

Programme Specification

Please note: This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if he/she passes the programme. More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each unit can be found in the programme handbook. The accuracy of the information contained in this specification is reviewed annually by Activate Learning and may be checked by Pearson as the awarding body.

Higher National Diploma (HTQ) in Digital Technologies

Awarding Institution/Body	Pearson
Teaching Institution	Activate Learning
Faculty responsible for management of the programme	Online
Teaching site	Reading College and University Centre
Mode of Delivery	Full time – on-campus
Final award	HND
Programme	Digital Technologies
UCAS Code	
Credits/ECTS Value	120 (60 ECTS)
Study level (FHEQ)	5
Date of creation/revision (for version control)	September 2023 (Version 1)
Intended start date of delivery	September 2025

1. Educational aims of the programme

The Higher National Diploma in Digital Technologies (Level 5) develops students underpinning knowledge of the subject and broadens their understanding of a range of digital technology specialist functions. There are 6 (six) specialist pathways available to develop students' skills and knowledge of specialist areas enabling them to enter employment with the qualities necessary for job roles that require some personal responsibility.

Students will gain a wide range of knowledge tied to practical skills gained through research, independent study, directed study and workplace scenarios. Students are involved in vocational activities that help them to develop vocational behaviours (the attitudes and approaches required for a competence) and transferable skills. Transferable skills are those such as communication, teamwork, research and analysis, which are highly valued in higher education and the workplace.

After studying a Level 5 Higher National Diploma in Digital Technologies students will have sound knowledge of the concepts of digital technology. They will be competent in a range of subject-specific skills (depending on the specialist pathway chosen) as well as general skills and qualities relevant to key areas of digital-technology-related business.

The qualification also aims to widen access and participation in higher education and enhance the career prospects of those who undertake it.

2. Programme Learning Outcomes

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, practical and transferable skills and other attributes.

The aims of the programme are:

- to develop students' leadership and management skills, knowledge and understanding to achieve high performance in the business environment;
- to develop students with enquiring minds, who have the abilities and confidence to lead and manage within different business functions, be able to respond to change and tackle a range of complex business situations;
- to provide insight into business operations and the opportunities and challenges presented by a global marketplace so that students can create and deliver operational plans that achieve goals and objectives;
- to develop students' understanding of the major impacts that digital technologies have upon the business environment, data security and management, and how to effectively use technology in an organisation;
- to provide the core skills required for a range of careers in leadership and management, including operations management, talent management, marketing, and sales;
- to develop student behaviours that are inclusive, agile and professional, to enable students to strive for achievement in all aspects of work and demonstrate resilience and accountability;
- to offer a balance between employability skills, behaviours and knowledge essential for students with employment or academic ambitions;
- to equip students with knowledge and understanding of organisational values, culturally diverse organisations, cross-cultural issues, diversity and values.

Progression

Students who successfully achieve 120 credits on the HND will be eligible to progress to a BSc (Hons) degree (subject to meeting entry requirements) as the Level 5 Higher National Diploma is recognised by higher education providers as meeting admission requirements to many relevant digital technology courses, for example:

- BSc (Hons) in Artificial Intelligence
- BSc (Hons) in Business Analytics
- BSc (Hons) in Computer Science
- BSc (Hons) in Cyber Security
- BSc (Hons) in Data Science and Analytics
- BSc (Hons) in Network Engineering
- BA (Hons) in Social Media Management
- BSc (Hons) in Software Engineering.

There are also a range of career opportunities including but not limited to Network Engineer, Data/Business Analyst and Software Tester/Developer

Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy

The learning and teaching strategy has been designed to ensure that students acquire the knowledge and understanding, skills and attributes essential for learners to be successful on the programme.

The programme will be delivered at Activate Learning's Reading College and University Centre Campus in the dedicated South-Central Institute of Technology suite, allowing students to adapt their learning to the approach that best suits their circumstances and learning needs.

All students are also provided with the programmes resources via the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), known as Activate Learning On-line (ALO). This system also facilitates the running of online lessons, seminars and tutorial and is a key tool in the delivery of all our courses. The underpinning pedagogy of the programme allows students to experience tutor led teaching over the programme while also developing their ability to control their own learning and study. Units are delivered via interactive sessions with mentored independent study. We expect students to experience a mix of these models during their time on the programme.

The following learning and teaching interventions have been designed to enable students to achieve the learning outcomes:

Learning intervention	Content and Learning outcomes	Mode of experience
Lectures	These are the most common techniques used by tutors. They offer an opportunity to engage with a large number of students, where the focus is on sharing knowledge through the use of presentations. They are used to provide an introduction to each topic area, contextualising students' prereading and drawing out interesting points of academic interest in a practical, business context.	These will be experienced live, with the facility to ask questions.
Seminars	These provide a forum for students to explore practice techniques and explore and apply theory to problems and case studies, developing their skills and deepening their knowledge in the process. They are often premised upon the flipped classroom approach, with students expected to have reviewed the lecture, done the reading, and prepared exercises in advance.	These are small group sessions timetabled through ALO to discuss the unit topics
Tutorial /Feedback sessions	These provide an opportunity for students to develop their individual learning through individual or small group contact with their lecturer. These sessions provide the opportunity for students to clarify issues arising from their reading / any of the above activities, as well as to seek guidance on how to develop and improve their skills. There is no formal teaching structure for these sessions. Students might use these to i) revisit topics covered in lectures, seminars or their own individual study	Students can book time during staff 'Office hours' using the calendar on ALO. These give students the opportunity to have individual time to discuss their progress and address any academic questions. They can choose to attend individually or in small groups depending on the topic under discussion

	ii) ii) develop their understanding of topics covered in lectures and seminars iii) iii) obtain formative feedback on work or coursework assessments.	
Workshops	These provide a forum for students to apply the knowledge and skills that they have developed in the context of practical sessions. External speakers will also contribute to workshops. The focus here is on the development of general transferable skills	These will be live on-campus supported by appropriate technology.
One-to-one support	These provide the opportunity for students to discuss wider issues related to their learning. As such, there is both a knowledge, skills and welfare component to this support, albeit tailored to the specific needs of the individual students. These sessions are also available for specific HE study support	Students will have open access to their module tutor for advice by a range of communication methods (face to face, telephone, email, chat etc.). Again, these can be booked via the ALO calendar
Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). Activate learning Online (ALO)	Our VLE known as ALO is invaluable. It is more than a repository for taught material such as presentation slides or handouts. Further reading could also be located on a ALO, along with a copy of the programme documents, such as the handbook and assessment timetable	ALO is used as the conduit for effective teaching and learning. All delivery is via the VLE and all formative and summative assessment is undertaken via ALO

Assessment Strategy

A variety of modes of assessment are used on the programme. These are designed to be the most appropriate assessment methods for each of the units in question in terms of their learning outcomes. Assessments are designed to replicate the kind of activity students would be expected to undertake in the workplace wherever possible.

The following tools are therefore employed:

- Written assignments;
- Individual presentations
- Group presentations;
- Group assessments
- Peer assessment;
- Portfolio assessment (including learning logs);

This multi-dimensional approach has the benefit that as in work, students have the opportunity to develop and demonstrate their knowledge and skills in a variety of different ways. Also, students' written, oral and online communication skills will be tested along with their capacity to work in a team and individually to set deadlines.

Feedback

Students will have the opportunity to receive formative feedback, typically as part of the academic feedback sessions during the term. During the sessions feedback will be provided in writing and orally. Draft presentations and assignments are also scheduled for

which feedback is provided in advance of the summative assessment. Students will receive feedback on summative assessment within 15 working days of their submission deadline.

The Virtual Learning Environment

Students are supported by a wide range of learning resources made available via the Virtual Learning Environment (Activate Learning Online, ALO) enabling them to study wherever and whenever they want, on their laptop, tablet or smartphone.

Through Activate Learning Online (ALO) students can access a variety of high-quality study materials designed to support their learning. These include all essential reading including textbooks, articles and multimedia content such as videos. In addition:

- Recommended reading is available in electronic format which can be read online or downloaded on to student devices for offline reading.
- All lectures are recorded and available online so that students can watch them on their laptops, tablets or smartphones, pause and review subject matter that they find difficult to understand and watch them again as revision.
- Interactive topic reviews are provided to help students self-assess their understanding of a subject either at the start or end of a topic in order to help embed learning.
- Discussion forums for online discussion and debate are provided.

In addition to learning resources ALO also provides students with a gateway to a wide range of other resources to help them with their studies including news and announcements, timetables, support and guidance.

In addition to the provision of all essential reading in electronic format students also have access to a wide range of online library resources via ALO provided at the start of the programme.

Library resources include full access to an online library that contains access to academic books and journals across a range of business -related subjects, disciplines and databases.

Students would also have access to HN Global.

Programme Structure and Requirements, Levels, Units and Credits

Introduction to the programme

The programme is designed around enhancing the employability of students and their long-term career prospects. This includes developing attributes in students such as resilience and an appreciation of cultural diversity, drawing Activate Learning's Educational Gain model, and its impact on commercial entities and decision-making, particularly in a global environment. It aims to provide a solid theoretical and academic foundation, enabling students to solve problems and capitalise on opportunities within a business context. The programme also aims to make students aware of their social responsibilities to the community as much as to the needs of employers. In the digital age of pervasive social media, this is a commercial as well as an ethical imperative, and one with which students on the programme will be fully acquainted.

The programme has been designed with the needs of the modern learner in mind. As such it is flexible both in mode and duration.

Students must successfully complete each unit in order to be awarded the specified number of credits for that unit. One credit corresponds to approximately ten hours of 'learning time' (including all classes and all private study and research). Thus obtaining 120 credits in an academic year requires 1,200 hours of overall learning time.

Where a student fails to achieve a unit(s) due to illness or other mitigating circumstances, such failure may be condoned, subject to the requirements of the Credit Framework and provided that the student has achieved the programme learning outcomes

The academic year is 32 weeks and delivery is planned over 2 semesters of 16 weeks

Full Time Cyber Security Pathway Delivery Option

Unit N°	Unit Title	Level	Credit Value	Year 1 S1	Year 1 S2
Core Units					
19.	Business Intelligence	5	15	X	
20.	Internet of Things	5	15	X	
21.	Emerging Technologies	5	15	X	
23.	Applied Security in the Cloud	5	15		X
24.	Applied Cryptography in the Cloud	5	15		X
25.	Information Security Management in the Cloud	5	15		X
22.	Work Based Learning in the Digital Economy	5	15		X
41.	Digital Sustainability	5	15	X	

Full Time Cloud Networking Pathway Delivery Option

Unit N°	Unit Title	Level	Credit Value	Year 1 S1	Year 1 S2
Core Units					
19.	Business Intelligence	5	15	X	
20.	Internet of Things	5	15	X	
21.	Emerging Technologies	5	15	X	
23.	Applied Security in the Cloud	5	15		X
31.	Network Management	5	15		X
32.	Digital Technology as a Catalyst for Change	5	15		X
22.	Work Based Learning in the Digital Economy	5	15		X
41.	Digital Sustainability	5	15	X	

Full Time Software Development & Programming Pathway Delivery Option

Unit N°	Unit Title	Level	Credit Value	Year 1 S1	Year 1 S2
Core Units					
19.	Business Intelligence	5	15	X	
20.	Internet of Things	5	15	X	
21.	Emerging Technologies	5	15	X	
26.	Data Structure & Algorithms	5	15		X
27.	Advanced Programming	5	15		X
28.	Risk Analysis & Systems Testing	5	15		X
22.	Work Based Learning in the Digital Economy	5	15		X
41.	Digital Sustainability	5	15	X	

Full Time Data Analytics Pathway Delivery Option

Unit N°	Unit Title	Level	Credit Value	Year 1 S1	Year 1 S2
Core Units					
19.	Business Intelligence	5	15	X	
20.	Internet of Things	5	15	X	
21.	Emerging Technologies	5	15	X	
28.	Risk Analysis & Systems Testing	5	15		X
29.	Applied Analytical Models	5	15		X
30.	Business Information Technology Systems	5	15		X
22.	Work Based Learning in the Digital Economy	5	15		X
41.	Digital Sustainability	5	15	X	

Full Time Digital Communications Management Pathway Delivery Option

Unit N°	Unit Title	Level	Credit Value	Year 1 S1	Year 1 S2
Core Units					
19.	Business Intelligence	5	15	X	

20.	Internet of Things	5	15	X	
21.	Emerging Technologies	5	15	X	
38.	Planning Social Media Campaigns	5	15		X
39.	Digital Marketing	5	15		X
40.	Customer Value Management	5	15		X
22.	Work Based Learning in the Digital Economy	5	15		X
41.	Digital Sustainability	5	15	X	

Full Time Business Analytics & Change Management Pathway Delivery Option

Unit N°	Unit Title	Level	Credit Value	Year 1 S1	Year 1 S2
Core Units					
19.	Business Intelligence	5	15	X	
20.	Internet of Things	5	15	X	
21.	Emerging Technologies	5	15	X	
29.	Applied Analytical Models	5	15		X
30.	Business Information Technology Systems	5	15		X
32.	Digital Technology as a Catalyst for Change	5	15		X
22.	Work Based Learning in the Digital Economy	5	15		X
41.	Digital Sustainability	5	15	X	

Full Time Artificial Intelligence Solutions & Emerging Technologies Pathway Delivery Option

Unit N°	Unit Title	Level	Credit Value	Year 1 S1	Year 1 S2
Core Units					
19.	Business Intelligence	5	15	X	
20.	Internet of Things	5	15	X	
21.	Emerging Technologies	5	15	X	
28.	Risk Analysis & Systems Testing	5	15		X
36.	Application Development	5	15		X

37.	Application Program Interfaces	5	15		X
22.	Work Based Learning in the Digital Economy	5	15		X
41.	Digital Sustainability	5	15	X	

Support for Students and their learning

Academic and pastoral support:

- At programme commencement, students will be allocated a personal tutor, who will effectively act as their academic mentor.
- Personal Tutors will provide ongoing advice on academic and pastoral matters (in partnership with academic tutors in other modules). They will act as students' first port of call for support during their studies.
- Students will have an initial one-to-one meeting with their Personal Tutor in the first few weeks of their studies as part of a settling in process, in which any early issues of an academic or pastoral nature may be addressed.
- Students' academic progress will be formally reviewed at least twice per academic year by their Personal Tutor.
- If a student experiences issues or problems which their Personal Tutor the student may contact the Programme Coordinator.

Learning support:

- Students with specific learning support needs will be directed to our team of HE Study Support tutors to obtain support, advice and guidance on how to progress through their studies. This includes addressing any special needs requirements. Further information is available in the Student Handbook.
- All students will be able to access the services of a Study Support Tutor regardless of whether they have a specific learning support need.

Admissions Criteria

Applicants will be expected to possess an HNC in Digital Technologies in a pathway that links to the appropriate pathway specification or another Level 4 qualification in a related digital specialism (or equivalent) along with a GCSE grade 4 or above in Maths and English. Other L2 qualifications in English and Maths may be accepted.

Applications from students returning to education who do not possess the formal entry qualifications, but can demonstrate relevant industry experience, will be considered on merit subject to the successful completion of a recognition of prior learning procedure. They would normally be expected to have achieved a Level 2 Maths and English qualification.

Applicants whose first language is not English must also demonstrate that their level of English is acceptable by achieving a score in a recognised test such as:

Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) level B2
PTE Academic 51, or
IELTS 5.5 (reading and writing must be at 5.5)

Personal Profile

A typical applicant might be expected to demonstrate at the commencement of his/her studies the following:

- a general interest in leadership and management

- a strong interest in developing their career
- a willingness to work collaboratively with others
- good oral and written communication skills
- a willingness to build knowledge across all aspects of business
- appropriate levels of numeracy and literacy

Methods for Evaluating and Enhancing the Quality and Standards of Teaching and Learning

- Student module evaluations
- Annual programme and module monitoring reports
- External Examiners review
- Periodic programme review
- Annual staff appraisals
- Peer observations
- Quality Assurance Framework
- Office for Students

Committees with responsibility for monitoring and evaluating quality and standards

HE Committees/Boards at Activate Learning:

- Programme Committee
- Faculty Improvement Boards
- Higher National Assessment Board
- Quality and Consistency Committee

Mechanisms for gaining student feedback on the quality of teaching and their learning experience

- Internal student satisfaction surveys that mirror the NSS
- Student complaints procedure
- Academic appeals procedure
- Programme Committees
- Student module evaluations
- Student representation system

Indicators of Quality and Standards

- Annual External Examiner reports
- Annual programme monitoring reports
- Annual programme quality statement
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Study Costs:

Students are advised that they will need access to a laptop or PC with a camera and microphone functionality. They are also advised to budget c£100 a year for additional costs such as for stationery to undertake their studies. They can borrow textbooks and access journals from the recommended reading lists from the Learning Resource Centre. If they choose to purchase textbooks, they are advised to budget c£60 each for each book.

Micorsoft Office 365 software is available to students from the College along with Eduroam.

Reference points used in creating this specification

- QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education

- Pearson BTEC Higher Nationals Centre Guide to Quality Assurance and Assessment L4-7