



Linwood Campus

"Entitlement plus opportunity"

Guide to Accreditation

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Introduction

The Linwood Schools are proud to be able to offer a wide range of external accreditation to our students across all campuses, from Entry Level Awards through to GCSE's and A Levels. This guide has been developed to help you understand what is being offered to your child and how this will affect him/her throughout the course.

Not all of the following sections will be relevant to your child and you should have received an Accreditation Advice detailing which accreditation your child is undertaking.

It is our intention to provide learners with the best possible opportunity to achieve their full potential whilst at Linwood School.

SJ Clark

Exams/Data Officer



Accreditation

Functional Skills

What are Functional Skills?

Functional Skills are practical skills in English, Maths and ICT for all learners aged 14 and above. Functional Skills provide an individual with essential knowledge, skills and understanding that will enable them to operate confidently, effectively and independently in life and work.

They are learning tools that enable students to:

- apply their knowledge and understanding to everyday life
- engage competently and confidently with others
- solve problems in both familiar and unfamiliar situations
- develop personally and professionally as positive citizens who can actively contribute to society.

Why are Functional Skills important?

Functional Skills are important because they provide young people and adults with the skills, knowledge and understanding that they will need in order to progress and succeed in education, work and life.

Who are they for?

Functional Skills are available to all learners from Key Stage 3 upwards, whatever learning pathway they are taking. The skills taught will help students to participate and progress in education, training and employment. Working on Functional Skills helps to develop and secure the broader range of aptitudes, attitudes and behaviours that will enable students to make a positive contribution to the communities in which they live and work.

What are the Functional Skills standards?

The Functional Skills standards are technical documents that define and differentiate the skill requirements for the Functional Skills qualifications. For Functional Skills assessment, learner performance will be measured on a pass/fail basis at five levels: Entry 1, Entry 2, Entry 3, Level 1 and Level 2. Learners are not required to move sequentially through each level but to take the Functional Skills qualification at the appropriate level when they are ready to do so.

At what levels are Functional Skills qualifications available?

Functional Skills qualifications in English, Maths and ICT are available at Entry 1, Entry 2, Entry 3, Level 1 and Level 2. Each subject area has a set of performance standards based on three key areas:

Maths Key areas:

- Representing – making sense of a situation and representing it mathematically.
- Analysing – processing and using maths.
- Interpreting – interpreting and communicating the results of analysis.

ICT Key areas:

- Use of ICT systems.
- Finding and selecting information.
- Developing, presenting and communicating information.

Functional English Key areas:

- Speaking and listening – making an oral presentation or report.
- Reading – reading and understanding information and instructions.
- Writing – writing accurately so that meaning is clear.

Entry Level Certificates (ELCs)

ELCs are unisex qualifications for students who are working below Grade G at GCSE. They're available at Entry 1, 2 and 3.

Entry Level qualifications are made up of a number of separately assessed units so achievements are recognised as the learner completes each unit. The assessment is based on a combination of tests, assignments and tasks which can be written, oral or practical.

Learners also have to produce a portfolio that shows evidence of what has been achieved. It can contain things like witness statements which are a written or oral account of performance, video, audio and photographs that are assessed by teachers.

Different subjects and courses will vary in structure, content and the number of units. When all the units are completed, the full certificate is issued.

Where they can lead

You can progress from one entry level to the next. At entry 3, the qualifications are designed to help learners move on to further qualifications, such as:

- GCSEs
- Key Skills
- Skills for Life
- NVQs
- BTEC Introductory or Level 1 BTEC Awards, Certificates or Diplomas

They can also lead to work-based learning, like an apprenticeship, or straight to a job.

ASDAN

ASDAN is a pioneering curriculum development organisation and awarding body, offering programmes and qualifications that explicitly grow skills for learning, skills for employment and skills for life. As leading specialists in SEND provision, ASDAN offers programmes and qualifications for learners working at Entry and pre-Entry level. Personal Development Programmes

Transition Challenge

- Learners compile a portfolio of evidence to show the activities they have completed. Following internal moderation, centres are required to submit learners for external moderation and certification. Module certification is also available.
- Learners can progress to Towards Independence and the Personal Development Programmes. Transition Challenge can support Personal Progress units.
- Transition Challenge provides a framework to develop and accredit independent living and personal skills.

Personal Development Programme

ASDAN's Bronze, Silver and Gold Personal Development Programmes offer imaginative ways of developing, recording and certificating a wide range of young people's personal skills, qualities and achievements, as well as introducing them to new activities and challenges.

Students gain one or two credits for each section completed, with each credit representing approximately 10 hours of activity. Six credits are needed to complete Bronze, 12 for Silver and 18 for Gold.

- Students are required to plan and review their work at key points and compile a portfolio of evidence, which documents the challenges they have completed.
- These programmes are aimed at learners working at Entry 3 and Level 1. They can be used in special schools as a major part of the curriculum, to enable tutors to engage learners in developing relevant life skills.
- Learners select a number of challenges from the 12 modules that make up the Personal Development Programmes.
- Learners can progress from Bronze to Silver and Gold.

BTEC

- BTEC stands for '**Business and Technology Education Council**', which used to run the award, first introduced in 1984.
- BTECs are now awarded by the [Edexcel exam board](#) and are taken in more than 100 countries at all levels, from pre-GCSE to Degree equivalent.
- They are vocational and work-related courses, designed to accommodate the needs of employers and allow students to progress to further and higher education.
- A BTEC takes a practical approach to learning, without missing any of the important theory on the subject
- BTECs are extremely reputable, having been around for 25 years

Why take a BTEC?

- BTECs are recognised by a large number of companies across a wide range of industries.
- As well as being developed in partnership with industry representatives so all employer and student needs are met, many professional bodies offer successful BTEC students exemptions for their own accredited qualifications.
- BTECs allow a learner to undertake a number of units for which they will present evidence, based on real-life work and studies, removing the pressure to perform in exams.

How do BTEC qualifications work?

There are different sizes of BTEC qualification at each level. Generally:

- The smallest is the **Award**
- Then the **Certificate**
- And the largest is the **Diploma**

Unit results are graded as **Pass, Merit or Distinction**.

The number of units varies according to the design and focus of each qualification, and all students complete realistic work-based assignments, which are internally assessed.

Assessment decisions and quality assurance procedures in each centre are regularly checked by [EdExcel](#).

What are the different BTEC levels?

BTECs are offered at a number of different levels. The levels we currently offer at Linwood are outlined below, however this list is not exhaustive and could change depending on the ability of the cohort.

- **Entry** – for learners to develop confidence and initial skills for either a broad work sector or everyday life
- **Introductory (Level 1)** – a basic introduction to a particular industry sector. They encourage development of personal and work-related skills
- **Foundation Diploma in Art and Design (Level 3)** – preparation for entry to higher education to study art and design
- **WorkSkills (Entry 3 - Level 2)** – a suite of skills-based employability units.

How long does a BTEC take?

- A BTEC will generally take one to two years to complete, depending on whether you study for the course full time or part time.
- BTECs are flexible. They can be taken alongside, or in place of, [GCSEs](#) and [A levels](#) and alongside Diplomas in schools and colleges.
- BTECs are mode-free and the time taken to complete them depends on the size and level of the qualification.
- Each BTEC programme has identified guided learning hours.

What is a BTEC qualification worth?

BTEC qualifications are fully recognised as holding equivalences to GCSEs and A Levels (dependent upon the level of BTEC qualification taken), and can be used towards the UCAS points needed for a university application.

Awards, Certificates and Diplomas

The Awards, Certificates and Diplomas offered by a wide range of awarding bodies and delivered at Linwood fall under the umbrella of a nationally recognised framework which:

- Recognises and accredits smaller steps of learning, and enables learners to build qualifications incrementally
- Assesses and recognises non certificated learning, and enables this to contribute to recognised qualifications
- Allows learners to obtain skills and qualifications that meet industry needs
- Provides accreditation for qualifications offered by a wide range of awarding organisations, including employers, which means that work-based learning and training can be recognised
- Recognises certificated achievement outside of the QCF through a process known as exemption

Qualification titles

Each qualification title contains the following:

- The **level** of the qualification (from **Entry Level to Level 8**)
- The **size** of the qualification (**Award/Certificate/Diploma**)
- Details indicating the **content** of the qualification.

Qualification sizes

There are three sizes of qualifications in the framework:

- **Award** - (1 to 12 credits - 10 to 120 hours of learning)
- **Certificate** - (13 to 36 credits - 130 to 360 hours of learning)
- **Diploma** - (37 credits or more - 370 or more hours of learning).

The qualification name - Award, Certificate or Diploma represents the **size** of a qualification, **not** how difficult it is. To understand how difficult a unit or qualification is, it might be helpful to know that:

- Pre GCSE is equivalent in challenge to Entry level 1, 2, 3 & Level 1
- GCSEs (grades A* to C / 9-7) are equivalent in challenge to Level 2
- A levels are equivalent in challenge to Level 3

14 + Accreditation from EQUALS

Moving On is a flexible curriculum of five, one year programmes for 14 + students. Courses of study include World Studies, Independent Living and Vocational Skills. There is no minimum or maximum number of units for which a student may be entered in any one year. The accreditation scheme enables students to be assessed and awarded nationally moderated certificates. There are no exams as the accreditation is portfolio based.

Unit Award Schemes (OCR)

The Unit Award Scheme (UAS) offers learners the opportunity to have their achievements formally recognised with a certificate issued by AQA each time a short unit is successfully completed.

There are no limits on:

- what can be accredited, as long as it is worthwhile and meaningful for the learner
- who can achieve, in terms of age or ability
- how long it takes to achieve or when this takes place
- how learning can be evidenced.

Flexibility is key with UAS, and AQA's motto is '**Achievement for All**'. AQA encourage and support learners to show them what they can do, rather than what they can't.

GCSEs

What are GCSEs?

- GCSE stands for General Certificate of Secondary Education.
- GCSE examinations are taken by most pupils at the end of compulsory school education (year 11) in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.
- GCSE provides a uniform framework for assessment.
- Each GCSE subject is assessed by formal examinations or by coursework, or by a combination of the two.

GCSE represents Key Stage 4 of the National Curriculum, and although GCSE provides a uniform framework of assessment, in fact it represents two "levels" of the National Qualifications Framework (Levels 1 and 2). Grades A to C (or new grade 9 to 4) are Level 2 (intermediate) qualifications, while grades D to G (new grade 3 to U) are Level 1 (foundation) qualifications.

Depending on their expected grades, pupils in certain subjects will be entered for the "higher" or the "foundation" tier GCSE exams. Pupils expected to achieve grades A to D (9 to 3) take the higher tier and can achieve any grade; pupils taking the foundation tier can only achieve grade C (4) or below. Most subjects have these two tiers, but some (art, music, physical education and history) have none, while mathematics has three.



A Levels

AS and **A levels** are the traditional qualifications offered by schools and colleges for **16-19 year olds**. They're highly valued by universities and employers and focus on **academic** subjects, although some are **work-related**.

AS/A levels are mostly assessed by **written exams**, although there's also some **coursework** in most subjects. In subjects like science and art, your child's **practical skills** are also assessed.



Access Arrangements

Access Arrangements are pre-examination adjustments for candidates based on evidence of need and normal way of working. Access Arrangements fall into two distinct categories: some arrangements are delegated to centres, others require prior JCQ^{CIC} awarding body approval.

Access Arrangements allow candidates/learners with special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access the assessment without changing the demands of the assessment. For example, readers, scribes and Braille question papers. In this way Awarding Bodies will comply with the duty of the Equality Act 2010 to make 'reasonable adjustments'.

All pupils with a SEN or EHCP are automatically entitled to 25% additional time to complete a formal time limited exam, together with rest breaks.

Linwood School's SENCO, teachers and the Exams Officer work closely together to identify the specific Access Arrangements each individual child needs to apply for early in the academic year. As and when it is necessary to apply for Access Arrangements parents/carers will be notified by the Exams Office. Some accreditation do not require an application for Access Arrangements and the centre (school) are able to delegate specific arrangements without permission. The nature of various accreditation such as Functional Skills and BTECs mean that Access Arrangements do not apply as they are not necessary.

Exam Conditions

All schools have to follow a set of guidelines and procedures for exams which are regulated by the Joint Council for Qualifications (www.jcq.org.uk).

The number of pupils we have sitting exams and the type of accreditation and access arrangements taken into consideration mean that we do not hold exams in a large exam hall. To avoid anxiety most assessments take place in the **learner's usual classroom**. **It is entirely possible that the learner may not be aware they are undergoing an assessment in order to avoid anxiety.**

For GCSE examinations there is a more rigorous procedure in place. However, where possible the exams are located in a familiar and routine venue, with a familiar invigilator. Due to the **learning needs** of most of our **students** GCSE exams are generally invigilated separately, each student situated in their own room with minimal distraction.

Results & certificates

All results are notified in August by first class post to the home address. This is to coincide with GCSE results day.

Certificates are usually delivered to centres from the accrediting bodies by the end of the following October.

Certificates are collated and issued in the **November** following the June exam series – regardless of awarding body or accreditation type. Current students are delivered their certificates in person. Ex students are notified by telephone that their certificates are ready and a mutually convenient time arranged for collection. Only under exceptional circumstances will the certificates be posted to students.