

health and social care

BTEC National Extended Certificate and National Diploma

Head of department: Annie Teoh Williams

Email: ateohwilliams@esher.ac.uk

Exam board: Pearson Edexcel



What is this subject about?

The BTEC National Extended Certificate and Diploma have a varied content and are aimed at providing students with the knowledge, understanding and skills relevant to careers in health care and social care. Students who wish to pursue a career in the Early Years' sector can also study this course as the content in the unit on "Human Lifespan Development" covers development in children. Visits, case studies and input from visiting speakers form an important part of the course, giving students an opportunity to understand what is being studied in relation to real care settings. Both courses are two year courses. The BTEC National Extended Certificate is equivalent to one A Level and the National Diploma is equivalent to two A Levels.

What will I study over the two years?

In the first year of the Extended Certificate course, you study the unit 'Human Lifespan Development' which covers physical, intellectual, emotional and social development across the human lifespan, the factors affecting development, and the effects of aging. This unit gives you a knowledge base for working with people in every stage of their lives, from birth to old age. You will also study a unit on 'Meeting Individual Care and Support Needs' which develops your understanding of the provision of support for people who have particular needs. It covers anti-discriminatory practices, ethical principles, communication approaches, and how professionals work in teams.

In the second year of the Extended Certificate course you will study the modules, 'Working in Health and Social Care' and 'Physiological Disorders and their care' already described.

If you take the Diploma course, you take further units to the ones already described. You take 'Working in

Health and Social Care' and 'Physiological Disorders and their care'. The former involves learning about the roles and responsibilities of care organisations including those that regulate and inspect health and social care services. The latter develops an understanding of the causes, signs and symptoms, diagnosis and treatment of disorders, including care planning.

The Diploma students also study 'Enquiries into Current Research in Health and Social Care' where you learn about research methods. You will also study, 'Sociological Perspectives' where you apply Sociology to health and social care. The other module is 'Principles of Safe Practice in Health and Social Care' which develops your understanding about the range of safety issues when caring for people who are dependent on others for their care. The remaining module 'Promoting Public Health' is learning about the models of health, and understanding the ways public health is promoted.

How are the courses assessed?

Both Diploma and Extended Certificate courses are assessed predominantly through coursework assignments. Students are guided on how to complete each assignment. The assessment format also includes externally set written tests.

What skills will I need and develop for these courses?

The skills that are of most help through the course are good organisation, the ability to work independently, and good communication skills. As the course progresses you develop and strengthen skills in working in a group, in conducting presentations, in analysis, in evaluating, and in referencing.

What can these courses lead to in terms of higher education and future careers?

Students who have studied these courses can progress to university for a wide variety of courses including Occupational Therapy, Nursing, Midwifery, Primary Teaching, Early Childhood Studies and Social Work. Other students have gone straight into employment in a variety of fields related to the course – for example, going on to work as Nursery Assistants or Care Assistants or to join the Ambulance Service.

What are the formal entry requirements for this course?

In addition to the College's general entry requirements you will need to have a minimum of a grade 4 in GCSE English Language. If you are looking towards Primary Teaching, Nursing or Midwifery, grade 4 in GCSE Maths and grade 4 in GCSE Science are also important.

Equally important is that you need to be interested in and committed to working with people and understanding and caring for them. A genuine interest in looking after people at critical and sometimes tricky stages of their lives is at the heart of these courses.

What extra support/enrichment activities are on offer?

Many students on these courses take part in the College's Community Volunteers or School Mentoring programmes. These involve assisting in a local nursery or school or day-centre on a weekly basis for two terms. It is our expectation that students studying the Diploma course will participate in two weeks of work experience at the end of the first year of the course. As part of the unit on Promoting Public Health, you will work with health professionals in planning and implementing a health campaign for the College's Health Fair for students.

There may also be an opportunity to take part in simulated Clinical Skills sessions at Kingston University. In addition the department provides support in terms of guidance on careers, including support with personal statements and mock interviews.

Subject Combination advice:

Health and Social Care is not a complete programme in itself and you will take other courses alongside it. Courses which are commonly taken alongside it and combine well in supporting it include Sociology, Psychology, Biology, Geography, History, English Language, Physical Education and BTEC Applied Science.

Is it a good idea to study Diploma or Extended Certificate in Health and Social Care alongside other BTEC courses?

Taking a programme consisting predominantly of coursework based courses is demanding in relation to the sheer volume of assignments and deadlines you would be managing, but it may be the right thing to do in particular circumstances. Including one or more A Level courses in your programme in order to develop your skills for example in essay writing, is helpful for progression to study at a higher level afterwards.