

business

BTEC National Extended Certificate

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What is this subject about?

Regardless of what your interests are, the chances are you will be employed in a business of some kind in the future. This could be as an entrepreneur in your own start-up or as an accountant or marketing manager in a large multinational such as Apple. The BTEC Business course helps you to develop both the skills and knowledge you will need in the future. You will learn about several important areas of business, such as Marketing, Finance and Human Resources, as well as about how businesses can be affected by their environment. As a BTEC student, you will become more independent and skilled in carrying out research, writing reports and making presentations. Excellent organisation, hard work and self-motivation are essential from the outset, as assessment is continuous, starting in the first term.

The BTEC Level 3 Extended Certificate in Business is a two-year course, worth the equivalent of 1 A-Level.

What will I study over the two years?

In Year 1, you start with Unit 3: Personal and Business Finance, and study the purpose and importance of personal and business finance. This unit is made up of two parts. You begin by investigating the personal finance sector. For instance, you explore features of different types of bank accounts, loans and investments and their pros and cons, and the organisations that can help individuals to manage their finances, such as independent financial advisors. You then go on to explore business finance where you study the purpose of accounting and learn how to prepare and analyse financial documents such as statements of comprehensive income and financial position. You will need good mathematical skills in order to carry out the required calculations.

You then go on to study Unit 1: Exploring Business, where you explore the internal organisation of a non-profit organisation in contrast to the organisation of a large profit-making business. You investigate how a business's activities are influenced by its external environment. Thirdly, you look at the contribution of innovation and enterprise to business success.

In Year 2, you study two further units. The first is Unit 2: Developing a Marketing Campaign. In this unit you gain an understanding of how marketing campaigns are developed. You learn about the different stages of the process that a business goes through when developing a marketing campaign, from carrying out research into competitor activities to deciding on an appropriate pricing strategy. You then go on to develop your own campaigns for a range of different products/services based on analysis of your research. This practice will help you to prepare for an external exam, within which you will need to write your own campaign under exam conditions.

In the final unit, Unit 8: The Recruitment and Selection Process, you explore how the recruitment process is carried out in a business. You learn that successful recruitment is key to the success of a business, as people are often considered to be the most valued resource. You explore the various tools used during a typical recruitment and selection process and investigate how a large business makes use of these tools. This unit also gives you the opportunity, through role play, to take part in selection process and to review your individual performance.

How is the course assessed?

The course is assessed both through external assessments (exams) worth 60% of the course and via internal assessments (coursework) worth 40%. The first of the two course work units (Exploring Business) is completed in the first year and the second (Recruitment and Selection Processes) is completed in Year 2. The first of the two exams (Developing a Marketing Campaign) takes place in the first year of the course and the second (Personal and Business Finance) takes place in the second year.

What skills will I need for this course?

Students taking this course need to be organised, hard-working and independent. As students are continually assessed via both internally assessed coursework assignments and externally assessed exams, an excellent work ethic, strong written communication skills and numerical ability are critical to achieving success.

The BTEC National Certificate in Business will provide you with opportunities to develop and strengthen your skills in communication, numeracy, IT and in carrying out independent research.

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

Although the BTEC National Certificate in Business is accepted by many universities and provides a foundation for degree level study, it is more suited to students who wish to apply for work or an apprenticeship.

What are the formal entry requirements for this course?

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

- Grade 4 in GCSE English
- Grade 4 in GCSE Maths
- Grade 4 in GCSE Business / Merit in Level 2 Business BTEC (if taken). However, it is not necessary to have taken Business previously.

What extra support/enrichment activities are on offer?

You will have the opportunity to visit some of the businesses that you are investigating and to listen to talks by guest speakers. This will help to develop your understanding of business theory in the context of real-life businesses. We also run visits and workshops during Wider Skills Week in the July of your first year, which you may opt to participate in.

Subject combination advice

It is not recommended that BTEC Business is taken alongside A Level Business, as these courses cover similar material. BTEC Business combines well with a range of other subjects, such as IT or Media.

What are the main differences between BTEC Business and A Level Business?

In terms of content, the courses cover some similar areas such as marketing and human resource management. The main difference is in how students are assessed:

- A Level Business is assessed entirely by external exam at the end of the two-year course.
- The BTEC National Certificate in Business is assessed by both external assessment (exams) which are worth 60% of the course and internal assessment (coursework) which is worth 40%.

You are assessed throughout the course so need to demonstrate strong skills of analysis and evaluation from the outset in order to achieve a high grade.