

STUDENT HANDBOOK 2010 - 2012/13

Welcome to your new course! Over the next two years (and they will fly by!) you will be studying for a BTEC First Diploma/Certificate Vocational Qualification. The qualification you receive at the end of the course will be equal to 2 or 4 GCSE grades.

How BTEC courses are different from GCSE courses:

This qualification is 100% coursework. Every piece of coursework counts towards your final grade. Keeping your folder of evidence is vital as this is the only way your work can be assessed. Your folder may contain video and photographic evidence in addition to written work.

- Each course is made up of a number of units. Added together, the marks you receive determine your final grade. This will be either: Pass, Merit, Distinction or Distinction*
- Diploma courses are equal to 4 GCSE passes.
- Extended Certificate courses are equal to 2 GCSE passes.
- Certificate is equal to 1 pass
- Vocational courses encourage you to take a more active part in your learning. You will also need to take responsibility for your learning by planning your work, carrying out research and regularly reviewing your progress.

Why do a BTEC course rather than a GCSE course:

- Vocational courses help to prepare you for the both the world of work and further education.
- BTEC courses are a good starting point for studying NVQ's while you are working.

- BTEC courses help you to develop organisation, time management, presentation and research skills. All these are highly valued by employers.
- If you are planning to go on to further education you will have developed all the above skills plus essential independent study skills - highly valued by colleges and universities.

Getting started:

- At the start of each unit, your teacher will explain what the unit is about. Your assignment will be made clear to you. Deadlines will be set and you will be expected to meet these. You will know what you have to do to achieve a Pass, Merit or Distinction.
- You will complete the assignments with help and guidance from your teacher. There will be a common format for setting out assignments.
- Pair/group work is sometimes a good way to complete certain tasks. This is OK as long as everyone does a fair share of the work. The contribution made by individual students must be identified on every student's work.
- Being creative is encouraged. Your individual flair and skill in producing different types of work, for example, producing leaflets, model making. Good use of IT will be highly valued. If you think you have a more appropriate way of evidencing the criteria discuss it with your teacher.
- Learning by experience. Your course will involve some or all of the following: visits from guest speakers or artists; visits; working in a different environment; meeting people from different jobs; work experience. Your completed units of work will need to reflect these new and different experiences.

BTEC courses will also help you to develop your skills in:

- Research -Mrs Richards, the Librarian, will show you how to do this if you are unsure.
- Use of IT and other Communication Systems

- Practical work - you may need to video this at times. Always keep a record of what you have done, with details and dates, if you intend to use this for your evidence folder.
- **YOU ARE IN CHARGE OF ENSURING YOU HAVE EVIDENCE FOR ALL YOUR CRITERIA AND ENSURE IT IS KEPT SAFE**
- Presentation
- Team work - make sure that everyone participates and plays their part.
- Problem solving
- Literacy and numeracy - essential skills for the workplace.

Your teachers will expect you to:

- Read the assignment brief carefully. Always ask your teacher if you are not sure.
- Plan your work. Talk through your ideas with your teacher before you start your work.
- Plan your work - you may change your plans as you develop your brief. Again - brainstorm ideas with your teacher and other students.
- Check your work with your teacher on a regular basis to make sure you are on track.
- Ask advice on how to improve your work as you go along.
- Draft your work before you do the final copy.
- Pay attention to standards of presentation, spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Be able to evaluate your work and identify areas for improvement.
- Keep a record of the units you have completed and the grades awarded.
- Meet all deadlines - later in the handbook is a policy for handing work in late. You need to read this carefully.

Marking/grading of units of work:

- To start with, your teacher will assess your unit of work.
- Your work will then be checked by another teacher to make sure that it has been marked fairly and meets the standard awarded.
- Some of your work will be sent away for external assessment.
- A representative from the examination board can visit school at any time and ask to see your folder of evidence.

DO NOT BREAK THESE SIMPLE RULES - YOUR GRADES COULD BE CANCELLED

- Do not present work done by another person as your own work. (This is called **Plagiarism** and it is cheating)
- If you include sections of work done by someone else you must provide a reference section to say who has done the work.
- Never copy another student's work and pretend it is your own - this breaks the examination rules.
- Never print off pages of written work from the internet - pictures are fine as long as they are included in your reference section.
- Do not copy and paste from the internet - it is copying.
- There are times when you will work with another student. It is important to share ideas with other students in your group. BUT - you must always show which section you have completed yourself and which have been done by someone else.

If you do not agree with the mark/grade you have been awarded you can appeal:

- It is important to remember that teachers are experienced in marking and grading work but sometimes mistakes can be made.
- Smart students will ask the teacher for advice and help as they go along. You should always know the grade that you are currently working at and what you need to do to improve.
- If you do not agree with the mark you have been given the first thing you should do is to talk to the teacher who has marked your work. Teachers will explain why you have been awarded that grade.
- If you are still unhappy, you can ask the internal verifier (the other teacher who checks the marks given) to check the decision.
- If you are still unhappy you can raise the matter with the Senior Management. In this case it will be the Quality Nominee who will check the mark given and let you know of any changes.

Late Work Policy

Students need to be aware that missing deadlines may result in a lower final grade. **Teachers have the right to refuse to mark work handed in late.** Being allowed to hand your work in late gives you an unfair advantage over other students. Only in exceptional circumstances may work be accepted late - this will be discussed with your teacher and Ms .

Students Professional Standards:

- Meeting all deadlines except in exceptional circumstances, for example, prolonged illness; family issues; unavoidable absence.
- Informing teachers at an early stage if it is not possible to meet deadlines.

Yardleys School is responsible for:

- Setting clear deadlines for checking draft work; making improvements; final marking.
- A clear final deadline will be stated on each assignment brief.
- Students in danger of missing deadlines will be identified at an early stage so that intervention strategies can be put in place.
- Teachers will keep dated records of interventions made. Continued problems referred on to the Quality Nominee, Ms Wright.
- Teachers to keep parents/carers informed of deadline issues.
- Catch up opportunities made available after school to complete any outstanding work.

If Students continually fail to meet deadlines:

- It may not be possible for the marker to show the student how work can be improved.
- Late work will be accepted but may not be marked.

The above would happen only if all intervention strategies had failed.

Assignment Presentation: You will need to follow the format outlined in the assignment brief. This is a professional qualification and all work must be presented in a professional manner. Follow this format:

Assignment cover sheet. These will be provided for you.

Contents page - number the pages

Introduction. This should be a short paragraph outlining a brief description of the assignment - include any key words from the brief.

Outline any decisions you made about the work and briefly say what is to follow in the main section.

Main section.

- Use sub headings to separate your work. Remember - its quality not quantity! Keep your information relevant to the assessment criteria. Make sure your key points are clear. Do not copy from books or internet!
- Include relevant diagrams etc. Make sure they are all labelled clearly.
- Read your work before you hand it in and correct where necessary.

Conclusion. This should be a brief summary of your findings. Include any opinions and conclusions.

Sources of Information. List what you have used to gather your information from. This could include internet; books; TV; personal contacts etc.

References:

Remember to include references you have used. For example, if you use quotations in your work you must make reference to them. You will need to quote: the author's name and date of publication.

If you use a quotation from the internet you need to write down the date and time of access.

At the end of your work you need a full list of all the books you have used with Author, title, publisher and date.