



## Vocational Curriculum – Key Stage 4

Pupils rank the 6 options and will be allocated 3 accredited choices from the list below, giving them as many of their highest-ranking choices as possible:

1. **Duke of Edinburgh - Bronze Award *and* Digital Literacy** – Functional Skills
2. **BTEC Introductory Diploma Sport-** Level 1
3. **BTEC Land Based Studies-** Level 1
4. **Food Technology-** BTEC Levels 1&2 leading to GCSE
5. **Art and Design** – GCSE
6. **BTEC Tech Award in Art and Design (Design & Technology)**

This booklet outlines the detail of our optional vocational offer in Key Stage 4.

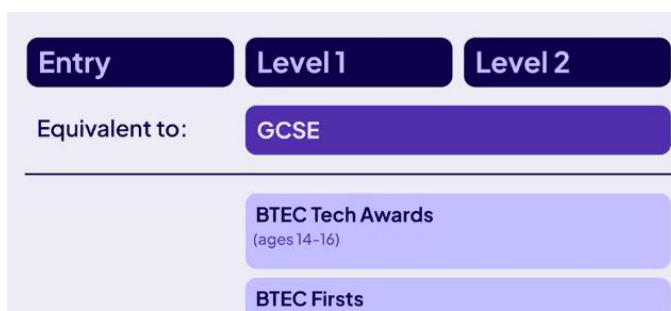
## Types of Qualification

**GCSE** (General Certificate of Secondary Education) provides an academic qualification in a particular subject.

It is studied over 2 years, with an element of coursework (in some subjects) and an external examination, taken at the end of Year 11. Work in each subject will be graded from 9-1.

| New Grading | Old Grading            |
|-------------|------------------------|
| 9           | High A*                |
| 8           | Low A* or High A Grade |
| 7           | Low A Grade            |
| 6           | High B Grade           |
| 5           | Low B or High C Grade  |
| 4           | Low C Grade            |
| 3           | D or High E Grade      |
| 2           | Low F or G Grade       |
| 1           | Low F or G Grade       |
| U           | U                      |

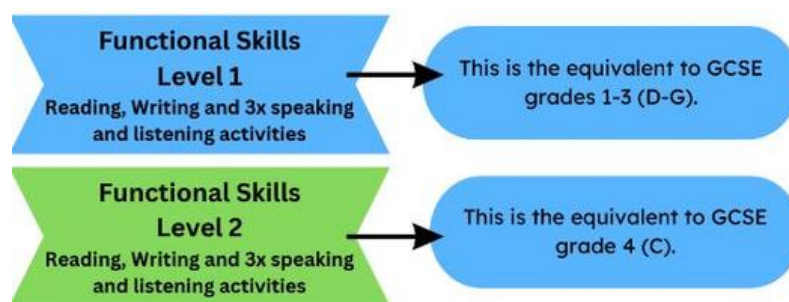
**BTEC** courses are largely portfolio (coursework)-based and relate to a particular vocational area. The courses are equivalent to a level 1



(Grades 1-3) or Level 2 (Grades 4-9)  
GCSE but have fewer or no external  
exams. All BTEC assessment decisions  
are subject to internal and external  
verification by Pearson.

**Entry Level/Functional Skills Qualifications.** These qualifications can help you build skills, increase your knowledge and boost your confidence. Functional Skills assess the fundamental skills of English and maths and help to prepare people with the skills that they may need in their working and professional lives.

There are different levels of Functional Skills Qualifications: Entry Level 1, Entry Level 2, Entry Level 3, Level 1 and Level 2



Once pupils have completed one level of a Functional Skills Qualification, they can progress onto the next level (providing a 'safety-net' at every point) after Level 1 and 2, pupils may study further at a GCSE level.

All Functional Skills Assessments are graded as either 'pass' or 'fail'. There aren't any coursework or portfolio-based elements, and the qualification result is based solely on exam papers.

# Food Technology

## (BTEC Home Cooking leading to GCSE Food Preparation & Nutrition)

Food Technology is a **practical, creative** subject that also **develops important life skills**. You will learn how to **cook safely and confidently**, understand where food comes from, and explore how food affects health and wellbeing. We create lots of different delicious dishes from chocolate profiteroles to chicken jambalaya and for both BTEC and GCSE you get to decide on a healthy meal to prepare. **Alongside practical cooking, both GCSE and BTEC include written work**, where you learn key facts, explain ideas, and reflect on your learning.

Pupils will spend time **planning, preparing and cooking a wide range of dishes**, while also **learning about nutrition, food science, food safety and sustainability**. They will focus on evaluating their own work and improving dishes over time, alongside completing written tasks to explain processes, decisions and learning.

BTEC Food is more coursework based, with practical work and written assignments completed throughout the course, whereas GCSE Food Technology includes a food investigation task set by the exam board, where pupils research, test, analyse and write about food, as well as a final written exam.

Food Technology helps pupils build **practical cooking and food preparation skills**, as well as organisation, time management and independence. It also develops problem solving and adaptability, along with confidence and resilience. Pupils strengthen literacy skills through written explanations, evaluations and reports, and improve teamwork, communication and following instructions. These skills are useful both in school and in everyday life.

### What could it lead to?

Food Technology can support **pathways into: catering** and hospitality; chef, baker or food preparation roles; nutrition, health and fitness industries and food product development/food science. It could also be a **first step to apprenticeships**, college courses or further vocational study. Even if pupils do not choose a food related career, Food Technology **develops transferable skills** that are valued by employers and colleges and **prepare pupils for adult life**.



## BTEC Level 1 Introductory Diploma in Sport

The Pearson BTEC Level 1 Introductory Diploma in Sport is a **practical, coursework-based qualification** designed to give pupils an introduction to the sport and physical activity sector. The course focuses on developing confidence, engagement, and essential learning skills through a combination of **practical sporting activities** and **classroom based assignments**.

Pupils study a range of introductory units such as participating in sport, health and fitness, working with others, and planning for future progression.

There are **no final exams**; assessment is based on work completed throughout the course.

During the course, pupils develop a wide range of **valuable transferable skills** including teamwork, communication, organisation, leadership, and self management. Lessons encourage pupils to work independently and as part of a team, take responsibility for meeting deadlines, and reflect on their own learning and progress. These skills are important not only within sport, but across many subjects and future career pathways.

### What could it lead to?

The qualification provides a strong foundation for progression to **BTEC Level 2 Sport**, other vocational courses, or apprenticeships, and can support future careers in areas such as sport, fitness, coaching, leisure, health and wellbeing.



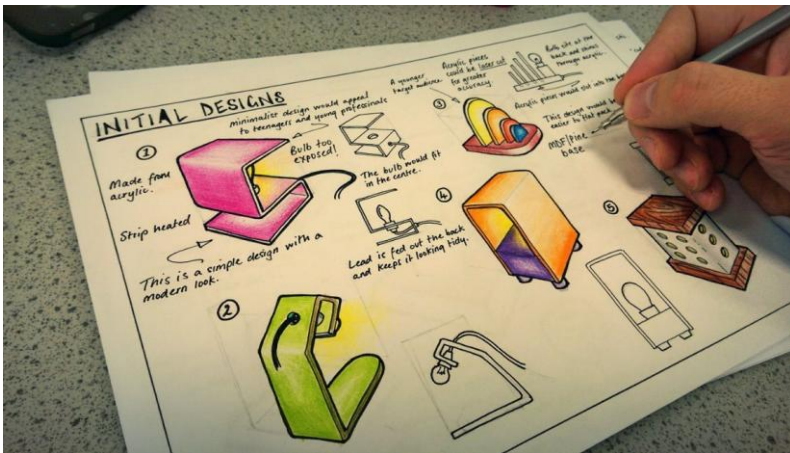
# BTEC Tech Award in Art and Design (Design & Technology) Practice

A practical, **vocational qualification** equivalent in size and level to a GCSE, designed for pupils who enjoy **designing, making and problem solving**. Delivered with a **Design & Technology focus**, the course allows pupils to follow a structured design process including research, idea development, making, testing and refinement. Pupils learn how designers respond to real-world needs and produce outcomes that meet the requirements of design briefs and users or clients.

Throughout the course, pupils develop a wide range of skills not always gained through GCSEs, including **applied problem solving, practical making skills, independent working, and evaluating and improving designs**. Learning takes place mainly through project-based coursework rather than written exams, helping pupils build confidence through practical achievement and creative decision-making.

## What could it lead to?

This qualification is particularly useful for pupils considering future pathways in Design & Technology, Product Design, Engineering, Creative Industries, Manufacturing, or vocational and technical apprenticeships. It also supports progression to Level 2 and Level 3 courses, including BTECs, A Levels and T Levels, and helps pupils decide whether a design or technical career pathway is right for them.



## GCSE Art & Design

A **creative, practical subject** that encourages pupils to develop their own ideas through making, designing and problem-solving. Pupils **explore a range of art and design disciplines** such as fine art, photography, graphics, textiles and three-dimensional design, depending on the pathway offered by the school. The course **focuses on learning through practical work rather than written exams**, allowing pupils to express themselves visually and creatively.

**Assessment is 100% coursework.** Sixty percent of the final grade comes from a portfolio of work completed throughout the course, showing how ideas develop from initial starting points to final outcomes. The remaining forty percent is an externally set assignment, where pupils respond to a theme provided by AQA and produce a final piece during supervised studio time. All work is marked by teachers and moderated by the exam board.

Pupils develop valuable skills such as **creativity, independence, organisation, resilience and problem-solving**. GCSE Art & Design is particularly **well suited to learners who enjoy practical, hands-on work** and prefer coursework to formal exams.

### What could it lead to?

The qualification provides a strong foundation for **further study at college** or sixth form, as well as **future careers in creative and design-related industries**.



## BTEC Level 1 – Land-Based (L1 Introductory)

The **BTEC Level 1 Introductory Award in Land-Based Studies** is a practical, hands-on course for pupils who enjoy learning by doing, particularly outdoors or in real-life working environments. The course gives pupils an introduction to land-based subjects such as animal care, plant growth, conservation, countryside skills, and understanding how the natural environment is managed. Learning takes place through practical activities, projects, and short written tasks, helping pupils build confidence in their abilities.

Pupils will develop a broad range of **practical, personal, and employability skills**. These include teamwork, communication, organisation, problem-solving, and working safely with tools and equipment. The course also supports personal development by encouraging responsibility, independence, and pride in completing practical work to a good standard.

### What could it lead to?

Land-Based Studies offers strong **progression opportunities**. It is well suited to pupils who may be interested in **future pathways such as animal care, agriculture, horticulture, countryside management, conservation, outdoor education, or environmental work**. The qualification provides a solid foundation for further vocational courses, apprenticeships, or entry into **employment within land-based and outdoor industries**.



Land-based  
Studies

## Duke of Edinburgh's Award – Bronze

The **Bronze Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE)** is a nationally recognised programme that encourages pupils to challenge themselves, build confidence, and develop independence. It is a practical and rewarding option for Year 9 pupils who enjoy being active, working with others, and learning beyond the classroom. Pupils complete activities across four sections: **Volunteering**, **Physical**, **Skills**, and an **Expedition**, working towards a well-respected Bronze award.

Through Bronze DofE, pupils develop a wide range of **life skills** that support both personal growth and success in school. These include **teamwork, resilience, communication, organisation, and problem-solving**. The expedition section helps pupils learn to plan, navigate, work as a team, and look after themselves and others in an outdoor environment. The volunteering and skills sections allow pupils to explore interests, develop responsibility, and contribute positively to their school or community.

The Bronze DofE is **highly valued by colleges, training providers and employers** because it demonstrates commitment, reliability, and a willingness to take on challenges.

### What could it lead to?

It supports future pathways by helping pupils **build evidence for CVs, applications, and interviews**, while also **boosting confidence** and independence. For many pupils, Bronze DofE is also the first step towards continuing with Silver and Gold awards in later years.



## Digital Literacy – Functional Skills

Pearson Functional Skills Digital Literacy helps pupils build the **confidence and practical skills needed to use technology safely, effectively** and independently in everyday life. This course is designed to support learners in developing important digital skills that can be used at school, at home and in future employment.

During the course, pupils will learn how to use computers, tablets and online tools for different purposes. They will develop skills in **creating and editing documents**, searching for information online, sending emails, **using digital communication tools** and working safely on the internet. Pupils will also learn about protecting personal information, recognising online risks and using technology responsibly.

The qualification **focuses on real-life situations and practical activities**. Pupils will complete tasks that help them become more independent and prepared for the modern world. They will learn how to organise files, use software correctly, solve simple digital problems and communicate clearly using technology. These are important life skills that employers, colleges and training providers expect young people to have.

Studying Digital Literacy can help pupils improve a wide range of important skills, including **communication, problem-solving, organisation**, and independence. It also helps build confidence when using technology, increases awareness of online safety, and encourages teamwork and collaboration. In addition, pupils can **develop their creativity and presentation skills** through a variety of digital tasks and activities.

### What could it lead to?

Functional Skills Digital Literacy can support progression into further education, apprenticeships, and employment. It can lead to further **ICT or computing qualifications** and help pupils prepare for **careers where digital skills are important**. It would be particularly relevant to specific careers with IT focus such as digital marketing, IT support and media/content creation roles.

This qualification gives pupils **valuable skills for work, learning, and everyday life**.

