

# Give your BTEC Business students real-world skills

College:  Petroc College

College students:  10,000

Location:  North Devon

16-18 students:  2,688

Area type:  Town

BTEC students:  791

## Petroc College, North Devon,

has a thriving BTEC Business cohort. BTEC qualifications have been taught at the college for more than 15 years, where students value and enjoy the flexibility of this specialist work-related qualification. The Business Faculty at its Barnstaple campus currently delivers the new RQF course which comprises of externally assessed units as well as the traditional internally assessed ones. Since 2017, when the RQF was first implemented, Extended Diploma students have achieved over 95% pass rate allowing progression to Higher Education (HE) and Apprenticeships.

Vocational qualifications give students who are undecided about a university education path, experience of the working world, helping them to make informed decisions.

**Marie Gould, Head of Faculty (Management and Business Studies)** advocates BTEC qualifications, saying "BTECs develop business skills and knowledge, making students more employable as well as offering progression to HE".

**Rebecca Merrick**, who is a **Lecturer of Business** at Petroc College, has taught BTEC in schools, referral units for BESD students, and in FE colleges. She loves BTEC because it "creates independent learners, and the courses with workplace elements offer the opportunity to develop skills that are relevant to employment."

*“It’s obvious after one year that you can be employable.”*

**Geeta Finn, Project Manager** at the college agrees. "Students gain a broad insight and knowledge of business and are able to apply this to a range of Business scenarios that are presented to them through assessments. They gain skills in verbal communication through presentations, improve team working skills in group tasks and build in confidence through their work placements and enterprise activities that are built into the curriculum."



Tom found the work placement during his BTEC beneficial.



James won Petroc's 2019 BTEC Enterprise 'Dragon's Den' Challenge.

Mandatory and Optional units within BTEC Business, Enterprise, and Law qualifications are carefully chosen to cover subject matter for HE and employment, so students have a choice in their next steps after they finish further education. "They leave confident, mature and prepared for the next step in their career," says Geeta, "I feel incredibly proud that I have been part of that journey and it is so often acknowledged personally by the students."

Tom, one of her students, says that the work placement he took during his course offered him "the chance to gain an insight into the different departments that an organisation has, such as, marketing, finance and logistical support."

***“They leave confident, mature and prepared for the next step in their career”***

Each year, Petroc College hosts an annual 'Dragon's Den' competition, where they have local business owners come in and have a series of speed networking meetings with the students. From the information learners gather from these discussions, they are then expected to go and create a pitch for a business idea to bring back in front of the 'Dragons'.

**James** was the winner of the college's 2019 BTEC Enterprise 'Dragon's Den' Challenge with his DECI Bike Cycling Safety Products pitch. He beat competing learners on his course to reach the final, where eight prestigious Local Business Dragons chose him as their winner.

"I've always wanted to become an entrepreneur with my own products," says James, "and the variety of different areas that Business Level 3 covers made my decision easier. It will give me the knowledge and qualification to start off my business."

"I have enjoyed how the course covers a wide range of business skills. I have benefited from the support and subject knowledge of the lectures. Winning the Enterprise Challenge has given me the opportunity to be in contact with one of the dragons that attended to help start up my business."

These real-world scenarios equip BTEC learners with valuable skills and experience when they begin to plot their career path.

For students looking to explore a variety of routes before making their decision, the college offers six-month size qualifications, giving an opportunity to learn a little about an area of interest before pursuing anything more.

**Charlotte, another student of Business at Petroc,** says, "I have enjoyed all the different aspects of the course, particularly managing an event, which also allowed me to pitch a business idea to a panel of local entrepreneurs.

"The expertise of the staff has equipped me with knowledge and skills to successfully achieve on this course and it has given me the confidence to work more effectively in my part-time job role."

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