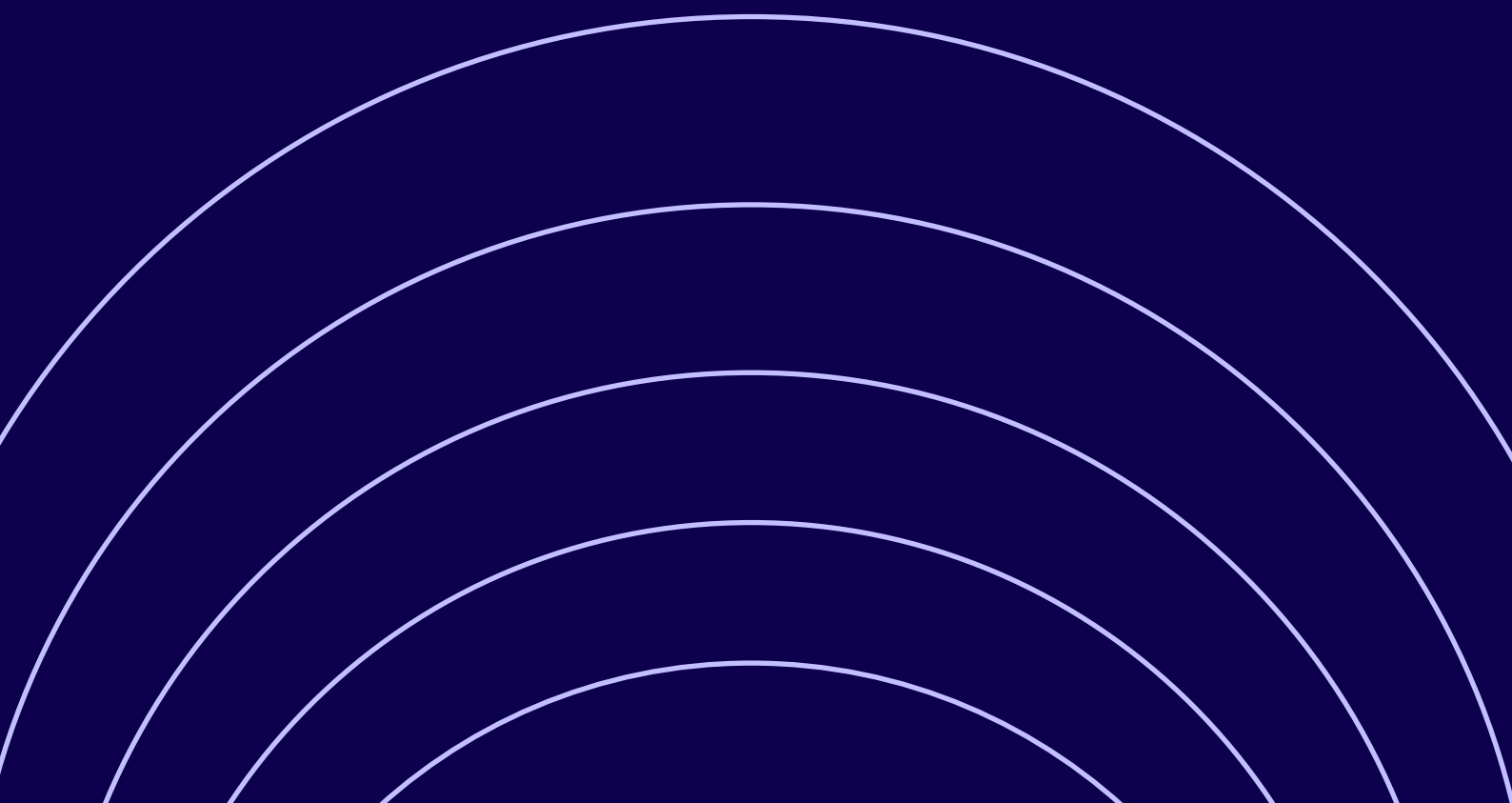




Pearson BTEC Digital Technologies Qualifications

Customised qualifications
case study





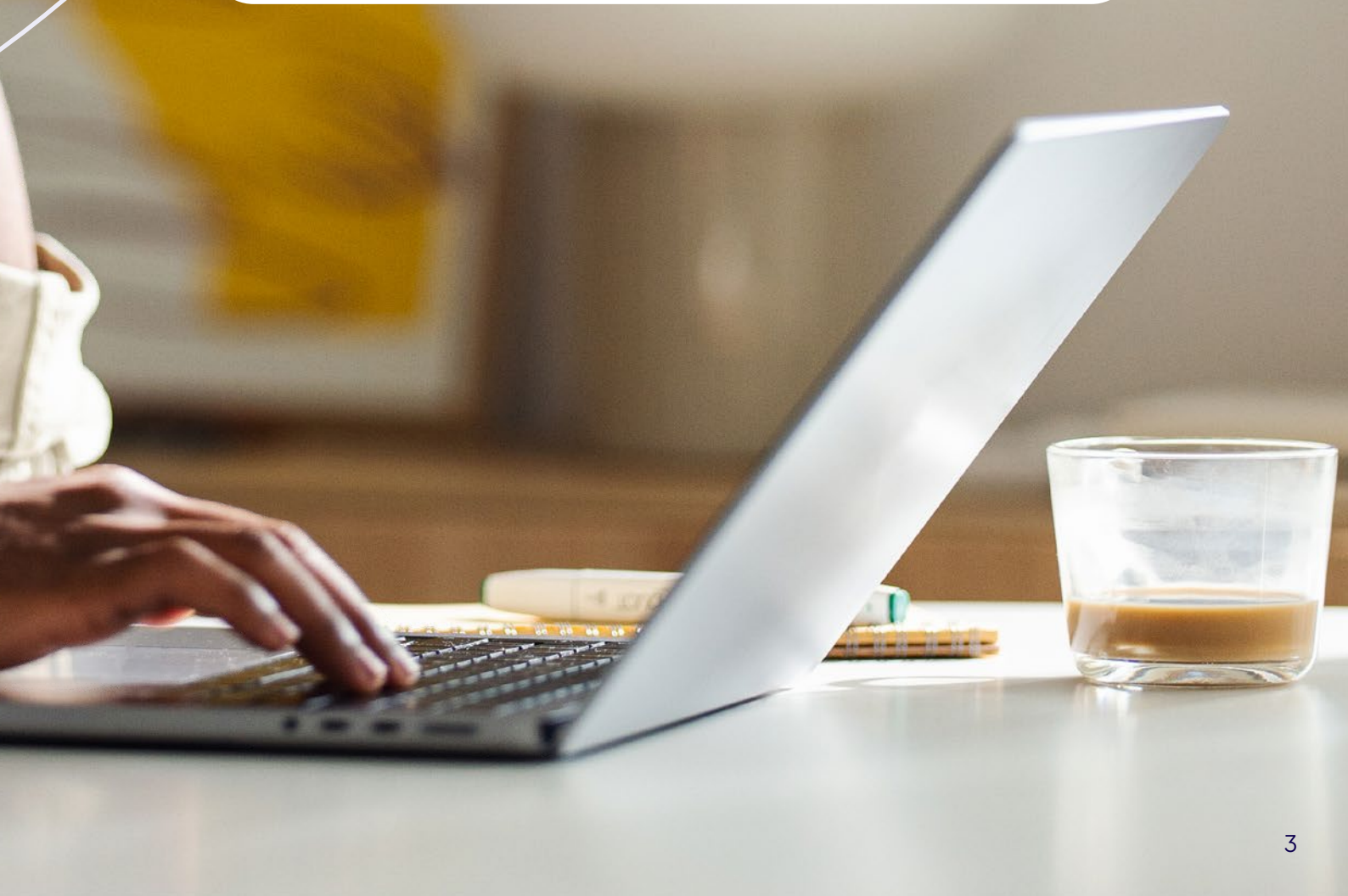
Executive summary

In 2021 we were commissioned to develop a new **Pearson BTEC Higher National in Digital Technologies** (Levels 4 and 5, equivalent to the first and second year of an undergraduate degree) by South Central Institute of Technology, United Kingdom (UK), with support from the UK Government.

Thanks to this investment, we were also able to produce an international version of this qualification which is now delivered around the world.

The creation of the Higher National sparked two further customised qualifications projects:

- We partnered with a leading university in **Uzbekistan** to develop a BTEC Level 6 Diploma in Digital Technologies, creating a vertical articulation pathway for graduates of the Pearson BTEC Higher National Diploma in Digital Technologies.
- In a partnership with UniSadhuGuna BSD in **Indonesia**, we co-designed a Pearson BTEC Level 3 International Foundation Programme for students needing an alternative progression route into higher education in the computing technology field.



Initial UK project

At a glance

Project title	Custom designed development and validation of a Pearson BTEC Higher National in Digital Technologies
Implementing agency	South Central Institute of Technology
Location	United Kingdom
Target beneficiaries	Adult learners (18+) who wish to study a sector related qualification which provides a direct progression route into the workplace or further academic study
Project highlights	• Custom qualification design • Competency-based training • Industry collaboration • Workforce development • Alignment to occupational standards • Alignment to key sector specific knowledge, skills and behaviours



Project rationale

South Central Institute of Technology identified an opportunity to work in collaboration with Pearson to custom design a new Pearson BTEC Higher National in Digital Technologies.

South Central Institute of Technology are at the forefront of redesigning how learning experiences are delivered through technology, developing technical qualifications and professional training for a new generation of digital visionaries. Working with employers, they provide real-world experiences that prepare students for today's business challenges and beyond.

With a keen focus in technology-based expertise, South Central Institute of Technology is supported by a range of partner employers, including Microsoft, KPMG, Cranfield University and CCL Solutions Group.

By combining Pearson expertise and the vision of South Central Institute of Technology and its partner employers we were able to work collaboratively to develop a robust qualification with a range of pathways that provides clear progression opportunities for the students who study these qualifications.

Socio-economic context

A major UK Government manifesto commitment, Institutes of Technology were established by the Department for Education (DfE) to deliver world-class higher technical education – helping to increase the supply of high-skilled technicians across key industries to meet specific economic needs.

They are a crucial component of the 2020 Skills for Jobs White Paper which outlined how the UK Government plans to provide the technical education and training needed to fill skills gaps, boost economic recovery, increase productivity and secure jobs in the future.

Each Institute of Technology (IoT), of which there are 23 across England, is awarded a license by the DfE that describes its role and objectives and is signed by all partners in the IoT. The IoT network has access to a £300 million capital funding pot to create state-of-the-art, industry-standard facilities and infrastructure in which to deliver this learning. The DfE's ongoing role is to provide support and challenge to ensure the successful delivery of their proposals in line with programme policy objectives.

Alignment with UK policy

Occupational standards have been introduced by the UK's Department of Education, they are employer-developed and define the specific knowledge, skills, and behaviours needed for a technical role. [Higher Technical Qualifications](#) (HTQs) are qualifications (Level 4 and 5) approved by Skills England, to ensure they align with these standards. This employer-led process ensures that HTQs deliver the skills and knowledge that businesses need, making the qualifications a clear route into skilled employment or further study. Students can identify approved HTQs by looking for the official Quality Mark, and these qualifications are available in sectors like digital, construction, and health and science.

Alignment with international development priorities

Pearson's expansion of the BTEC Digital Technologies suite beyond the UK is strategically aligned with international development priorities, focusing on human capital development and building sustainable educational ecosystems in emerging economies. Our approach is to engage in demand-driven, localised partnerships that build in-country capacity and create clear pathways to economic opportunity.

This collaborative, needs-based model demonstrates a scalable and replicable framework for workforce development. By co-designing qualifications with in-country partners, we ensure strong labour market alignment and enhance graduate employability. This approach actively builds local capacity, fosters sustainable partnerships, and delivers measurable outcomes, directly contributing to these Sustainable Development Goals: SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).



The international projects



Uzbekistan – In a clear example of a demand-driven intervention, Pearson partnered with a leading university in Uzbekistan to address the need for advanced digital skills. We were commissioned to develop a BTEC Level 6 Diploma in Digital Technologies, creating a vertical articulation pathway for graduates of the Pearson BTEC Higher National Diploma in Digital Technologies. This initiative directly enhances the local skills base, providing the specialised, higher-level competencies required to fuel the nation's growing digital economy.



Indonesia – Further demonstrating our commitment to localisation and improving educational access, we collaborated with UniSadhuGuna BSD in Indonesia. They identified a critical gap for students needing an alternative progression route into higher education. In response, we co-designed a bespoke TVET-aligned pathway: the Pearson BTEC Level 3 International Foundation Programme for Higher Education in Computing Technology. This programme has had significant positive externalities; our partner successfully leveraged the collaboration to secure Memoranda of Understanding with universities in the UK, Australia, and Canada. This creates tangible South-North linkages, providing Indonesian students with unprecedented global mobility opportunities.



The intended impact

This multifaceted customised qualifications project was designed to achieve the following key outcomes:

1

Partner institutions strengthen their market position with industry-relevant qualifications.

2

Graduates achieve higher employment rates and faster career progression.

3

Employers report reduced training costs and better access to skilled talent.



What we delivered

Working with our partners, we delivered the following:



A bespoke Pearson BTEC Higher National in Digital Technologies, co-designed with South Central Institute of Technology.



Distinct sector and employer qualification pathways developed to provide academic and employer focused progression, via the BTEC Higher National Level 4 Certificate or Level 5 Diploma.



An integrated curriculum combining academic rigour with practical, hands-on learning, real-world projects, and industry collaboration.



A customised Pearson BTEC Level 6 Diploma in Digital Technologies to provide a top-up qualification for students who have studied the Pearson BTEC Higher National Diploma in Digital Technologies, developed with a university in Uzbekistan.



A customised Pearson BTEC Level 3 International Foundation Programme for Higher Education in Computing Technology, developed with UniSadhuGuna BSD in Indonesia.

How we did it

We were able to effectively deliver this suite of customised qualifications by:

- Conducting a needs analysis to identify the specific skills gaps and employer requirements in the local market.
- Engaging in a close, collaborative co-design process between our partners and Pearson qualification specialists.
- Developing a curriculum focused on employability, professional skills, and adaptability.
- Implementing a robust quality assurance framework to ensure the programme meets international standards.

Approach and methodology

The project's methodology was founded on the principle of genuine partnership and customisation. For each of the three qualifications that have been developed, rather than adopting an off-the-shelf solution, each commissioning party chose to co-design a qualification with Pearson to ensure it precisely met the needs of its students and local industry. This approach positioned each commissioning party as a central partner in the development process, ensuring the final qualification was relevant and met the needs of the commissioning party, students and employers. Pearson's role was to provide the expert framework, leveraging its global experience in qualification design, assessment, and quality assurance. This collaborative methodology ensured the resulting BTEC programme was rigorous, internationally credible, and flexible enough to adapt to future industry changes, creating a truly sustainable educational asset for each of the commissioning parties.

Partnerships and coordination

The project was defined by the close, collaborative partnership between each commissioning party and Pearson. In each case, the commissioning party provided the local context, the institutional vision, and the deep understanding of student and regional needs. Pearson brought its global expertise in qualification development, assessment design, and quality assurance. This partnership was further strengthened by engagement with industry employers, who provided critical input into the skills required for the workplace, ensuring the curriculum was aligned with real-world demands and that graduates would be valued by the labour market.



The results

Results achieved

- The Pearson BTEC Higher National in Digital Technologies – HTQ approved by Skills England – has been available to Pearson approved centres in the UK since March 2021 and has grown rapidly in popularity.
- The international qualification has been available to approved centres since March 2021 and has quickly become a top choice Higher National subject.
- Students who have studied this qualification have progressed academically and in the workplace. Students have reported gaining knowledge and skills that have ensured that they are capable of undertaking technically relevant roles with a range of employers.
- Industry partners now see a direct alignment between the BTEC Higher National curriculum and their workplace demands, strengthening the talent pipeline.

Why customised made sense

BTEC customised qualifications are focused on embedding key sector relevant competencies, occupational standards and alignment to frameworks such as the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ). By co-designing, each commissioning party had the opportunity to develop a qualification that would meet their exact requirements, provide valuable skills for the students who study it and offer clear academic and professional progression routes.



Discover BTEC Customised Qualifications

Partner with Pearson to design qualifications tailored to your organisation, your sector and your learners, including high-growth areas such as digital, IT, data science, AI and emerging technologies.

From short-course design to full progression pathways, we provide end-to-end consultancy, development and design – working with you to co-create qualifications that directly address workforce challenges and skills priorities.