



# BTEC Higher Nationals Student Guide

For the skills to stand out from the crowd

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# Take control of your career with BTEC Higher Nationals

Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today. With so many students wanting to make their mark in the world, it is becoming more important to gain the right skills to be confident in the work force.

## What are Higher Nationals?

BTEC Higher Nationals have a long history of delivering higher level technical and professional skills to help students progress with their lifelong learning journey. They provide career-focussed experience as well as academic knowledge; ensuring you'll gain the required expertise, as identified by industry, and the flexibility to take the next step into employment or continue to a degree.

## How can they help you to stand out?

Whichever path you choose, BTEC Higher Nationals will provide you with the qualification and opportunities to continue to prosper. In designing the BTEC Higher Nationals we've worked closely with relevant employers and professional bodies, to help bridge the skills gaps across different sectors, ensure alignment with recognised professional standards, and with universities to provide alignment with degree programmes.

The qualifications are designed to reflect the increasing need for high quality professional and technical qualifications at levels 4 and 5, equivalent to the first 2 years of an undergraduate degree, providing you with a clear line of sight to the workforce, or progression to a degree at level 6.



*"Because of the HNC, I developed a thirst for lifelong learning. It made me appreciate that with the right support and course, anyone can achieve their goals."*  
**Brendan Coulson | HNC Computing Alumni**







## Why choose BTEC Higher Nationals?

When thinking about your career and your future, it is becoming increasingly important to make sure you feel confident that what you choose to study will enhance your career path and meet industry standards. BTEC Higher Nationals are professional / technical higher education qualifications, not only recognised as equivalent to the first two years of an honours degree, but co-designed with industry, employers and professional bodies, so they are widely recognised by industry and higher education as the principal vocational qualification at levels 4 and 5. With clear routes to or within employment, or progression to an honours degree at level 6, BTEC Higher Nationals are designed to help you secure the knowledge, skills and behaviours needed to succeed in the workforce.

- When developing the BTEC Higher National qualifications, we collaborated with a wide range of students, employers, higher education providers, colleges and subject experts, to ensure that the qualifications meet their needs and expectations.
- We place emphasis on employer engagement and work readiness so that you can enter the workforce with fresh skills and knowledge to meet modern day challenges or take a recognised progression route to gain the further learning required at level 6.
- They are designed to reflect this increasing need for high-quality professional and technical education pathways at levels 4 and 5.



*"Since HNs are assignment-based, the experience was more flexible; allowing me to study and complete the assignments in my own time. Furthermore, the HND coursework enabled me to understand the practical world in a better way."*

**Arham Ali Sultan | HNC in Business (Marketing) Alumni**

# What subject areas can you study?

There are a wide range of different courses to choose from, along with specialist pathways available for each course. The following subject areas are available to study at both HNC and HND level:

- Aeronautical Engineering
- Agriculture
- Animal Management
- Animation
- Applied Sciences
- Architectural Technology
- Art and Design
- Automation and Control Engineering
- Building Services Engineering
- Business
- Civil Engineering
- Cloud Computing
- Computing
- Computer Systems Engineering
- Construction
- Construction and the Built Environment
- Construction Management
- Counselling and Applied Psychology
- Creative Media Production
- Digital Technologies
- Early Childhood Education and Care
- Electrical and Electronic Engineering
- Electrical Systems Engineering
- Electronic and Electrical Systems Engineering
- Electronic Systems Engineering
- Engineering
- Esports
- Fashion and Textiles
- Film and Television
- Fine Art
- Game Development
- Graphic Design
- Journalism
- Healthcare Practice
- Hospitality Management
- Horticulture
- Interior Design
- International Travel and Tourism Management
- Manufacturing Engineering
- Manufacturing Operations
- Mechanical Engineering
- Mechatronics
- Modern Methods of Construction
- Music
- Operations Engineering
- Performing Arts
- Photography
- Policing
- Product Design
- Public Services
- Quantity Surveying
- Rail Engineering
- Social and Community Work
- Sound Media
- Space Technologies
- Sport
- Sport and Exercise Science
- The Animation Industry
- Travel and Tourism Management
- Visual Effects
- Web Design



## HTQs for students in England

Higher Technical Qualifications, or HTQs, are technical qualifications available for students in England at higher education level.

All of our BTEC Higher Nationals and approved HTQs have been expertly designed in collaboration with industry, subject specialists, education partners, apprentice alumni and learner groups. This means you can study with confidence, knowing that our qualifications will meet your learning needs as well as needs in the workforce.

It is important to note that BTEC Higher Nationals still exist as a distinct qualification type. The HTQ quality mark that they receive when approved as HTQs shows that they are considered high quality technical education, developed with employers and aligned to Occupational Standards.

Currently, we offer over 35 HTQs across the following 6 sectors: Digital Technologies, Construction, Healthcare, Sport, Engineering and Business.

To find out more about HTQs, search '[Skills for Life](#)' to visit the Department for Education's designated website. You can also get in touch with your local centre to find out which HTQs they may offer.



*"I knew I wanted to take a more practical route into my career. After deliberating for a while, I decided that the best option was the HND Computing course; it fit in with all my needs and its HTQ status added more value to the qualification."*

**Chloe Caine | HND in Computing (HTQ) Alumni**



# What is the difference between an HNC and an HND?

## Higher National Certificate (HNC)

Usually takes one year to complete if studying full time, and two years if studying part time.

Equivalent to the first year of a University degree (level 4).

Usually a more introductory programme with a 'core' of learning essential to the subject (some sectors may have more specialist content depending on level of entry to the job market).

Opportunities to develop project management skills.

Assessment for both years will be through a varied programme of assignments.

Core modules credit values may vary by subject but will not be less than 30% of the whole qualification.

## Higher National Diploma (HND)

Usually takes two years to complete if studying full time, and four years if studying part time.

Equivalent to the first and second year of a University degree (level 5).

A more specialised programme of learning with pathways linked to occupational outcomes.

An increased focus on research skills.

## Student successes



### **Preeya Lakhani | HND in Engineering**

After completing her BTEC level 3 Diploma, Preeya progressed onto an Apprenticeship with Proctor and Gamble, then to Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) where she studied her HNC and HND in Engineering part time. Preeya has since gone on to complete a master's degree in Engineering, and now currently works as a Business Operations Lead.



### **Matt Chilvers | HND in Sport (Leisure Management)**

Before studying his HND, Matt completed a BTEC Level 3 Diploma in Sport Exercise Fitness. He found the transition from the Level 3 to the HND (covering levels 4 and 5) a smooth process due to similar assessment styles using coursework-based assignments throughout. Matt then continued at his College for an extra year to top-up his qualification and now has a BA (Hons) Sport Management Degree.



### **Anneth Vanessa Albino | HND in Business (Management)**

Deciding to study an HND in Business because of its ability to be applicable across a wide range of different sectors, Anneth took the course part time, enabling her to start a cafe in her local town in the Philippines in partnership with local farmers. She now manages the cafe whilst also working towards topping up her qualification to gain an Undergraduate degree in Business.

*"I am confident with what my programme has taught me, especially my favourite lessons - learning about value chains and business strategies. With the help of the knowledge and skills I have gained in my Higher National, I was able to turn my simple hobbies into my career. I am grateful that I have had the opportunity to study and work at the same time."*





## Designed for clear progression

Entry points: A level 3 qualification, for example, a BTEC level 3, A-level or T-level. Access to HE Diploma.



Level 4 Higher National Certificate (120 Credits)



Level 5 Higher National Diploma (120 Credits)



Full-time  
employment

Level 6 Honours  
degree programme

Professional body  
qualifications

## Designed to work in a digital world

To ensure that you'll have the best possible experience during your course, your BTEC Higher National qualification will be supported by a specifically designed range of digital resources. These are available on our free platform for Higher National students – HN Global. With HN Global you'll have access to the following:

- Online learning courses to develop your study skills to support your higher education studies.
- A wide range of career development resources to support you with preparing for the workforce.
- A community of other BTEC Higher National students and Alumni from around the world, who you can interact with via online forums to discuss anything relevant to your course.



# Designed to take you further

## Topping up to gain a degree

After completing your BTEC Higher National qualification, you will find a range of different pathways to continue your development. One route you may choose to take is further education. BTEC Higher National qualifications are recognised among universities from around the globe, meaning you can top up your qualification to gain an undergraduate degree. You can find out more about this by using the Degree Finder search tool on our website (please note that you should always check the entry requirements for degree programmes at specific higher education providers).

## Joining the workforce

We work with employers to produce our qualifications, making sure the BTEC Higher Nationals are up-to-date and meet the modern-day requirements of industry. This means that you will be learning the practical skills and knowledge wanted by employers to prepare you for the workforce.

## Professional recognition

By working closely with professional bodies to create clear routes of progression for BTEC Higher National holders, you can also use your qualification to fully, or partially, claim a professional certification and gain accelerated progression towards, for example, Chartered status.

BTEC Higher National qualification	Some examples of current exemptions/vendor accreditations for BTEC Higher Nationals
Business	Association of Chartered Certified Accountants ACCA, CIMA, CIPD, CIPS
Computing	CompTIA, CISCO, Microsoft, Oracle, AXELOS
Construction and the Built Environment	Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE), Institution of Structural Engineers (iStructE), Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB), Chartered Institution of Highways & Transportation (CIHT), Institute of Highways Engineers (IHE).



*“Enrolling on a BTEC course has changed my life because it's given me a prospect and a qualification that I need. And I can use this knowledge at work, as well as work knowledge at college so it works both ways.”*

**Christopher Meredith | HNC Engineering Alumni**



## Designed to meet your budget

### **Costs**

Please note that the annual tuition fees to study a BTEC Higher National qualification are at the discretion of the college and can be found within their prospectus. However, it is usually considerably less than studying at university.

### **Funding**

BTEC Higher Nationals are subject to student loan funding within Further Education Colleges, but you will generally only receive student finance for your first higher education qualification. A full breakdown of available funding can be found on the opposite page. If you are considering a BTEC Higher National at a private college in the UK, you will need to consult with the college regarding the tuition fees.

### **More information**

If you want to read more about loans and grants, visit [www.gov.uk/student-finance](http://www.gov.uk/student-finance)

## Your next steps

### **1. Research**

If you are interested in studying a BTEC Higher National qualification, spend time researching courses and careers that interest you.

### **2. Explore institutions**

Visit college website(s), read their prospectus, and attend open days to find out more about what they have to offer.

### **3. Make your application**

Check that you meet all application requirements. Speak to your careers advisor for further support and submitting your application.



## Contact us

To find out more about our BTEC Higher National qualifications, please email us at [highernationals@pearson.com](mailto:highernationals@pearson.com)

