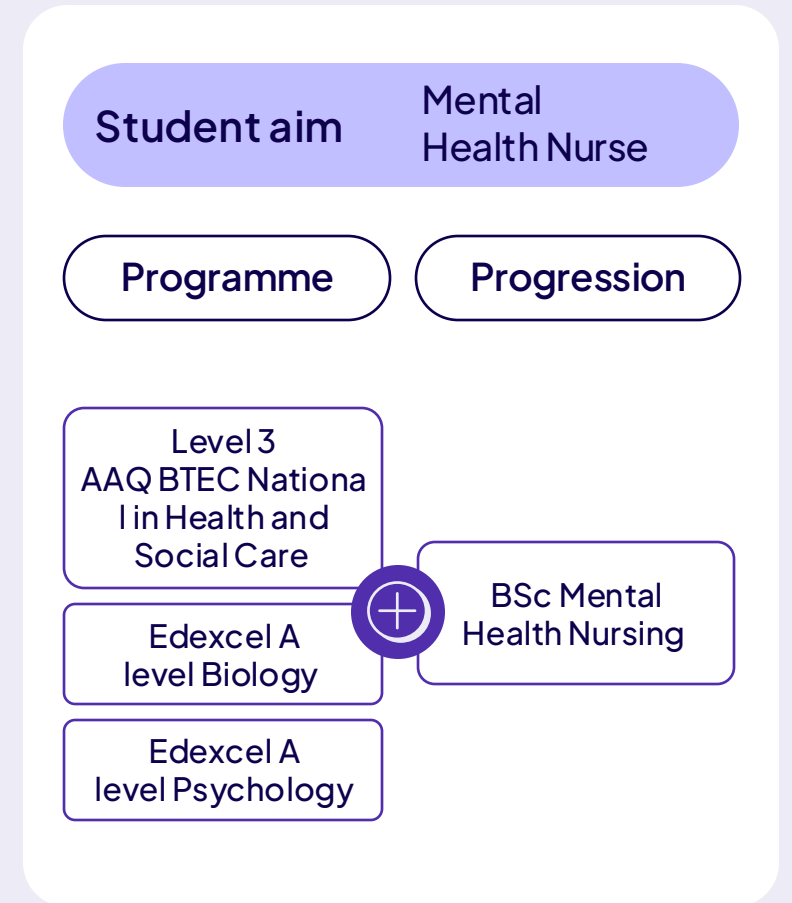
Pathway D: T Level in Health



Pathway E: Mixed programme of study



Pathway F: Mixed programme of study



Guidance on study programme combinations and progression

Consider progression outcomes

Study programmes should align with students' intended progression goals, such as higher education aspirations. For example, many students taking the BTEC Level 3 National (AAQs) will be intending, or hoping, to progress to HE.

Check entry requirements

Understanding varying university entry requirements is crucial for guiding students effectively.

Important guidance on study programmes: progression

One of the most important considerations when devising a study programme is taking account of students' intended progression outcome.

Study programmes should align with students' intended progression goals, such as higher education aspirations. For example, many students taking the BTEC Level 3 National (AAQs) will be intending, or hoping, to progress to HE.

For those intending to progress to HE, select subjects/ qualifications that cover a broad range of content and skills relevant to their intended degree specialism(s). This will help maximise their chance of successfully progressing to HE. Some universities have subject-specific entry requirements, particularly for STEM-related degrees, where they may require students to have studied specific subjects and/or specific A levels.

Check entry requirements

Understanding varying university entry requirements is crucial for guiding students effectively.

At present, a few selective UK universities do not accept students with more than one vocational qualification at Level 3. Where universities do accept students holding more than one BTEC qualification, they generally expect this to be in separate subject disciplines and do not accept combinations with a high degree of overlap, irrespective of UCAS points.

It is important to check that your student's intended destination(s) accept the combination(s) you are considering delivering.

Where students have yet to decide which university and/or degree they wish to progress to, it is worth asking your main recruiting universities for their views on your proposed combination.

Sector transition plan

Subject to change

Based on current information, further details on qualification titles, and full plan to be published in June 2026 by the DfE.

Refer to our main [Guide to Funding and Support](#)

Health and Social Care

New qualifications will be introduced in this route:

- Health and Science
- Care Services

Academic Year 2028 to 2029

- V Levels (Level 3)
- T Level in Care Services (Level 3) TBA
- Foundation Certificates ((Level 2)
- Occupational Certificate (Level 2)

T Levels available and funded

- [T Level in Health](#)

Level 3

QN	QUALIFICATION TITLE	GLH	26/27	27/28	28/29	29/30	30/31
610/6196/7	Pearson Level 3 Alternative Academic Qualification BTEC National in Health and Social Care (Certificate)	180	✓	✓	x	x	x
610/3964/0	Pearson Level 3 Alternative Academic Qualification BTEC National in Health and Social Care (Extended Certificate)	360	✓	✓	x	x	x
601/7194/7	Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Diploma in Health and Social Care	720	✓	✓	x	x	x
601/7198/4	Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Extended Diploma in Health and Social Care	1080	✓	✓	x	x	x

Level 2

QN	QUALIFICATION TITLE	26/27	27/28	28/29	29/30	30/31
600/6311/7	Pearson BTEC Level 1/Level 2 First Certificate in Health and Social Care	✓	✓	x	x	x
600/6312/9	Pearson BTEC Level 1/Level 2 First Extended Certificate in Health and Social Care	✓	✓	x	x	x
601/0170/2	Pearson BTEC Level 1/Level 2 First Diploma in Health and Social Care	✓	✓	x	x	x
603/6166/9	Pearson BTEC Level 2 Certificate in the Principles and Practice for Pharmacy Support Staff	✓	✓	x	x	x

Why choose Pearson for your transition?

Why Pearson?

Long-standing trusted partner

Continuity and expertise as a long-standing health education provider.

Government-endorsed pathways

Government endorsed pathway with the T Level in Health - the only publicly funded large level 3 qualification in health in England.

Removing pain points

If you're already an existing provider of our Level 3 BTEC in Health and Social Care, you can move to our AAQs in the same area without the need of going through the approvals centre.

Employer-informed curriculum

Curriculum is designed with input from employers to align learning with workforce needs and trends.

Flexible qualification options

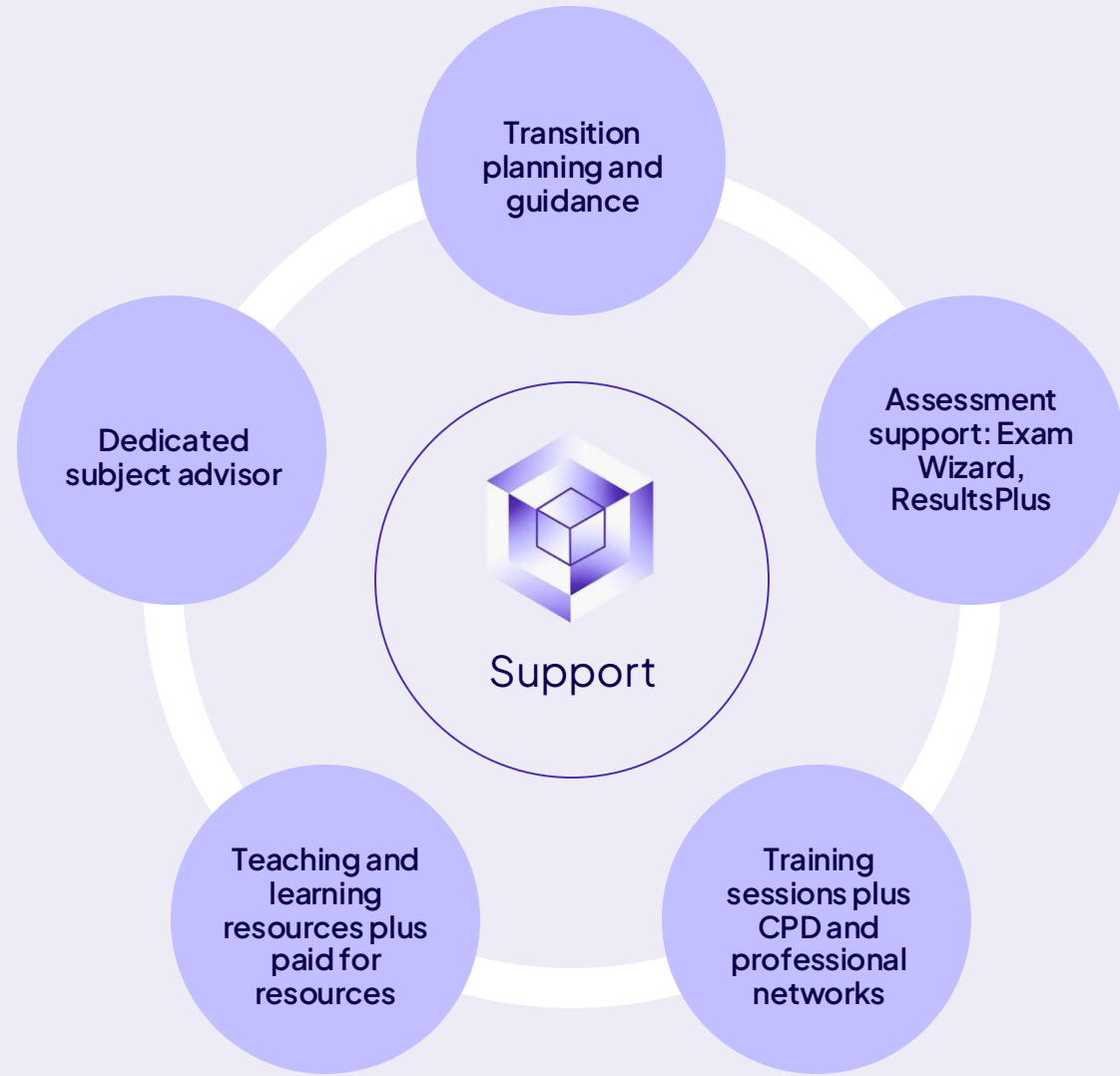
Flexible qualification combinations via mixed programmes which include AAQs, other funded BTEC courses and A Levels.

Comprehensive support services

Including access to a dedicated subject advisor, training, support for teaching and learning materials.

What you can expect from us

We'll provide educators with comprehensive, sector-expert support to help you navigate qualification reform with confidence, offering clear guidance, training, and dedicated account-manager engagement.



Useful links and resources

[BTEC National in Health and Social Care](#)

[T Level in Health](#)

[Health Sector Qualifications \(including AAQs\)](#)

[T Level Training and Admin Support Hub](#)

[Live and on-demand training](#)

[Sector Briefings and Webinars](#)

[Level 3 Funding Updates](#)

[Funding Guide](#)

[Guide to Funding and Support](#)

[Support from ETF](#)

[Support from The Technical Education Network](#)

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Ready to
take the
next step?

[Get in touch](#)



The Pearson logo is displayed in white against a dark blue background. It features a stylized icon on the left consisting of three curved, overlapping shapes that resemble a book or a stylized 'P'. To the right of this icon, the word "Pearson" is written in a bold, sans-serif typeface.

Pearson