National College for Digital Skills

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BTEC Level 3 National Diploma in Computing[1]
Learner Handbook (2025-2027)

Contents:

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[1] https://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/BTEC-Nationals/computing/2016/specification-and-sample-assessments/9781446940167-BTEC-NAT-L3-DIP-COMP-SPEC-PREPUB-060916.pdf

Computer Science at Ada

"Computers are incredibly fast, accurate, and stupid. Human beings are incredibly slow, inaccurate, and brilliant. Together they are powerful beyond imagination."- Albert Einstein

Computer Science at Ada is a groundbreaking effort to change the way we educate young people to be job-ready for the future. It is core to all pathways offered by the college and all learners have at least 10 hours per week of timetabled Computer Science lessons. The Computer Science curriculum actively incorporates the expertise of our digital industry partners alongside that of our experienced teaching team and ensures our programmes of study offer outstanding opportunities for learners to develop in-demand, industry-ready skills that allow them to make excellent progress in their chosen digital career.

Computer Science is at the heart of the digital revolution affecting all aspects of our working and social lives. Its impact is unparalleled and its reach unrivalled. We have designed our curriculum to cohesively bring together a diverse range of course units that underpin the wider Computer Science field and for which we have evidenced strong industry demand. Our course choice of BTEC Level 3 Nationals (RQF) in Computing allows us to do this effectively as the range and scope of its modular structure and the associated courseworks, projects and examinations undertaken, provide our learners with the opportunity to develop the essential understanding and skills for a wide variety of digital careers underpinned by a broad Computer Science curriculum. This ensures excellent progression opportunities to Degree Apprenticeships in Software Development, Tech Consulting, Networking, and Cybersecurity or on to university courses such as Computer Science, Cybersecurity, Games Design and Development, Software Engineering, Software Development and eSports.

How Computer Science is taught at Ada

- We lead with concepts - supporting learners in the acquisition of knowledge, through the use of key concepts, terms and vocabulary, providing opportunities to build a shared and consistent understanding;

- We use project-based learning activities and direct industry engagement to provide learners with ample opportunity to apply and consolidate their knowledge and skills;

- We encourage learner collaboration through paired programming and structured group tasks in order to stimulate classroom discussion, articulation of concepts and development of a shared understanding;

- We model processes and practices using techniques such as worked examples and live coding and believe modelling is particularly beneficial as a means of providing scaffolding;

- We provide activities with different levels of direction, scaffolding and support that promote active learning, ranging from highly structured to more exploratory tasks with the aim of encouraging greater learner independence;

- We bring abstract concepts to life with real-world, suitably diverse, contextual examples and a focus on interdependencies within the wider Computer Science curriculum and between Ada's different subject areas;

- We encourage program comprehension through a variety of activities to consolidate knowledge and understanding of the function and structure of programs, including debugging, tracing and Parson's Problems;

- We use formative questioning to challenge misconceptions and adapt teaching to address them as they occur;

- We use supportive research-based frameworks when planning lessons, such as PRIMM (Predict, Run, Investigate, Modify, Make) and Use-Modify-Create in programming lessons;

- We encourage learners to value the importance of failure and to see it as an intrinsic part of the iterative process of coding, testing and debugging.

- We apply a semantic waves approach to teach new concepts by first unpacking complex terms and ideas, exploring these ideas in unplugged and familiar contexts, then repacking this new understanding into the original concept;

- We facilitate hands-on learning opportunities using physical computing as appropriate to enhance learning opportunities and provide learners with a creative, engaging context to explore and apply computing concepts;

- We maximise the use of lesson time by primarily using independent study for activities that reinforce concepts and provide rigorous practice of skills, and which do not need to be completed in class;

- We encourage the development of rigour through learners' timely completion of independent study tasks, class presentations - individual and group, and critical reflection through the giving and receiving of both verbal and written feedback;

- We challenge our learners to think about how a problem studied may be extended and developed and to consider what additional insights this might lead to;

- We strive to create a collaborative and curious culture of learning by supporting classroom discussions which value all learners' ideas;

- We reward engagement and accomplishment (not just academic achievement) to further encourage the development of our values;

- We track our learners across each of their taught units and review their expected progress with them at regular intervals throughout the academic year and implement rigorous intervention programmes should that expected progress not be met.

Computer Science Teaching Team

The following staff are the core members of Ada's Computer Science teaching team:

Mark Campbell (markcampbell@ada.ac.uk) - Assistant Principal and Curriculum lead

Mark was part of the UK's initial cohort of students that took 'O' and 'A' Level Computer Studies between 1978-1982. He went on to study Computer Science at Nottingham Trent University and then spent over 12 years working as a Computer Programmer, Systems Analyst and Business Analyst for leading financial services companies including Credit Lyonnais and Goldman Sachs. After travelling Mark returned to university and graduated with a Distinction in MSc Distributed Systems. Mark spent 20 years working as a University Senior Lecturer in Computer Science and was responsible for the creation and validation of several BSc and MSc specialist computing courses including BSc and MSc Cyber Security and Networking. Mark spent many years volunteering as a STEM Ambassador and as a result of this trained at University College London to make the shift to teaching college level students.

Neelu Vasishth (neelu@ada.ac.uk) - Head of Computer Science

Neelu is an industry professional and an educator. She pursued Computer Science Engineering (with Honors) in 1999 and later an executive programme in management from one of India's premier management institutions. For the first decade of her career, She was deeply immersed in software development and large scale engineering management. Her work experience was equally split between Germany and India where she worked with leading tech companies like Hughes Systique, Lucent technologies and L&T Infotech, as well as start-ups in the mobile telephony space. She pursued a Postgraduate Certificate PGCE in computer science with Qualified teacher Status (QTS) from King's college London in 2017. As a computer science educator, she would like to share her experience of being a professional coder with young students to open their minds to new possibilities.

Jan Siemaszko (jan@ada.ac.uk) - Lead Practitioner

Jan completed an MA (combined Bachelor and Master degree) in Computing at Aberdeen University winning several awards - including one for a local government data analytics project and another for academic excellence. Jan then pursued a Postgraduate Certificate (PGCE) with Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) at King's College London, prior to joining Ada.

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Omar Mufti (omar@ada.ac.uk)- Computer Science Teacher

Omar completed a BSc in Computer Science and then an MSc in Internet Technology at the University of Greenwich, London. Omar then trained to be a Further Education lecturer and was awarded a Postgraduate Certificate (PGCE) in Further Education. Since completing his study, Omar has gained over eighteen years experience as a computing lecturer in FE colleges. Initially working at Croydon College and then moving to Uxbridge College (now part of HCUC - Harrow, Richmond & Uxbridge Colleges). Whilst at HCUC. Omar taught mostly on BTEC Information Technology programmes (Level 1 through to Level 3), but also taught on HNC/HND provision.

Mesay Gashaw (mesay@ada.ac.uk)- Computer Science Teacher

Mesay holds a Bachelor of Science (BSc) in Mathematics, with a major in Mathematics and a minor in Physics. He began his career as a computer programmer for Ethiopian Airlines before pursuing further studies in computing. He holds a Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip) in Computer Science and a Master of Science (MSc) in Internet and Database Systems. In addition, he has earned a Diploma in Education and Certificate in the Internal Quality Assurance of Assessment and Practice. Mesay has also completed the National Professional Qualification for Leading Teacher Development (NPQLTD) and holds Fellowship status with the Society for Education and Training (FSET). He is an active member of the Practitioner Advisory Group (PAG) for SET. With over 15 years of experience teaching IT and Computing in the post-compulsory education sector, Mesay has assumed various roles in addition to teaching, including Lead Internal Verifier and Course Leader.

Hari Swaminathan (hari@ada.ac.uk)- Computer Science Teacher

Hari completed a BEng (Hons) degree in electronics engineering from Queen Mary, London University in 1991 and an MSc in Electronic Engineering from the University of Wales in 1994. Over the first 15 years of his career, he worked as a software and test engineer at companies including Ericsson, Cisco Systems, and GN Nettest. After completing an MBA at Bayes Business School (2010), he spent the next decade working in network architecture and testing roles at Vodafone and Telefónica O2. He completed the PGCE in computer science at the University of Roehampton in 2024 and joined Ada as a Computer Science teacher in June 2025.

Qualification Details

The Pearson BTEC National Diploma in Computing is equivalent in size to two A Level qualifications and is aimed at learners who want to progress to employment in this sector, either directly or following further training through an apprenticeship or university degree. The qualification is 720 guided learning hours (GLH), designed to be studied over two years. Learners are expected to have an appropriate range of achievement at GCSE prior to course entry though they may not have previously studied Computer Science at GCSE.

Programme Overview

This qualification is designed to support learners who want an in-depth study of Computer Science as part of a study programme (course pathway) that includes additional subject A Level(s) to support career progression to higher education degree courses at university or via a degree apprenticeship. The additional qualification(s) studied allow learners to add breadth to their study programme by choosing a contrasting subject or give it more focus by choosing a complementary subject. Learners have many opportunities to work with our industry partners to gain real world understanding of the many roles, opportunities and challenges associated with the digital sector. Learners will be required to work both individually and collaboratively in allocated teams and to be effective in a variety of team roles – technical, creative and entrepreneurial.

Programme Timetable

Guided learning means activities, such as lessons, tutorials, online instruction, supervised study and giving feedback on performance, that directly involve teachers and assessors in teaching, supervising and invigilating learners

Learners have 10 hours of taught lessons per week and for those not taking additional programmes in either Further Maths A-Level or Maths Studies, 3 additional hours of programming labs and self-study sessions. The majority of CS Lessons are 1 hour or 2 hours long. Lessons will vary depending on which units are currently being studied. There will be opportunities for workshops and many occasions when external speakers will deliver content.

Learners are expected to spend at least an equal amount of time in self study (mostly at home) as is allocated to lessons. For exam-based units this should also include practising exam-style questions using previous exam questions - available for learners to directly access here[2]. Other, more recent examples will be provided by your teachers as appropriate.

Independent Learning & Study Support

In addition to guided learning, other required learning directed by teachers or assessors will include private study, preparation for assessment and undertaking assessment when not under supervision, such as preparatory reading, revision and independent research.

Learners should schedule independent learning sessions - as long as their guided learning, in their own time. So, in a week where there are 3 hours of Unit 2 lessons, there should be 3 hours of Unit 2 research and consolidation of classroom learning done by the learner independently.

Learners may be **required** to attend Directed CS Study Support sessions where the teacher feels they need more support to progress in their work. This requirement could be indicated by a

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[2] https://bit.ly/3JPMrQo

number of factors - including various behavioural issues such as missed/late homework submissions and lack of sufficient focus in lessons. These additional sessions will most likely take place on a specific day (either Monday or Wednesday) between 4-5pm and for those identified students will be <u>compulsory</u>. Parents and carers will be contacted in advance as appropriate.

Additionally, if learners feel they need additional study support for any subject or if they require any other well-being support then they should contact Ryan Manning, Assistant Principal (SEND, Behaviour, Pastoral and Welfare) to arrange a consultation.

Ada Skills Strategy

At Ada, we prioritise the development of a learner's communication and professional skills because we recognise that the better these are the higher a learner's academic attainment will be, and so the more progression opportunities they will have. Beyond Sixth Form, these are also the very skills learners will need to thrive in their future careers and lives.

To support the development of these skills, we create frequent opportunities for learners to practise them. Opportunities to improve their writing, for example, will present every time they are set a written assignment in their respective subjects.

In addition, learners are timetabled to attend two Ada Skills sessions per week. The purpose of these sessions is to afford learners an overview of how to develop essential communication skills and skills to be used in a professional environment, as well as to create the opportunity to practise these. All resources from the sessions will be shared in an Ada Skills Google Classroom.

Ada Professional Skills

The Professional Skills Curriculum is a component part of Ada's Skills Intent: for every student to develop their professional and communication skills.

The objectives of the Professional Skills Curriculum are:

- To introduce the professional skills students must develop to succeed at Ada and beyond;

- To introduce, and to afford the students the opportunity to practise, the techniques and strategies that support the development of these professional skills;

- To afford every student feedback on their professional skills development.

Term Dates and Course Delivery Plans

Term Dates (2025/2026)

Term dates are expected to follow a similar pattern in 2025/2026 and will be published on the college website at: https://www.ada.ac.uk/sixthform/termdates

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Course Delivery Plan (Year 12 - 2025/26)

		Year 12 (2025/26) - Computing Diploma							SUMMER
Months		Sept-Oct	Oct - Dec	Jan-Feb	Mar-Apr	Apr-May	**June**	June-July	**Aug**
Terms	hours per week	T1a	T1b	T2a	T2b	T3a	**Year 12 June Exams**	T3b	
Num Weeks		7	7	6	5	6	**1**	**4**	
Year 12 CS Dip 10 hours per week Plus 1.5 hours CS Labs	2	U1 Principles of CS (120GLH) (1 lesson per week) 31 x 2 hours (62 hours) CORE (Dip)					**U1 EXAM (first sit) (June 2026)**	Projects or resubmissions and retakes of BTEC internal coursework unit assessments	
	1	U1 Principles of CS (120GLH) (1 lesson per week) Programming lesson 31 x 1 hour (31 hours) CORE (Dip)							
	2	U2 Fundamentals of Computer Systems (90GLH) (1 lesson per week) 31 x 2 hours (62 hours) plus unit material taught in U7 CORE (Dip)					**U2 EXAM (first sit) (May 2026)**		
	1	U3 Project Management (120GLH) 1 lesson per week PART A 31 x 1 hour (31 hours) + Ind projects (3 x 3 days) CORE (Dip)							
	4	U14 Computer Games Development (60GLH) 4 lessons/week 4 x 14 = 56 hours Optional (Dip)	U7 IT Systems Security and Encryption (90GLH) 18 x 4 hours = 72 hours (T3b for redos in July if req'd) CORE (Dip)						

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Course Delivery Plan (Year 13 - 2026/27)

		Year 13 (2025/26) - Computing Diploma										
Months		Sept - Oct		XMAS	Jan		Jan-Feb	Mar-Apr	April	Apri-May	June	July
Terms	hours per week	T1a	T1b		Year 13 Jan Exams	hours per week	T2a	T2b		T3a	Final Exams	T3b
Num Weeks		7	6+1(mock exams)		3		3	5		5		5
Year 13 CS Diploma 10 hours per week	4	U3 Project Management PART B. 2 lessons per week (4 x 13 = 52 hours) CORE	U3 Mock		U3 Controlled Assessment (first sit)		U8 IT Business Applications of Social Media (90GLH) 10 hours (10 lessons) x 8 = 80 hours CORE			U17 Mobile applications development (60GLA) 10 hours (5 lessons) x 5 = 50 hours Optional		Final BTEC completition
	6	U9 Impact of Computing (90GLH) 6 lessons per week (6 x 13 = 78 hours) CORE			U1 Exam (re-sit opportunity) U2 Exam (re-sit opportunity)	10						

Unit Details

Eight units of which six are mandatory and three are external and assessed by exams (Unit 1, Unit 2) or controlled assessments (Unit 3)

Mandatory units[3]

Unit 1: Principles of Computer Science (120 GLH) - External Exam
This unit covers the principles that underpin all areas of computer science. It will develop your knowledge of computational-thinking and support you in demonstrating your ability to analyse and interpret problems and develop detailed and complex solutions in response. You will gain an in-depth understanding of programming constructs and a thorough understanding of how data is handled in a computer program.

Unit 2: Fundamentals of Computer Systems (90 GLH) - External Exam
In this unit you study the fundamental principles of how computer systems work and will gain underpinning knowledge on the role of hardware and software, the way components of a system work together and how data in a system is used. You will develop skills in applying knowledge of computing to deconstruct problems, drawing on various sources of information to develop effective solutions with justification. You will develop the ability to evaluate the effectiveness of computer systems to make justified recommendations on their development.

Unit 3: Planning and Management of Computing Projects (120 GLH) - External Assessment
In this unit you will develop your knowledge and understanding of the role of a computing project management professional and gain the skills necessary to apply project planning and management techniques to given computing project scenarios. The application and further development of these skills also forms an intrinsic part of the Industry Projects you will undertake whilst at Ada.

Unit 7: IT Systems Security & Encryption (90 GLH) - Internal Assessment
In this unit you will learn about the different types of security attack and develop your knowledge of how to protect IT networks from such attacks. You will learn about encryption and gain knowledge of various encryption techniques. You will then undertake practical activities using a range of software simulation tools and sandboxed virtualisation environments to develop your practical skills, such as by 'hardening' computer servers against potential security threats, in protecting IT systems.

Unit 8: Business Applications of Social Media (90 GLH) - Internal Assessment
In this unit you will explore different social media sites and gain knowledge on how organisations can use social media to promote their products and/or service and the potential pitfalls when doing so. You will then leverage that knowledge to develop skills in designing and implementing a social media plan for an organisation to meet its specific business requirements.

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[3] In order to pass the overall course **ALL** mandatory units have to be studied in full and a grade of at least 'N' achieved in external units (U1, U2, U3) and at least 'P' in all internal coursework units (U7, U8, U9).

Unit 9: The Impact of Computing (90 GLH) - Internal Assessment

In this unit you will study the impact that developments in computing have on organisations and wider society. You will then develop a plan to implement a computing technology development in an organisation and then review your plan using feedback from others to analyse the skills, knowledge and behaviours that you practised during this activity.

Additional units[4]

Unit 14: Computer Game Development (60 GLH) - Internal Assessment

In this unit you investigate the computer games industry and its impact on technological and social trends. You will develop your knowledge of game genres, player categorisation, game design techniques, production options and monetisation strategies. You will then apply this knowledge and your emerging programming skills to design, develop and test a computer game to meet exacting user requirements.

Unit 17: Mobile App Development (60 GLH) - Internal Assessment

In this unit, you will investigate mobile apps, how they are used, why they are created, the differences between devices and the implications of creating and using software on mobile devices. You will study the design considerations inherent in mobile apps design. You will use this acquired knowledge to help develop your skills in designing, developing, testing and evaluating mobile apps to fulfil a specific set of client requirements.

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[4]Note: these are selected from the 'Optional Units' available with regards to the BTEC Course Specification and are therefore subject to change

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Internal unit assessment

Each internal assessment unit, mandatory or additional, will have exactly two pieces of assessed coursework. The first of which usually focuses on the **knowledge** you have gained in the module's subject area and is usually realised through a substantial written report detailing such in reference to a particular scenario provided. The second coursework usually involves a practical, scenario-based, implementation of that **knowledge** in order that you demonstrate the acquisition of relevant subject-based **skills** gained. Each of these courseworks will be formally assessed and graded either U, P, M, or D (see next section for grade details).

Important to note that your overall unit grade (that counts towards your final course grade) will be the lesser of your two individual coursework grades. For example, if you gain a P(ass) in Unit 14 - Assignment A and a (D)istinction in Unit 14 - Assignment BC, you will receive an overall Unit 14 course grade of P(ass).

Extensions to internal unit assessment deadlines

If you know you are going to be unable to meet the submission deadline, you **must** speak to the Assistant Principal (SEND, Behaviour, Pastoral and Welfare). You should do this at **least 3 working days before the given deadline** unless you are unable to meet the deadline due to an accident or severe illness occurring within 3 working days of the given deadline. You and your parent/carer will be expected to provide medical evidence to support your extension request.

Resubmission of internal unit assessment

Ada, like all BTEC Centres, has to strictly follow the exam bodies assessment processes. This includes appointing a Lead Internal Verifier (LIV). The LIV is the only person authorised to grant a unit assessment resubmission that provides a learner an opportunity to evidence missing assessment criteria in order to try and improve their original grade. However, please note that the LIV is governed by the following stringent conditions - specifically, the necessity of the learner having submitted their initial coursework submission by the set assessment deadline:

When can a Lead Internal Verifier authorise a resubmission?

The Lead Internal Verifier can only authorise a resubmission if all the following conditions are met:

- The learner has met initial deadlines set in the assignment or has met an agreed deadline extension.
- The Assessor judges that the learner will be able to provide improved evidence without further guidance.
- The Assessor has authenticated the evidence submitted for assessment and the evidence is accompanied by a signed and dated learner declaration of authenticity.

What if a learner does not meet all of these conditions?

If a learner has not met these conditions, the Lead Internal Verifier must not authorise a resubmission.

Where a learner's resubmission assessment has been approved for a specific unit it is then subject to the following exam board criteria:

1. The resubmission period (window) is fixed at a maximum of 15 days. However, this is more usually set at between 5 and 10 days depending on that unit's assessment calendar;

2. The resubmission window opens as soon as a learner receives notification of their original submission grade and associated feedback detailing the assessment criteria met and those not evidenced and therefore not awarded.

Retakes of internal unit assessment

If a learner does not achieve at least a Pass grade following a re-submission, the LIV may allow one retake of a brand new assignment which is set at **Pass level only**. However, the LIV will only authorise a retake of an assignment in exceptional circumstances where they believe it is necessary, appropriate and fair to do so. The learner will not be allowed any further resubmissions or retakes.

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BTEC Assessment Information

Achievement in the qualification requires a demonstration of depth of **knowledge** gained in each unit, assured acquisition of a range of practical **skills** required for employment or progression to higher education, and successful development of **transferable skills**. Learners achieving a qualification will have achieved across mandatory units, including external and synoptic assessment.

Units are assessed using a grading scale of Distinction (D), Merit (M), Pass (P), Near Pass (N) and Unclassified (U). The grade of Near Pass (N) is used for externally-assessed units only. All mandatory and optional units contribute proportionately to the overall qualification grade, for example a unit of 120 GLH will contribute double that of a 60 GLH unit.

The overall BTEC National Diploma in Computing is graded using a scale of PP to D*D* that is based on the total number of UMS points accumulated across a student's 6 core and 2 optional units. This current (July 2024) unit grade to unit UMS points and UMS total points to qualification grade is given in the following tables:

COURSEWORK GRADES & POINTS			
60 GLH		**90 GLH**	
U	0	U	0
P	6	P	9
M	10	M	15
D	16	D	24

EXAM GRADES & POINTS			
90 GLH		**120 GLH**	
0	U	0	U
6	N	8	N
9	P	12	P
15	M	20	M
24	D	32	D

Diploma	
720 GLH	
Points threshold	Grade
0	U
72	PP
88	MP
104	MM
124	DM
144	DD
162	DsD
180	DsDs

Note: The relationship between qualification grading scales and unit grades will be subject to regular review as part of Pearson's standards monitoring processes on the basis of learner performance and in consultation with key users of the qualification. Exams are awarded a mark out of a given total (see next section). That mark is then converted to UMS points on a sliding scale and those points are then equated to a grade according to Grade Boundaries.

Overall course grades are used by UCAS (Universities and Colleges Admissions Service) in determining the number of A-Level equivalent points gained when applying for University. At the end of your Year 12, Ada's Computer Science Department will calculate a 'predicted grade' for use in your UCAS application, based on the accumulated UMS points of ALL of your Year 12 units.

The mapping of BTEC course grade to A-Level equivalent grades and UCAS points is the following:

Grade	A-Level	UCAS Points	Grade	A-Level	UCAS Points	Grade	A-Level	UCAS Points
U	U	0	MM	CC	64	DsD	AsA	104
PP	EE	32	DM	AC	80	DsDs	AsAs	112
MP	CE	48	DD	AA	96			

Grading

As your course progresses you can model and track your progress towards your overall target course grade by using the BTEC performance tracker provided by Pearson to predict your overall grade on the basis of inputting your current completed unit grades and inputting estimates for those units remaining.[5]

The following is an example of a how a student's overall grade is calculated:

Diploma Grade Calculator						
Unit Number and Unit Name	GLH	Type		Optional?	Grade	UMS Points
Unit 1 - Principles of Computer Science	120	External	Exam	NO	D	32
Unit 2 - Fundamentals of Computer Systems	90	External	Exam	NO	M	20
Unit 3 - Planning and Management of Computing Projects	120	External	CA[6]	NO	M	24
Unit 7 - IT Systems Security & Encryption	90	Internal	CW	NO	D	24
Unit 8 - Business Applications of Social Media	90	Internal	CW	NO	D	24
Unit 9 - The Impact of Computing	90	Internal	CW	NO	D	24
Unit 10 - Human Computer Interaction	60	Internal	CW	YES	D	16
Unit 17 - Mobile Application Development	60	Internal	CW	YES	P	6
	720					**170**
Final course grade:	**DsD**					
UCAS points:	**104**					

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[5] See here for details how to use the BTEC Nationals - Grade Calculator Excel spreadsheet

[6] CA refers to Controlled Assessment. These are externally marked set tasks that need to be completed under exam-type conditions within a specified timeframe usually over a number of days

External Assessment - Exam and Set Task Schedule

Unit	Type	Availability
Unit 1: Principles of Computer Science	• Written examination set and marked by Pearson. • 90 marks. • Two hours.	**Jan and May/June.** **First assessment:** **May/June 2017**
Unit 2: Fundamentals of Computer Systems	• Written examination set and marked by Pearson. • 80 marks. • 1 hour and 45 minutes.	**Jan and May/June.** **First assessment:** **May/June 2017.**
Unit 3: Planning and Management of Computer Projects	• A task set and marked by Pearson and completed under supervised conditions. • There are two supervised assessment periods. Part A is a maximum of three hours in a one week period and Part B is a maximum of two hours in a three day period. Both periods are timetabled by Pearson. • Completed using a computer and submitted electronically. • 66 marks.	**Dec/Jan and May/June** **First assessment:** **Dec/Jan 2018.**

Each external assessment is available to be taken twice per year. These are referred to as the January Exam Series and the June Exam Series. At Ada, we have successfully structured our courses, and our learners achieved great success, by adopting the following exam timetable:

Unit	First Sit	Re-Sit *(only where this is considered necessary)*
Unit 1	Y12 - June Exam Series (i.e., June 2026)	Y13 - Jan Exam Series (i.e., January 2027)
Unit 2	Y12 - June Exam Series (i.e., May 2026)	Y13 - Jan Exam Series (i.e., January 2027)
Unit 3	Y13 - Jan Exam Series (i.e., January 2027)	Y13 - June Exam Series (i.e., May 2027)

Time Management

As you will see from both the internal assessment schedule and the fact that there are important exams in each of Year 12 (U1 and U2) and Year 13 (U3), you have a substantial amount of studying to do in order to be successful on your BTEC Computing Diploma course in o rder to achieve your maximum potential. Noting that you will need to balance the additional taught time and necessary independent study associated with your additional A-Level(s) subject(s). Also, unlike your GCSEs or most A-Level qualifications where the formal course grade is entirely based on an end of Year 13 assessment, your BTEC Diploma course is modular and each formal assignment (as well as each exam) counts towards your final course grade. You will therefore need to start planning - and following, an independent study (work outside of your lesson time) programme from Day 1 of the

course, otherwise you may quickly fall behind in your programme, score poorly (or even fail) individual unit assignments, and ultimately not meet your goals and expectations.

Plagiarism/Malpractice[7]

When submitting evidence for assessment, each learner must sign a declaration confirming that the work is their own:

"I certify that the evidence submitted for this assignment is my own. I have clearly referenced any sources used in the work. I understand that false declaration is a form of malpractice."

Definitions/Terminology

Learner malpractice: any action by the learner which has the potential to undermine the integrity and validity of the assessment of the learner's work. (plagiarism, collusion, cheating, etc.)

Plagiarism: taking and using another's thoughts, writings, inventions, etc. as one's own

Minor acts of learner malpractice: handled by the Assessor by, for example, refusal to accept work for marking and learner being made aware of malpractice policy. Learner resubmits work in question

Major acts of learner malpractice: extensive copying/plagiarism, 2nd or subsequent offence, inappropriate for the Assessor to deal with.

Definition of Malpractice by Learners
- plagiarism of any nature (including 'AI-assisted plagiarism')
- collusion by working collaboratively with other learners to produce work that is submitted as individual learner work
- copying (including the use of ICT to aid copying)
- deliberate destruction of another's work
- fabrication of results or evidence
- false declaration of authenticity in relation to the contents of a portfolio or coursework
- impersonation by pretending to be someone else in order to produce the work for another or arranging for another to take one's place in an assessment/examination/test.

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[7] [Malpractice & Appeals Policy - 6th form](#)

Assessment Malpractice Policy

Aim:
- To identify and minimise the risk of malpractice by staff or learners
- To respond to any incident of alleged malpractice promptly and objectively
- To standardise and record any investigation of malpractice to ensure openness and fairness
- To impose appropriate penalties and/or sanctions on learners or staff where
- Incidents (or attempted incidents) of malpractice are proven
- To protect the integrity of this centre and BTEC qualifications.

In order to do this, the centre will:
- seek to avoid potential malpractice by using the induction period and the learner handbook to inform learners of the centre's policy on malpractice and the penalties for attempted and actual incidents of malpractice
- show learners the appropriate formats to record cited texts and other materials or information sources
- ask learners to declare that their work is their own
- ask learners to provide evidence that they have interpreted and synthesised appropriate information and acknowledged any sources used
- use Unicheck software to test coursework for plagiarism.
- conduct an investigation in a form commensurate with the nature of the malpractice allegation.

Where a malpractice investigation is conducted it will be supported by the Principal and all personnel linked to the allegation. It will proceed through the following stages:
- make the individual fully aware at the earliest opportunity of the nature of the alleged malpractice and of the possible consequences should malpractice be proven
- Assessor talks with the Learner who is given a chance to respond to the allegations made, and, if accepted, amend within a predefined period of time. However, if this is a repeat occurrence or if the Learner's explanation is not acceptable, the offence is recorded and the Learner is asked to retake the unit of work
- If there is a repeat occurrence the Learner will be disciplined according to the disciplinary procedure of the College.
- inform the individual of the avenues for appealing against any judgement made
- document all stages of investigation.

Where malpractice is proven, this centre will apply the following penalties / sanctions:
- For the first offence this will be recorded in the Learner's' record and learners will have the opportunity to address the issue
- After the second offence, which will also be recorded in the Learner's record, learners will have to retake the unit of work.
- After the third offence Learners will be disciplined according to the college disciplinary procedure.

Learners have the right to appeal at every stage of the malpractice investigation.

This policy will be reviewed every year by the Lead of BTEC qualifications at the College.

Assessment Appeals Policy[8]

If learners feel that assessment decisions are incorrect or assessment was not conducted fairly, they have a right to appeal the assessment decision.

The aim of this policy is
- To enable the learner to enquire, question or appeal against an assessment decision
- To attempt to reach agreement between the learner and the Assessor at the earliest opportunity To standardise and record any appeal to ensure openness and fairness
- To facilitate a learner's ultimate right of appeal to the Awarding Body, where appropriate
- To protect the interests of all learners and the integrity of the qualification.

In order to do this, the centre will:
- inform the learner at induction, of the Appeals Policy and procedure
- record, track and validate any appeal
- forward the appeal to the Awarding Body when a learner considers that a decision continues to disadvantage her/him after the internal appeals process has been exhausted
- keep appeals records for inspection by the Awarding Body for a minimum of 18 months
- have a staged appeals procedure
- will take appropriate action to protect the interests of other learners and the integrity of the qualification, when the outcome of an appeal questions the validity of other results
- monitor appeals to inform quality improvement.

This policy will be reviewed every year by the Lead of BTEC qualifications at the College.

Appeals procedure

Stage 1 – Informal: Learner consults with Assessor within a defined period of time following the assessment decision, to discuss an assessment decision. If unresolved, then the issues are documented before moving to stage 2

Stage 2 – Review: Review of assessment decisions by Manager and/or Internal Verifier/Lead Internal Verifier. Learner notified of findings and agrees or disagrees, in writing, with outcome. If unresolved, move to stage 3

Stage 3 – Appeal hearing: Senior Management hears the appeal: last stage by the centre. If unresolved, move to stage 4

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[8] This policy does not apply to appeals against malpractice sanctions

Stage 4 – External appeal: The grounds for appeal and any supporting documentation must be submitted by the centre to Pearson within 14 days of the completion of Stage 4: a fee is levied