

L4 Higher National Certificate in Computing (HTQ)

Academic Year 2025/27

Course Leader: Lewis Campbell
Teaching Institution: Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College
Campus: Hereford
Awarding Body: Pearson
Final Award: HTQ L4
Intermediate Award(s): N/A
Mode of Study: Part-time
Qualification number: 610/0580/0
Date of programme specification preparation/revision: Sept 2025

Educational aims of the programme

The aim of the BTEC Higher National Certificate in Computing for England is to develop students as professional, self-reflecting individuals able to meet the demands of employers in the computing sector and adapt to a constantly changing world. The qualifications aim to widen access to higher education and enhance the career prospects of those who undertake them.

The objectives of the Pearson BTEC Higher National Certificate in Computing for England are as follows:

- To equip students with computing skills, knowledge and the understanding necessary to achieve high performance in the global computing environment.
- To provide education and training for a range of careers in computing, including network engineering, software engineering, data analytics, security, intelligent systems, and applications development.
- To provide insight and understanding into international computing operations and the opportunities and challenges presented by a globalised marketplace.
- To equip students with knowledge and understanding of culturally diverse organizations, cross-cultural issues, diversity and values.
- To provide opportunities for students to enter or progress in employment in computing, or progress to higher education qualifications such as an Honours degree in computing or a related area.
- To provide opportunities for students to develop the skills, techniques and personal attributes essential for successful working lives.
- To provide opportunities for those students with a global outlook to aspire to international career pathways.
- To provide opportunities for students to achieve a nationally recognized professional qualification.
- To provide opportunities for students to achieve vendor accredited certifications.
- To offer students the chance of career progression in their chosen field.

- To allow flexibility of study and to meet local or specialist needs.
- To offer a balance between employability skills and the knowledge essential for students with entrepreneurial, employment or academic aspirations.

We meet these objectives by:

- Providing a thorough grounding in computing principles at Level 4 that leads the student to a range of specialist progression pathways at Level 5 relating to individual professions within the computing sector.
- Enabling progression to a university degree by supporting the development of appropriate academic study skills.
- Enabling progression to further professional qualifications in specific computing areas by mapping to units in a range of vendor accredited certificates.

QAA and professional academic standards and quality

The BTEC Higher National Certificate in Computing for England is located at level 4 of the Framework for Higher Qualifications (2018).

External Reference Points consulted in the design of this course include:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/btec-higher-nationals.html>

<https://hnglobal.highernationals.com>

<http://degreecoursefinder.pearson.com>

National Occupational Standards

Pearson BTEC Higher National Certificate in Computing for England has been developed with career progression and recognition by professional bodies in mind. The qualification provides underpinning knowledge as well as developing practical skills in preparation for work and possible study and achievement of Level 6 in due course.

The documents consulted during the design of this course include:

Higher-level Skills

On completion of this programme, learners studying the HTQ in Computing at level 4 will be able to develop their careers in the computing sector through:

- Entering employment
- Continuing existing employment
- Linking with the appropriate vendor accredited certificates
- Committing to Continuing Professional Development (CPD)
- Progressing to HTQ (Level 5) or university.

The BTEC Higher National Certificate in Computing for England is recognised by higher education providers as meeting admission requirements to many relevant computing-related courses.

Details of entry requirements for BTEC Higher National and equivalent for graduates into degree programmes at institutions in the UK and internationally can be found on the Degree Course Finder website (<http://degreecoursefinder.pearson.com/>).

Course Structure

The BTEC Higher National Certificate in Computing for England is a qualification with a minimum of 120 credits of which 105 credits are mandatory.

Unit Number		Unit Level	Unit Credit
Mandatory units			
1	Programming	4	15
2	Networking	4	15
3	Professional Practice	4	15
4	Database Design & Development	4	15
5	Security	4	15
6	Planning A Computing Project (Pearson Set)	4	15
10	Cyber Security	4	15
Optional units			
13	Website Design and Development	4	15

Learning and Teaching Methods

Students will learn through a series of lectures, practical sessions, workshops, seminars and tutorials. They will also be required to undertake substantial independent study. Typically, this will involve completing online activities, reading journal articles and books, watching selected videos, working through example problems, working on individual and group projects, undertaking research in the library and online, preparing assignments and presentations.

Students will be taught by a teaching team whose expertise and knowledge are closely matched to the content of the modules on the course.

In a typical week, students will normally have 9 hours of contact teaching.

Means of Assessment

Students working at higher levels should be capable of undertaking independent study and research, developing strategies to improve their own performance, supported by teaching staff.

Students will be required to complete coursework as they progress through the programme and undertake assessments at the end of each semester. The assessment of Pearson BTEC Level 4 Higher National qualifications is criterion-referenced and we are required to assess learners' evidence against published learning outcomes and assessment criteria. All units will be individually graded as 'pass', 'merit' or 'distinction'. To achieve a pass grade for the unit learners must meet the assessment criteria set out in the specifications. Merit and distinction grades are awarded for higher-level achievement.

All grades awarded are provisional until they are confirmed at the assessment board. This usually takes place at the end of an academic year.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is 'a method of assessment that considers whether an individual can demonstrate that they can meet the assessment requirements for a unit through knowledge, understanding or skills that they already possess and do not need to develop through a course of learning'. If individuals can produce relevant evidence that fully meets learning outcome requirements then RPL can be given for their existing knowledge, understanding or skills

External Examiner

The External Examiner (EE) is a subject assessment specialist appointed by Pearson to conduct external examination. They verify that the management of programmes and assessment decisions meet national standards. External examination is usually conducted by an annual visit, usually in the summer term.

Additional Support

Developing effective study skills is an essential element in achieving academic success. All module leaders provide individual academic support. This is in addition to Personal Academic Tutor support.

All students are provided with a Course Handbook that comprehensively outlines the programme and provides advice and guidance. Module outlines and assessment details are provided for all modules. During your studies you will have access to fully equipped classrooms, practical workshops, Library with text and electronic resources and Student Services.

The College is committed to ensuring that disabled people, including those with specific learning difficulties and/or mental health difficulties are treated fairly. Reasonable adjustments to provision will be made to ensure that disabled students are not disadvantaged. The Learning Support Service is your initial point of contact.

Entry Requirements

Entry criteria detail a typical offer but the College considers all applications on an individual basis which means that we could make offers based on qualifications, personal profile and experience. If you have any queries regarding your offer, please contact our Admissions Team.

Typical offer: For students who have recently been in education, the entry profile is likely to include one of the following:

- A* to C grade and/or 9 to 4 in GCSE Maths (or equivalent) is strongly recommended.
- A BTEC Level 3 qualification in Computing
- A GCE Advanced Level profile that demonstrates strong performance in a relevant subject or adequate performance in more than one GCE subject. This profile is likely to be supported by GCSE grades at A* to C and/or 9 to 4 (or equivalent)
- Other related Level 3 qualifications
- An Access to Higher Education Diploma awarded by an approved further education institution
- Related work experience
- An international equivalent of the above

The College welcomes applications from motivated applicants from all backgrounds. We recognise that student potential is not always demonstrated within formal academic qualifications and welcome applications from individuals from backgrounds that are under-represented within higher education.

Course Exit Points

To achieve a Pearson BTEC Level 4 Higher National Certificate qualification a student must have:

- completed units equivalent to 120 credits at level 4
- achieved at least a pass in 105 credits at level 4.

Progression Route

The Pearson BTEC Level 4 Higher National Certificate provides a solid grounding in engineering, which students can build on should they decide to continue their studies beyond the Certificate stage onto Level 5.

The Pearson BTEC Level 5 Higher National Diploma allows students to specialise by committing to specific career paths and progression routes to degree-level study. On successful completion of the Pearson BTEC Level 5 Higher National Diploma, students can develop their careers in the engineering sector through:

- Entering employment
- Continuing existing employment
- Linking with the appropriate Professional Body
- Linking with the appropriate vendor accredited certificates [if appropriate]
- Committing to Continuing Professional Development (CPD)
- Progressing to university.

Please note: This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if s/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found in associated course documentation e.g. course handbooks and module specifications.