



Helpline Enquiries

BTEC Information

Enquiry

Have you any general information on BTECs that we could share with a parent? And what are the differences between A Levels and BTECs?

Our reply

BTECs are vocational qualifications relating to 16 work sectors; the most popular are: Business Studies, Childcare, Construction, Engineering, Health and Social Care, Hospitality, Information Technology, Travel & Tourism.

There are varying levels of BTECs.

- Levels 1-2 - GCSE equivalent
- Level 3 – A-Level equivalent
- Levels 4-5 - equivalent to 1st and 2nd year of an undergraduate degree

Within Level 3 there are different options.

- BTEC Subsidiary Diploma is equivalent to one A-Level
- BTEC Diploma is equivalent to two A-Levels
- BTEC Extended Diploma is equivalent to three A-Levels

Some students will study a mix (either of BTECs or BTECS and A Levels).

What are the main differences between A Levels and BTEC Level 3 qualifications?

1. Teaching Style

A-levels are taught in a similar way to GCSEs as two year linear courses with exams at the end of year two.

BTECs are different in that theory is combined with regular practical work so students directly apply what they learn. For example, those studying a BTEC in business will learn the key fundamentals as they would at A-level; however the assessments to test this knowledge may be different.

2. Assessments

Whereas A-levels are assessed mainly through exams at the end of Year 13, BTECs are assessed via regular coursework and projects throughout the course. If a student doesn't do well in exam conditions, BTECs can relieve this pressure, spreading out the work that gives the final grade. BTEC students will generally have a

good idea of what their final grades will be.

3. Practical Experience

With BTECs, students gain practical experience and work experience as part of the course.

Options after a BTEC Level 3

BTEC students who have completed a Level 3 qualification will be able to progress to an apprenticeship or university.

If a student has studied a Level 3 Extended Diploma their degree choice can be more limited than for students who have completed A Levels. For example, students who have studied a Level 3 Extended Diploma in Business aiming for university will naturally progress to a degree in Business or a related area such as Marketing, Event Management or Entrepreneurship. If a student decided they wanted to apply for a History or French degree they would be unlikely to get accepted before gaining a relevant qualification.

It is well documented that Universities do accept BTECs and that BTECs are part of the [UCAS tariff table](#)

Please also see the information UCAS has on BTEC as a Post 16 qualification

<https://www.ucas.com/further-education/post-16-qualifications/qualifications-you-can-take/btec-diplomas>

If a student is aiming to progress from BTEC on to a degree they should be advised to consider the method of assessment for the degree. There is great variation in how degrees are assessed and this is something the student will need to be aware of as they may struggle if a degree is assessed mainly via exams. Some universities are aware of this and add in extra exam preparation classes for students who have studied BTEC's.

Helpline Team

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