

What's next for qualifications? Reform and Digital Credentials

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DCL1 – public V1.0 6 July 2026

Welcome and Thank You!

Agenda

01 Introduction

02 General Qualification
reform

03 Vocational Qualification
reform

04 Digital Credentials

05 Q&A

02

GQ and VQ reform

Timing

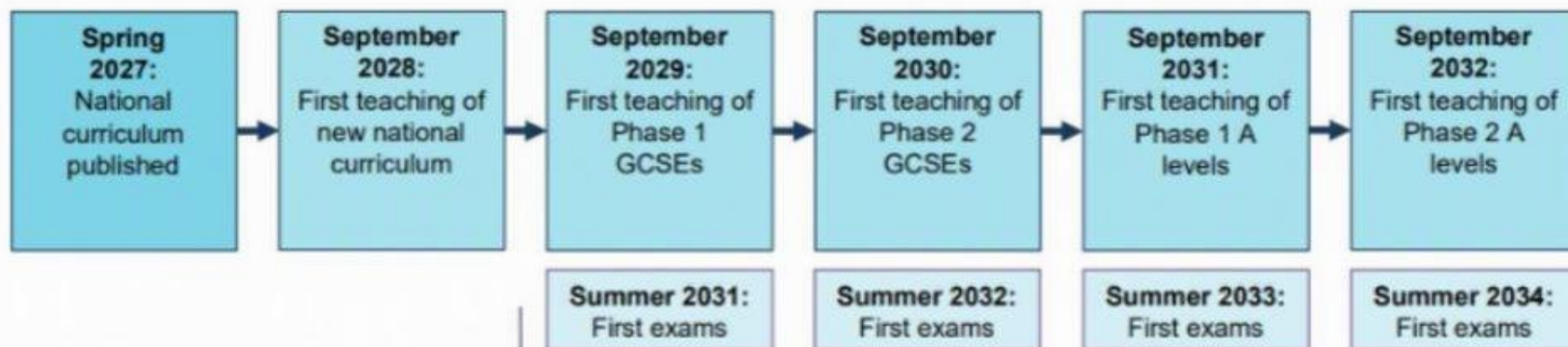
Overview:

The new curriculum will be implemented in full, for first teaching from September 2028. Government will aim to publish the final revised national curriculum by spring 2027 – giving schools four terms to prepare for the changes.

Outlook by suite:

- V-Levels first teach 2027
- National curriculum 2028
- GCSEs – phased, some for first teach 2029 and rest for first teach 2030
- Corresponding AS and A levels – phased, some for first teaching in 2031 and rest for first teach 2032

Figure 3: Implementation timelines





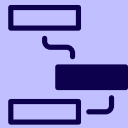
Post-16 Level 3 and below pathways: government responses

Key documents published



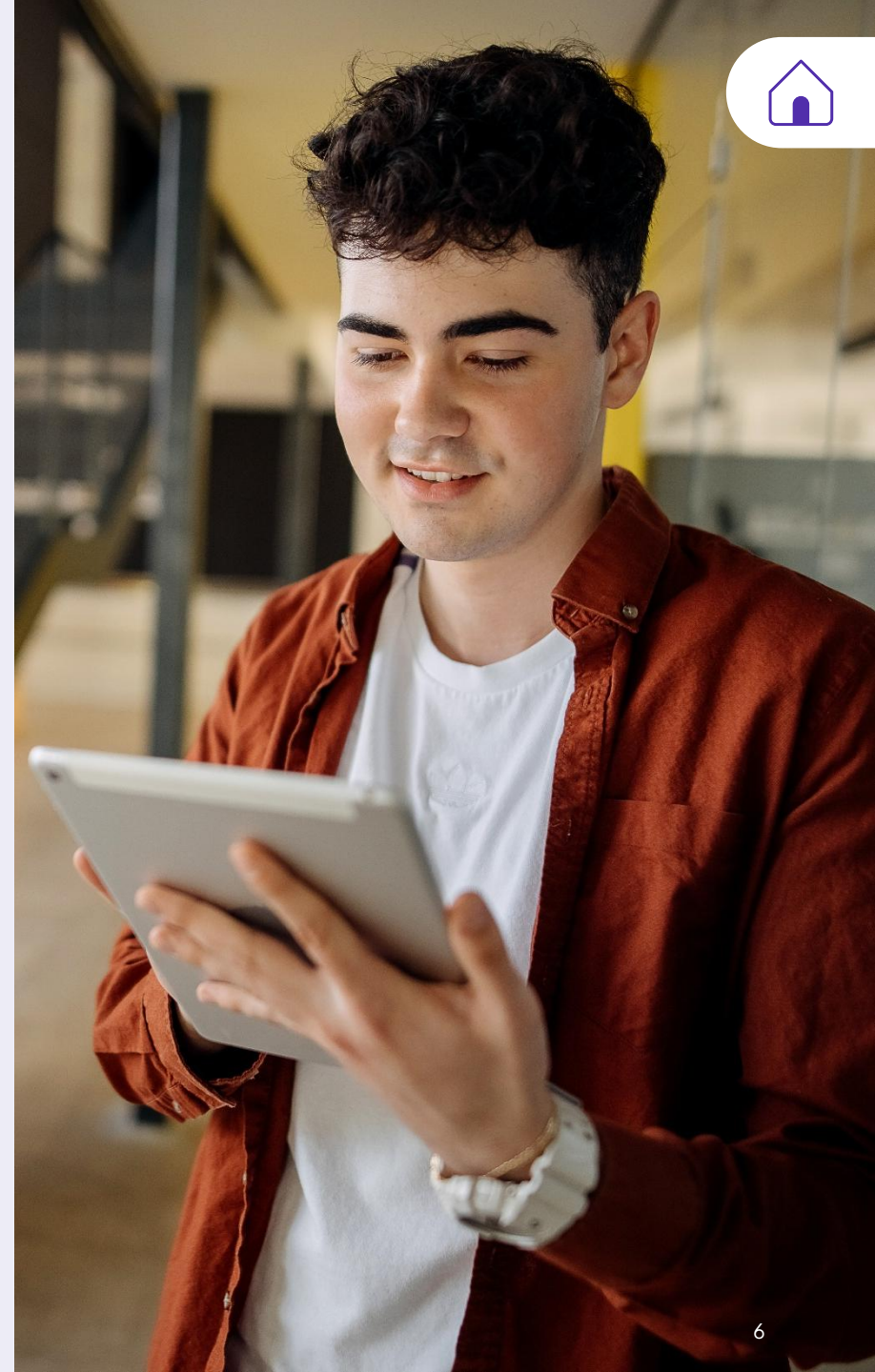
List of qualifications due to have funding removed from August 2027

Removal of additional qualifications approved for public funding 2027 tranche 1



Implementation plan

This guide relates to reform and impact on qualifications and funding in **England only**.





Future 16 to 19 Level 3 and Level 2 landscape summary

LEVEL 3 OR LEVEL 2 APPRENTICESHIPS (WORK-BASED)	LEVEL 2	Foundation Certificates – Further Study Pathway - For students progressing onto further study on a level 3 pathway after one additional year at level 2. - Strong focus on English and Maths. - Sat over 1 year. 240–300 GLH - Foundation Certificates focus on applied and practical learning.	Occupational Certificates – Occupational Pathway - For students who want to enter a particular level 2 occupation and need to develop their technical knowledge and skills. - Tailored to support progression to skilled employment. - Sat over 2 years – 540–720 GLH - Strong focus on English and Maths. - Broad introductory occupation specific content.	AS/A Levels
	LEVEL 3	V Levels - Provide broad, vocational qualifications for students who wish to explore a range of routes. 360 GLH, to be studied alongside other qualifications such as other V Levels, A Levels or an English or maths retake. - Blend applied learning with practical assessment. - Progression to higher education or an apprenticeship.	T Levels - Classroom-based technical route for students who want to pursue a chosen career area. 1080 GLH (for new T Levels onwards), equivalent to three A Levels. - Based on occupational standards. - Includes a minimum 315 hours (45-day) industry placement. - Combine route-specific core content with a specialist component. - Progression to related higher education, apprenticeships, or skilled employment.	

Source: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/69aefbedbde9c3f213c89a2e/Post-16_level_3_and_below_pathways_government_consultation_response.pdf

First teach for qualification routes



Academic year 2027/28 (Tranche 1)

Occupational Certificates

- Catering and Hospitality
- Education and Early Years

Foundation Certificates

- Digital Systems and Data
- Education and Early Years

V Levels

- Digital Systems and Data
- Education
- Accounting and Finance



Academic year 2028/29 (Tranche 2)

Occupational certificates

- Business and Finance
- Health and Care Services
- Healthcare and Science
- Construction (On-site)
- Construction (Finishing Trades)
- Engineering and Manufacturing
- Sports and Leisure

Foundation certificates

- Business, Administration and Law
- Health and Care Services
- Construction and the Built Environment
- Engineering and Manufacturing
- Science
- Sport, Fitness and Exercise Science

V Levels

- Applied Research and Technology (NEW – Sector area TBC)
- Construction Design
- Engineering Design
- Health
- Social Care
- Healthcare and Clinical Technologies (NEW – Sector area TBC)
- Legal Services
- Leisure, Exercise and Sport
- Management, Procurement and Supply Chains
- Marketing and Retail

T Levels

- Social Care
- Sport



Academic year 2029/30 (Tranche 3)

Occupational Certificates

- Agriculture, Environmental and Animal Care
- Hair and Beauty
- Horticulture and Floristry

Foundation Certificates

- Agriculture, Land Management and Animal Care
- Hair, Beauty and Aesthetics
- Hospitality and Catering
- Protective Services

V Levels

- Agriculture and Land Management
- Animal Care and Management
- Protective Services

T Levels

- Catering and Hospitality
- Expansion of Agriculture, Environment and Animal Care
- Expansion of Creative and Design
- Hair and Beauty
- Protective Services



Academic year 2030/31 (Tranche 4)

Occupational Certificates

- Creative and Design – CAD Technician (2D Design)

Foundation Certificates

- Creative, Media and Design
- Performing Arts
- Travel and Tourism

V Levels

- Art and Performing Arts
- Creative, Media and Design
- Travel and Tourism

T Levels

- Art and Performing Arts
- Travel and Tourism



Centre communications and briefings



[Dedicated post-16 reform page](#)

Regular [sector-specific briefings and updates](#)

[Subject advisor](#) guidance and support

Funding guidance

[Dedicated funding guides](#)

Support with transferring learners to funded qualifications, where appropriate

Take a look at our [Support guide](#)



Introduction Digital Credentials

Pearson Digital Credentials

We're introducing digital credentials for vocational qualifications

What are digital credentials

Digital credentials are official, secure digital records of student achievement.

Students can store them online and share them with employers, universities, or anyone who needs to confirm their results.

They can also display their digital credentials on their online professional profile or CV.

What's changing and what isn't?

Digital credentials change how achievements are recognised, accessed and shared, but they don't change what students need to achieve or how they achieve.

This means that there is no change to assessment, grading or qualification standards.

Paper certificates will continued to be issued as normal.

What happens on results day?

If you've provided your students email address then they'll receive their digital credential on results day.

They'll receive their paper certificate at the usual time.

For all vocational qualifications apart from tech award and T level.

What's next?

We have been communication with centre's that are in scope to let you know when you can begin sharing your student email addresses with us in Edexcel Online.

We have shared student and parent facing guides, and content to help you explain digital credentials. And ongoing support from us ahead of results day.

Digital Credentials Overview

What are Digital Credentials?

- A digital credential **will recognise a learner's achievement of the qualification and the core skills and knowledge** they have developed.
- It is a secure way to verify online a learner's achievement and skills.
- It will be **issued on "results day"** when the learner achieves the qualification (as per the eligibility rules in the specification following the centre's claim), **where the centre has shared the student's contact details with us.**
- The digital credential will be issued **directly to students via the Credly platform.**

Digital Credential Format

- The digital credential will take the form of: a **digital badge** on Credly, with a verifiable **Digital Certificate, Notification of Performance (NoP)** attached and skills.
- The digital certificate and NoP will **replicate the paper versions** with key information to ensure compliance with regulatory conditions, as appropriate.
- Every digital certificate and NoP will include a distinct **QR code** for immediate verification, allowing employers and other recipients to validate the credentials while preserving the security and authenticity of the certificate. **Also facility to authenticate via the Credly platform.**

Benefits of Digital Credentials

01

Enhanced security: Protected with encryption to help prevent tampering or misuse; supporting trust, compliance, and peace of mind.

02

Verifiable in real-time: Can confirm the authenticity and validity of a digital certificate instantly, thus saving time and resources; reducing delays to accepting/hiring recipients.

03

Convenient and accessible: stored securely in the cloud, so there's no risk of losing or damaging it.

04

Easy to share: Can be effortlessly shared through the Credly platform, email, social media, messaging, and other digital channels.

05

Easy and fast issuance: Easier to issue than paper/physical certification. Reduced costs, faster delivery and reduced administration for centre.

06

Transparency and accountability: Provides transparency in terms of the criteria required to earn the credential. Greater accountability where earners and issuers have a shared understanding of what each credential represents.

07

Recognise specific skills and achievements: helping earners highlight their strengths and allowing employers to gain a clearer understanding of qualifications—essential for a skills-focused future. Necessary for the skills-based future.

08

Easy to update and make amendments: Automated updated and amendments to correct errors and any post results service changes.

Methods of Receiving and Viewing Digital Credentials

Pearson Digital Credentials

Credential Format

01

All learners meeting ***at least the Pass eligibility*** requirements for a qualification are to be awarded a digital credential on results day that recognises their achievement.

02

The digital credential is **issued upon the awarding of the qualification** and not as units are achieved overtime.

03

The digital credential will **take the form of a digital badge** relevant for the qualification with a **verifiable digital certificate** embedded as evidence (as well as a notification of performance where relevant)

The digital certificate will **replicate the paper versions**.

Learner Experience via Desktop

Email Notification of Digital Credential:

[sandbox] Sara! You just earned a badge from Pearson BTEC

Pearson BTEC via Credly <admin@credly.com>
To: Sara Sandhu

Retention Policy: Pearson-Default Email-2 Years-Policy (2 years) Expires on: 18/02/2027
Follow up: Start by 18 February 2025. Due by 18 February 2025.
If there are problems with how this message is displayed, click here to view it in a web browser.

SANDBOX ENVIRONMENT

Pearson BTEC

Congratulations!

Sara, you just earned a badge from Pearson BTEC



BTEC Level 3 National Diploma in Business - TEST 2
Issuer: Pearson BTEC

[View Details](#)

or view details by clicking:
<https://sandbox.credly.com/go/HIYC5Xk9b8B8hpVTBk1mbw>

You've told us to always accept badges from Pearson BTEC

You can use the following URL to manage your profile:
<https://sandbox.credly.com/earner/settings>

Wondering what happens when you accept a badge?

[Learn more.](#)

View in Credly:

Pearson

BTEC LEVEL 3 NATIONAL EXTENDED CERTIFICATE

Performing Arts Practice

Musical Theatre 1080-GLH

BTEC Level 3 National Extended Diploma (1080) RQF In Performing Arts Practice (Musical Theatre)

Issued by [Pearson BTEC](#)

Earners of this badge have demonstrated applied knowledge and skills essential to the Health and Social Care sector and related transferable skills, enabling them to progress to higher education as a route to graduate level employment, apprenticeships or directly into relevant roles. They have completed a combination of mandatory and optional units. Mandatory units include: Developing skills and techniques, Investigating Practitioners work and Final live performance.

[Learn more](#)

Certification

Skills

Collaborative Communication Creativity Critical Thinking Ensemble

Performance creation Performance Techniques Physical Performance Problem Solving

Rehearsal Techniques Vocals Writing

Earning Criteria

- Successfully met the requirements for a Pass, Merit or Distinction grade for the qualification.
- Completed a study programme of 1080 Guided Learning Hours (GLH) as required by the qualification specification.

Evidence

- [Digital Certificate](#)
Your digital certificate is now available and attached here.
- [Notification of Performance](#)
Your Notification of Performance is now available. This document provides a detailed breakdown of your results, including each unit you completed and the grade achieved.

Pearson

 **Valid Certificate**

Name: xxxxxxxxxxxxxx
Centre Name: xxxxxxxxxxxxxx
Grade Achieved: xxxxxxxxxxxxxx
Date Issued: xxxxxxxxxxxxxx
Qualification Title xxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Scanned QR Code

Pearson BTEC

Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Extended Diploma

in BUSINESS

WITH THE TRIPLE GRADE DISTINCTION MERIT is awarded to

who has completed an approved programme as

AWARDED: JUNE 2024

THIS DOCUMENT CONSISTS OF MORE THAN ONE PAGE

ofqual REGULATED
regionalofqual.gov.uk

Verify this certificate

Scan the QR code to confirm the authenticity of this certificate and verify the achievement. This digital verification ensures that the qualification and student details are legitimate and issued by Pearson.

For additional verification, visit www.pearson.com/credentials/verification and enter the unique QR code ID

Notification of Performance

PEARSON BTEC LEVEL 3 NATIONAL EXTENDED DIPLOMA (1080) RQF

UNIT REF	UNIT	VALUE	LEVEL	GRADE
1080/1/1	Developing skills and techniques	100	1	PASS
1080/1/2	Investigating Practitioners work	100	1	PASS
1080/1/3	Final live performance	100	1	PASS
1080/1/4	Developing skills and techniques	100	1	PASS
1080/1/5	Investigating Practitioners work	100	1	PASS
1080/1/6	Final live performance	100	1	PASS
1080/1/7	Developing skills and techniques	100	1	PASS
1080/1/8	Investigating Practitioners work	100	1	PASS
1080/1/9	Final live performance	100	1	PASS
1080/1/10	Developing skills and techniques	100	1	PASS
1080/1/11	Investigating Practitioners work	100	1	PASS
1080/1/12	Final live performance	100	1	PASS

Verify this certificate

Scan the QR code to confirm the authenticity of this certificate and verify the achievement. This digital verification ensures that the qualification and student details are legitimate and issued by Pearson.

For additional verification, visit www.pearson.com/credentials/verification and enter the unique QR code ID

ZXCVBNN

Attached .pdf certificate & NoP including the QR code

Examples of Digital Certificate and Notification of Performance



Pearson
BTEC Level 3
National Foundation Diploma

in in BUSINESS
WITH GRADE Pass
is awarded to
TEST STUDENT TWO
who has completed an approved programme at
CAPITAL CITY COLLEGE GROUP
AWARDED : 2023-07-01

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10332A : DJHB6 : R988176:002345:06 : 10 : 01 : ISSUED 2025-06-12 : QN: 60171613



ofqual
REGULATED
register.ofqual.gov.uk



City & Guilds
REGULATED
Recognised awarding body



GCE
Regulation



Cath Jadhav
Responsible Officer
Pearson Education Ltd



Click or Scan QR
code to verify result



Notification of
Performance

R988176 TEST STUDENT TWO
PEARSON BTEC LEVEL 3 NATIONAL FOUNDATION DIPLOMA (510) RQF
in BUSINESS
The learner has been awarded the following credit for achieving the learning outcomes
of the unit(s) listed

UNIT REF	TITLE	CREDIT VALUE AT LEVEL	GRADE
CAPITAL CITY COLLEGE GROUP			
M5074288	DEVELOPING A MARKETING CAMPAIGN	90.00	3 Pass
T5074289	PERSONAL AND BUSINESS FINANCE	120.00	3 Pass

THE LEARNER HAS QUALIFIED FOR THE ABOVE AWARD WITH
GRADE Pass IN 2023-07-01
10332A : DJHB6 : 06 : 10 : 01 : ISSUED 2025-06-12 : QN: 60171613



Cath Jadhav
Responsible Officer
Pearson Education Ltd



Click or Scan QR
code to verify result

Instant Verification with QR Code

Quick & Secure Verification:

Each digital certificate and Notification of Performance (NoP) includes a QR code for instant verification. Scanning confirms whether the qualification is “Valid” or “Invalid”, and displays key details such as:

- Student name,
- Qualification title,
- Date of issuance,
- Centre Name,
- Grade achieved

If a post-results service or other processes updates a grade, the original QR code will show “Invalid”, and a new certificate will be issued.

Secure & Shareable:

This feature offers instant verification, reducing the risk of fraud while ensuring transparency for both students and third-party verifiers.

Students have multiple ways to share their digital certificate, making it easier to showcase their achievements via:

- URL link to the Credly-hosted certificate
- Send certificates via email directly through the Credly platform
- Download a PDF version of the certificate for attachment or upload across platforms or applications.



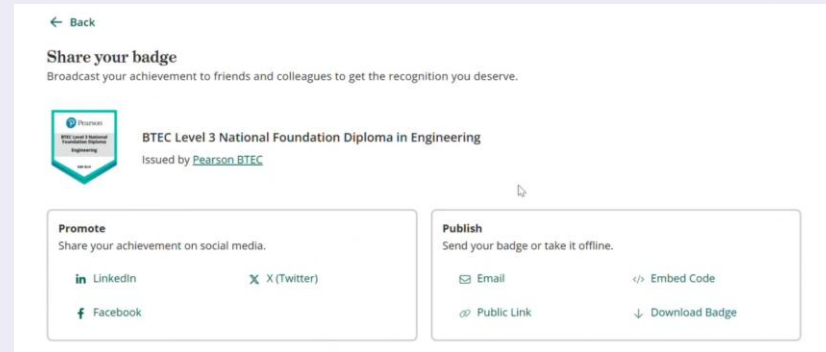
Digital Credentials Verification

Pearson Digital Credentials

Digital Credentials Verification

1 Learner Shares

Learner shares their badge via Credly (email, link, socials (Twitter, X, LinkedIn))



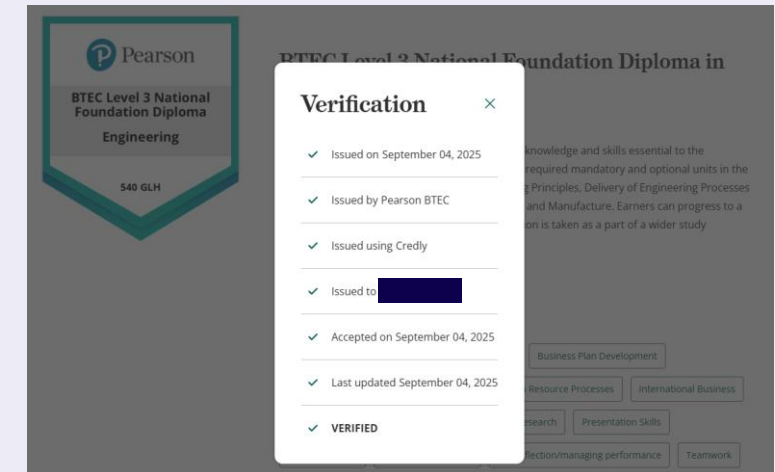
2 Verifier Receives

Email received (in this example), for verification purpose, comes from our Pearson Credly domain. Click the link & select Verify

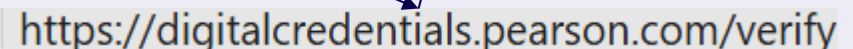
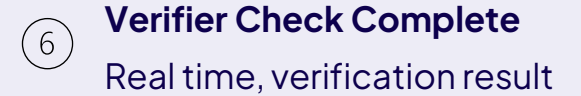
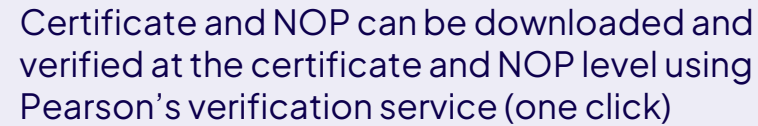


3 Verification Check Complete

Real time, verification result



Verifier accesses the Certificate and Notification of performance embedded within the badge which the learner shared



Our release plan for Summer 2026

Pearson Digital Credntials

Plan for Summer 2026

Independent Training Providers Roll-Out

Go live from 1st July 2026

- **Commencing with ~90 customers**
- Spanning across **11** different qualification types – BTEC Customised, Firsts, HNs, Level 2 Skills, Level 2 Technicals, Nationals, Specialists, WorksSkills, ESOL, Functional Skills and NVQ's
- Approx. **5,000** learners within the ITP roll-out

All UK Centres

Go live from 13th Aug 2026

- **Wide inclusion of customers with around ~5,000 involved**
- Includes England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales
- Applies to FE colleges, HEI's, private colleges and schools excluding International and Skills Providers (Independent Training Providers)
- **Spanning ~1,000** qualifications. Excluding T Levels, Apprenticeships and Tech Awards
- Approx. **~700,000** learners could be involved

X2 International Pilots – VQ & GQ

Two small pilots looking at digital credentials internationally.

- ~20 customers included, covering ~2000 learners
- International VQ pilot has launched with a small number of qualifications
- International GQ pilot will launch from 13th August (covering both International GCSEs and International A Levels)

- There is **no change** to assessment, awarding or certification standards.
- **Digital credentials are issued only after all standard certification checks are complete**
- **There is no earlier release of results or certificates.**
- **Students will still receive paper certificates this year**

Difference between the DfE App and Digital Credentials

Department for Education App

- Introduction from Summer 2026.
- A digital record of GCSE and equivalent VTQ results.
- All Year 11 students, where schools & Awarding Organisations have supplied information.
- Purpose of DfE app to support enrolment at sixth form etc, & reduce reliance on paper.
- Released 11am on GCSE and L1/2 VTQ results day in August.
- Following post results services/appeals, will update once AOs transferred the data.
- Data source: Personal Learner Record (PLR).

Schools and teachers – issue education records

Pearson Digital Credentials

- Introduction largely from Spring-Summer 2026, depending on qualification & centre type.
- Primarily Pearson VTQ digital certificates. Information showcases wider range of skills.
- Students aged 16 plus, taking an in scope Pearson qualification.
- Purpose to share with prospective employers and recruiting institutions (when self-declaring results). No longer need to wait for paper certificates in Oct.
- Main release: 8am on student results days in August.
- Live record of results on Pearson systems.

Copyright 2025 Pearson. All rights reserved.

9:41   

 Department for Education 

Your education record

This information comes from the Department for Education.

Name:
A Name

Unique Learner Number (ULN):
1234567890

▶ [What is your ULN?](#)

Sex:
Sex

Date of birth:
Day Month Year

Address:
A street
A town
A postcode

Qualifications:

Subject	Grade
▶ GCSE in Physics	4
▶ GCSE in Mathematics	5
▶ BTEC in Forestry	P
▶ GCSE in Performing Arts	D
▶ GCSE in Art and Design	6
▶ GCSE in English Literature	3
▶ GCSE in French	3
▶ GCSE in History	4

Schools attended:
School (TERM YEAR- TERM YEAR)

Financial support needs:
Financial support

Learning support needs:
Learning support

Digital Credentials supporting articles & FAQs



Reference

URL Link

Main Support Page

[Digital Credentials Support](#)

How Credentials are issued

[Digital Credential Overview & Issuing Guide \(Centres\)](#)

Self Service Guides for Centre to use for comms to Students

[Digital Credentials Communications Guide \(Centres\)](#)

How to access Digital Credentials

[Getting & Sharing your Digital Credential \(Learners\)](#)

FAQs for Learners

[Digital Credentials FAQs \(Learners\)](#)

FAQs for Centres

[Digital Credentials for Vocational Qualifications: FAQs](#)

How to upload email addresses into EOL

[Digital Credentials Learner Email Address Bulk Upload / Update Guide](#)



**Thank you for
joining us**