



# Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Extended Certificate Sound Engineering/Digital Music Production

## Preparation for September

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# 1. Welcome and course description

Welcome to the Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Extended Certificate in Digital Music Production/Sound Engineering. This handbook gives you all the information you need to make sense of the course. It tells you how the course operates, what you will be taught and how you will be assessed. The course provides an introduction to study of music technology offering learners the opportunity to specialise in Sound Engineering/Digital Music Production.



## The digital music production sector

From chart successes and download sales to live performances and recording studios, the music industry is a global industry and the UK punches well above its weight. Sales of music, concerts, publishing and related revenue contributed £5.8 billion to the UK economy, with exports of £2.9 billion in 2019. Figures also show a year-on-year rise in employment since 2012, with a reported 197,168 jobs in the music industry in 2019, before the Covid-enforced shutdown in 2020.

(Source: [UK Music, Music by Numbers 2020](#))

The course provides an introduction to study of music technology offering learners the opportunity to specialise in sound engineering/digital music production. It is designed to provide learners with a good introduction to the sector with a focus on performance/recording including musical skills development and professional practice.

## Mandatory

Two mandatory units cover the following aspects of digital music production:

- studio recording techniques
- digital audio workstation (DAW) production

You will be able to add three optional units, from a choice of four, to the mandatory content. These have been designed to support your progression to a range of employment opportunities in digital music production, and to a range of higher education courses. Optional units will introduce you to sector specialist areas of your choice, including working in particular environments, and link with relevant technical roles.

## Optional

Optional units cover areas such as:

- live sound
- remixing and reworking
- mixing and mastering techniques
- working and developing as a production team

## Why choose this size of qualification?

The Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Extended Certificate in Sound Engineering/Digital Music Production is equivalent in size to one A-level. Taken alongside other level 3 qualifications, it will prepare you for an entry-level role in the digital music production sector or a higher/degree apprenticeship. Alternatively, it will enable you to progress to a sector related degree before entering the digital music production sector at a higher level.

## What this qualification could lead to

This qualification will prepare you for direct employment in the digital music production sector, and is suitable if you wish to work in entry level roles, such as:

- junior music producer
- remixer
- junior sound designer
- music studio assistant
- assistant audio restorer/digitiser/archiver
- sound engineer

## Will the qualification lead to further learning?

There are many roles in this sector where recruitment is at graduate level. The qualification carries UCAS points and is recognised by higher education providers as contributing to meeting admission requirements to many relevant courses such as:

- BA (Hons) in music technology and production
- BA (Hons) in sound arts and design
- BA (Hons) in digital music and sound arts
- BSc (Hons) in music and sound production technology



## 2. Introduction to the course

### Course title

BTEC Level 3 National Extended Certificate in Sound Engineering/Digital Music Production

### Awarding body

Pearson / Edexcel

### Aims of the course

A BTEC National Extended Certificate is a practical, work-related course. You learn by completing projects and assignments that are based on realistic workplace situations, activities and demands. As well as learning about production techniques, equipment and technology, you will gain an insight into the world of music technology.

It is equivalent to one A-level which means when you have finished the course you can apply for further education courses and degree access (see Mr Timbers for further details), or simply have sufficient production knowledge in order to gain confidence and skills in other areas of the curriculum or within employment.

The BTEC in music technology has been developed to include a wide range of production related areas of understanding and practice, focusing on:

- education and training for music technology employees
- providing opportunities for music technology employees to achieve a nationally recognised level 3 vocationally specific qualification
- giving learners the opportunity to gain a nationally recognised vocationally specific qualification in the music technology sector to progress to higher education, vocational qualifications, degree access or employment.
- giving learners the opportunity to develop a range of skills and techniques, personal skills and attitudes essential for a successful working life

### What are the entry requirements?

All students are invited to join the BTEC, although you should discuss with Mr Timbers your suitability for the course. Minimum requirements are six GCSEs at Grade 4 or above, including maths and English, with Grade 5 in English strongly recommended and Grade 5 in music if taken. Previous experience of making or producing music is essential. We also look for:

- commitment
- enthusiasm
- hard working
- good team member
- reliable
- problem solving
- patience
- creativity
- numeracy
- confidence



### 3. The course team

#### Course leader

Mr Timbers: responsible for co-ordinating, monitoring and reviewing the programme

#### Teaching team

Mr Timbers



### 4. Your programme of study

As a full time student of Taverham High School studying BTEC level 3 music technology, you are entitled to a programme of study leading to your main qualification aim.

The course is spread over two years and is made up of six units of study. Workshops, recordings and performances will be used to put the work into a vocational context, whilst you are actively encouraged to attend extra-curricular events and visits outside of learning hours in order to experience the various aspects of the music technology sector. You will need time outside of GLH to use the studio.

If the course is studied for one year a certificate can be awarded, the equivalent of an AS level.

The programme and assessment plan (appendix 2) shows the major programme components on a two year course, and identifies assessment points and assessment board dates.

Each of the six units will be approximately 60 hours, made up of teaching and workshop time. You will make notes and use your workbook in school, and write your assignments in your own time. The course will be assessed by the collection of evidence present in your portfolio.

#### Your main course of study will include:

##### Core units

- Unit 6 – digital audio workstation (DAW) (1st year)
- Unit 2 – studio recording techniques (1st year)

##### Additional units

Students also take three additional units:

- Unit 1 – live sound (1st year)
- Unit 13 – mixing and mastering techniques (2nd year)
- Unit 18 – working and developing as a production team (2nd year)

##### Guidance/tutorial support

The course requires you to attend regular lessons and scheduled workshops.

##### Non-directed study

Most of your directed time will be spent in workshop sessions and is geared towards helping you achieve the learning outcomes of your main qualification aim. During these sessions you will be expected to conform to the rules of the music department with regard to the appropriate use of the facilities. You will also be expected to conduct your own research, maintain your workbook, read around the subject and utilise the studio and resources outside of directed time. Homework tasks/assignments will be set dependent upon the assignment brief you are undertaking.



## 5. Course assessments

### Introduction

The assessment procedures that apply to this programme of study meet the requirements of the awarding body and are subject to the provisions of the appeals procedure.

### Overview

The course is made up of five units of study, each of which are internally set and assessed. Each unit will be internally checked to ensure the moderation/marketing process is correct. One unit each year will also be externally verified to ensure the school's marking/quality assurance procedures are working correctly.



## 6. Assessment regulations

### What is assessment?

Assessment is the measurement of students' achievement against agreed and openly stated national criteria and standards.

### How will I be assessed on this course?

The teacher will assess all four of the units. This is known as internal assessment. Internally assessed units will be assessed through the submission of a portfolio of evidence; this will include performance videos, evaluations, log-books and teacher comment sheets. The completion of a unit portfolio will require you to undertake one or more assignment tasks. You will be provided with a deadline for the final submission of the unit portfolio and with other deadlines for the purposes of interim assessment. Interim assessment deadlines will require you to submit the portfolio or perform the tasks required as 'work in progress' or to submit individual assignment tasks on particular dates for review and feedback.

### What is an assignment?

An assignment is a task or series of tasks that covers all or some of the requirements of a unit of study. In music technology this generally consists of a series of workshops, digital portfolios and supporting written work.

### What is an assignment sheet?

An assignment sheet accompanies and identifies all work submitted for internal assessment. On submission of an assignment or whole portfolio you will attach the assignment sheet. When the work is returned to you the assessor will have included a feedback sheet and usually a comment sheet on your performance in workshops.

## How will my work be graded?

Your work will be assessed in terms of three grade categories. The three grade categories are Pass, Merit and Distinction.

Your work will be graded according to the grading criteria specified for the unit of study to which the work relates. Each unit will be graded separately. The assignment sheet will provide you with guidance on the assessment criteria that apply to each unit of study.

- Pass is equivalent to a grade C
- Merit is equivalent to a grade B
- Distinction is equivalent to a grade A
- Distinction\* is equivalent to a grade A\*

## Do I have to pass all units to achieve the main qualification?

Yes. The assessment system however permits compensation across units so that students are given credit for their achievement. It is possible, therefore, to be assessed on more than one unit on the same piece of work.

## How will my final qualification be graded?

To achieve an overall pass for the qualification you would normally be expected to achieve a minimum score of a pass in every unit. Your course leader will provide you with more detail of the overall grade boundaries.

## Achieving your qualification

The table below shows the **number of points scored per credit** at the unit level and grade.

	Points per credit		
	Pass	Merit	Distinction
<b>Level 3</b>	7	8	9

Learners who achieve the correct number of points within the ranges shown in the qualification grade table below will achieve the qualification merit, distinction or distinction\* grades (or combinations of these grades appropriate to the qualification).

## BTEC Level 3

Points range above pass grade	Grade	
460-499	Merit	M
500-519	Distinction	D
520 and above	Distinction*	D*

## 7. Attendance

### Timetable information

We assume your attendance will be 100%. Full attendance is essential for you to be able to fulfil all the objectives of the course.

If you fail to attend lessons regularly then due to the nature of performance you will be affecting the grade of others as well as yourself. In such circumstances the course leader will carry out an investigation and you may be asked to discontinue the course.

Music technology students are expected to attend after school performances and shows. You are expected to attend **all** classes, **all** rehearsals and to arrive on time





## 8. Progression opportunities

### Further study and qualifications

You will have many opportunities to discuss your future plans whilst on the course. Past students have gone on to post 18 education courses in music technology. Several students have been successful and attended Lincoln University to undertake audio production.

### Getting into employment

With further training or study, students may progress into music production related careers such as:

- sound for TV and film
- radio and broadcasting
- live sound engineer/technician
- entertainment industries
- recording studio engineer/technician
- sonar and ultrasound
- audio production
- instrument technician
- musical performance and composing

Music technology qualifications are recognised by any employer where the position applied for deals with any aspect of music or audio. Music technology qualifications indicate a creative, technical mind, excellent listening skills and the ability to work and learn independently.

## 9. Recommended reading

There is no required text book for the course, but reading around the subject will greatly increase your chances of a distinction. There are many excellent music technology books in the department. Here is a list of additional sources:

*Sound on Sound* magazine

Propellerheads website: <https://www.propellerheads.com/>

Steinberg website: <https://www.steinberg.net/en/home.html>

*Music Technology* magazine – subscription in the library

## Mr Timbers' recommended reading list

The following books will supplement content of the course. The books in **bold** are highly recommended for you to read/purchase.

**Bartlett B and Bartlett J – *Practical Recording Techniques* (Focal Press, 2008) ISBN 978-0240811444**

Whitaker J & Benson B – *Standard Handbook of Audio and Radio Engineering* (McGraw-Hill Education, 2001) ISBN 978-0070067172

Crick T – *Recording Tips for Engineers, 2nd Edition* (Focal, 2005) ISBN 978-0240519746

Eagle J – *The Microphone Book: From Mono to Stereo to Surround, A Guide to Microphone Design and Application* (Focal Press, 2005) ISBN 978-0240519616

Gibson B – *Sound Advice on Microphone Techniques* (Music Sales, 2003) ISBN 978-1931140270

Gibson B – *Ultimate Live Sound Operator's Handbook* (Hal Leonard, 2007) ISBN 978-1423419716

**Gomel K – *Cubase 5 Tips and Tricks* (PC Publishing, 2009) ISBN 978-1906005139**

Guerin R – *Inside the Recording Studio* (Course Technology, 2004) ISBN 978-1592001316

Huber D and Runstein R – *Modern Recording Techniques* (Focal Press, 2005) ISBN 978-0240803081

Mansfield R – *Studio Basics: What You Should Know Before Going into the Recording Studio* (Billboard Books, US, 1998) ISBN 978-0823084883

Nisbett A – *The Sound Studio* (Focal, 2003) ISBN 978-0240519111

Oswinski B – *The Mixing Engineers' Handbook* (Course Technology, 2006) ISBN 978-1598632514

Rumsey F and McCormick T – *Sound & Recording* (Focal, 1997) ISBN 978-0240519968

The following books by Paul White form part of his basic series. The books are affordable pocket size books with useful guidance (some available in the school library).

**White P and Rocha M – *Basic Microphones* (SMT Books, 2002) ISBN 978-1860742651**

**White P – *Basic Live Sound* (Sanctuary Publishing, 2000) ISBN 978-1860742712**

**White P – *Basic Mixing Techniques* (SMT Books, 2002) ISBN 978-1860742835**

**White P – *Basic Multitracking* (SMT Books, 2002) ISBN 978-1860742644**

**White P – *Studio Recording Basics A (Basic Mixing Techniques, Effects & Processors, Multitracking & Mixers)* (Sanctuary, 2003) ISBN 978-1860744730**

## 10. Costs

The school meets most materials costs. However, you must be prepared to cover some costs including:

- writing materials such as paper, ring binders, files, plastic pockets, notebook etc.
- a good set of headphones (Seinnheiser, Technics) if you do not wish to use the school headphones
- a USB portable hard drive – on loan from the school
- a workbook (blank A4)

If eligible for the post 16 bursary, materials for the course can be ordered by the school on your behalf via bursary funding. Please ask in the sixth form office for details.

## 11. BTEC marking criteria

When submitting coursework and assignments it is essential you understand the marking criteria in order to ensure that you cover every area and maximise your chance of achieving the top grades.

Having an understanding of the main key words used within the BTEC course will allow you to develop more focused responses, thus increasing your ability to answer correctly and gain marks.



<b>DEFINE</b>	to record short pieces of information, usually written or printed with a single item on each line
<b>DESCRIBE</b>	to say or write what someone or something is like
<b>IDENTIFY</b>	to recognize someone or something and say or prove who or what they are
<b><i>To achieve merit or distinction grades you need to be able to explain what you have listed or identified, or make comparisons between two things you have identified.</i></b>	
<b>EXPLAIN</b>	to make something clear or easy to understand by describing or giving information about it
<b>COMPARE</b>	to examine or look for the difference between two or more things
<b><i>To achieve a distinction grade you need to be able to analyse and evaluate</i></b>	
<b>ANALYSE</b>	to study or examine something in detail, in order to discover more about it
<b>EVALUATE</b>	to judge or calculate the quality, importance, amount or value of something
<b>JUSTIFY</b>	to give or to be a good reason for

## 12. Plagiarism

It is also important you know how to reference to ensure that you do not plagiarise by copying another student's or author's work and claiming that it is your own original work. Some examples of plagiarism are:

- copying and pasting from a website
- copying directly from the text book
- copying another student's work in your class
- using work from students who have previously completed the course

### Sanctions for plagiarism

- failure of the assignment – any student you have copied from will also receive a fail
- detention and parents contacted (letter/meeting)
- level 1 – cause for concern

### How to reference

#### Books

Author Surname, Initial (Year) ***TITLE*** publisher, page

Commons, R., Swales, M., Wood, I., Barker, R., Rizzo, G. & Barsby, D., (2010) BTEC Level 2 Firsts in Sport, Folens

Beashel, P., Taylor, J., (1992). Sport examined 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Nelson

#### Websites

Full website address

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plagiarism>

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport1/hi/tennis/rules\\_and\\_equipment/default.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport1/hi/tennis/rules_and_equipment/default.stm)

## 13. Preparation for September

**Please note your assignment must be presented in a digital format as it will be required for the course. Please ensure it is available at your first class in September.**

Despite developments in computer software, the elements required to produce a studio recording remain little changed. There is a huge range of equipment available so choosing which equipment to use depends on being able to match the specification of the equipment to the sonic characteristics of the sound source to be captured.

You have been asked to produce an article detailing all the components required for someone to build a home studio. You must analyze the specification of the range of equipment:

- microphones
- mixing desks
- recording devices
- monitoring

Under each of the following headings you need to cover and include information about the following in your article. Include any pictures eg polar patterns for microphones.

### ***Microphones***

Polar patterns; frequency response; sensitivity; type of microphones e.g. dynamic, condenser, ribbon, Boundary

### ***Mixing desks***

Routing; channels; busses; auxiliaries; groups; inputs; outputs; facilities eg EQ, monitoring

### ***Recording devices***

Tracks; inputs; outputs; format e.g. standalone, computer-based digital audio workstation, audio interface, specification eg protocol, bit depth, sample rate, noise figures

### ***Monitoring***

Nearfield, midfield, full range, frequency response, two-way, three-way, passive, active, power rating

Please acknowledge your sources when completing this work, as plagiarism is not acceptable. See marking criteria and referencing sheet.