# information technology

## BTEC National Subsidiary Diploma

**Head of department:** Lori Peel

**Email:** lpeel@esher.ac.uk

**Exam board:** Pearson Edexcel

## What is this subject about?

This is a practical hands-on course for students who wish to develop their expertise with IT use of hardware and software. The Subsidiary Diploma is a two year course equivalent to one A Level. Over the two years students will take 6 units of coursework. During the first year these are prescribed units and during the second year students can choose their own three units which are the most suitable in relation to their other subjects or future career.

## What will I study over the two years?

In the first year you look at the components of computer systems and their technical specifications. You will get to grips with the hardware, software and operating systems of computers. You will develop the expertise needed to decide on appropriate systems for business purposes and get hands-on experience with setting up and maintaining computer systems. You will also take a more specialised unit focused on designing and creating an interactive website at the same time as studying a unit which focuses on the development of the wide range of skills and qualities needed alongside the technical knowledge to work effectively in IT.

In the second year you will take three units focusing on other particular specialist areas, chosen from a wide range including digital graphics, computer animation, computer game design, programming, project management, networking, spreadsheets, databases and e-commerce strategies.

## How is the course assessed?

The course is assessed throughout the two years by a number of coursework assignments. Coursework assignments may include written documents, group presentations and practical work. These coursework assignments are centre-assessed and then externally moderated by the exam board.

## What skills will I need and develop in this course?

Previous study of IT at GCSE level is useful but not essential. You will develop your technical skills in working with PC computers, together with developing your ability to think out solutions to problems, give presentations, take part in group discussion in an effective way, share work in a team with others, and write reports and technical documents.

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## What can the course lead to in terms of higher education and future careers?

The course develops expertise that is helpful for employment in roles where IT is used. It is suitable for progression on to higher education in a wide range of fields as part of an appropriately chosen overall programme of study. The Subsidiary Diploma is offered as part of a wider programme of study alongside courses in other subjects, however, should circumstances occur it can also be developed further by taking more units to widen your expertise and achieve the more specialised 90 credit Diploma or full BTEC Diploma.

## What are the formal entry requirements for this course?

Aside from the general criteria that the College requires, you will need to achieve a minimum of:

• Grade 4 in GCSE English Language

A good standard of English is important during group discussion work, presentation work, and report and technical writing.

## What extra support/enrichment activities are on offer?

We have strong links with Kingston University Computing Department, who often arrange an annual IT workshop for our students, and we are associated with the British Computer Society. You are encouraged to take up employment in IT environments outside college hours and to undertake work placements during the College's Wider Skills Week at the end of their first year.

## Subject combination advice:

The course is useful and interesting in its own right as well as complementing a wide range of subjects, such as Mathematics or Physics for a future in Computer Science, Media or 3D Design for a creative future, English or History for a career related to the law, or to the detection and prevention of crime, or Art and Drama if your interests lie in these directions.