

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

Higher National Certificate & Higher National Diploma **INTERIOR DESIGN**

2025-2028

Qualification titles:

Pearson BTEC Level 4 Higher National
Certificate in Interior Design (2023)

Pearson BTEC Level 5 Higher National Diploma
in Interior Design (2023)

Qualification codes:

610/1798/X

610/1799/1

Awarding institution: Pearson Education Ltd

Accreditation details: BTEC

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Aims of the Programme

Interior design is an evolving and multidisciplinary field that responds to social, cultural, environmental, and technological influences. It encompasses the creative and technical processes involved in shaping interior spaces to enhance the quality of life, meet user needs, and express identity. This dynamic discipline offers diverse career pathways, including residential and commercial interiors, spatial design, lighting, retail environments, hospitality, exhibition and event design, set design, and sustainable interiors.

This programme is designed for students who aspire to pursue a professional career in interior design—whether as independent practitioners, in multidisciplinary studios, or within in-house creative teams. It equips learners with the practical, contextual, and professional competencies necessary to navigate the expectations of a competitive and globally-aware interior design industry.

The programme aims to:

- Provide a broad and practice-led introduction to interior design, including space planning, technical drawing, digital visualisation, materials, design theory, and professional practice.
- Develop creative and technical design skills through iterative, project-based learning grounded in real-world scenarios and vocational relevance.
- Encourage learners to explore a wide range of interior design methods and media to formulate creative solutions responsive to user needs and spatial contexts.
- Foster independent, reflective design practitioners who can critically evaluate their own work and apply professional standards of presentation and communication.
- Support progression into employment, self-employment, or further academic study at Level 5 and beyond, including progression to a BA (Hons) in Interior Design or related disciplines.
- Promote awareness of sustainability, inclusive design, digital transformation, and ethical professional practice in contemporary interior design.



Programme Outcomes

The HNC (level 4) will provide you with a solid foundation in the key principles and practices of the discipline. Through a blend of directed learning, hands-on studio work, and independent research, students will develop a range of practical, technical, and theoretical skills relevant to the industry. Vocationally focused projects and activities will encourage the development of creative thinking, problem-solving, and transferable professional skills such as communication, analysis, and time management.

By the end of the HNC you will be able to:

- Apply creative problem-solving and spatial thinking to interior design briefs.
- Investigate and interpret historical, cultural, and environmental influences on interior design.
- Explore and test materials, techniques, and processes to develop original design proposals.
- Use industry-standard software and drawing techniques to visualise and communicate design ideas effectively.
- Present interior design concepts using appropriate visual, verbal, and written methods.
- Demonstrate an understanding of professional practice, sustainability, and ethical considerations in interior design.
- Work independently and collaboratively to respond to vocationally relevant, client-focused briefs with considered and creative outcomes.

The HND (level 5) builds upon the knowledge and skills acquired at Level 4, enabling students to deepen their expertise and develop greater autonomy in their design practice. The programme supports progression into professional employment or further academic study, such as a BA (Hons) in Interior Design. Students will engage with complex projects, refine their personal design approach, and demonstrate critical awareness of industry contexts and professional standards.

By the end of the HND you will be able to:

- Articulate a distinct creative identity through the production of innovative and coherent interior design solutions.
- Apply advanced conceptual and technical knowledge to develop resolved design outcomes for a range of interior environments.
- Critically analyse and reflect on your own practice in response to challenging design problems and contemporary industry trends.
- Manage the planning, development, and execution of a substantial design project that demonstrates professional competence and personal direction.
- Effectively communicate design intent and professional insight through presentations, portfolios, and industry-facing documentation.
- Operate with initiative and responsibility, demonstrating an understanding of project management, client engagement, and commercial awareness in interior design practice.



Programme Structure

The Pearson BTEC Higher National Certificate (HNC) and the Pearson BTEC Higher National Diploma (HND), provided by the Academy, are very well known and respected qualifications within the industry. The HNC is the same level as the 1st year of a UK university degree and the HND is the same level as the 2nd year of a UK university degree. Pearson has developed relationships with numerous universities that allow students to progress directly into a relevant degree program including opportunities for accelerated progression.

The Awards are comprised of the following credits:

HNC = 120 Credits Level 4

HND = 240 Credits Level 5

At each level there is 1 module, and 2 assessment units. You must successfully complete both assessment units within the HNC before progressing to HND. Each assessment unit will comprise a number of assessment tasks/elements which build towards the successful achievement of unit learning outcomes.

HNC (Level 4 FHEQ) Module A: Process & Practice

Assessment Unit A1 R/650/4776	Concept Development	85 credits	340 Guided Learning Hours
Assessment Unit A2 T/650/4777	Creative Project	35 credits	140 Guided Learning Hours

HND (Level 5 FHEQ) Module B: Professional Creative Practice

Assessment Unit B1 Y/650/4778	Personal Professional Development	45 credits	170 Guided Learning Hours
Assessment Unit B2 A/650/4779	Professional Project	75 credits	310 Guided Learning Hours



Teaching and Learning Strategy

The course is delivered asynchronously and taught through a proprietary learning management system developed for the Academy (known as the Online Learning Centre). You will engage in self directed learning by working through a series of lessons comprising of:

- course materials developed by the Academy (text, graphics, audio and video materials),
- learning activities,
- assessments and
- related teaching materials (e.g. support resources and additional readings, access to a student forum, student handbooks, grading rubrics etc)
- Access to a range of digital subscriptions for academic resources (e.g. Bloomsbury Applied Visual Arts Library and EBSCO Art Full-Text) to support your studies.

All lesson content, assessments and related teaching materials are developed with the consultation of industry experts and are delivered to you via the Online Learning Centre.

Each lesson is a step in a curated learner journey that supports knowledge acquisition and the development of subject specific skills and general skills (e.g. communication, research and analysis) that are transferable to both higher education and the workplace.

In addition to self-directed learning, which allows you to manage the pace and intensity of your studies, course assessment places an emphasis on project based learning. This instructional approach is particularly suited to subject areas in art & design. It emphasises the opportunity for you to develop skills and knowledge through practice by engaging in projects that reflect real-world scenarios (see 'assessment' for details).

You will also be supported by a series of regular online tutorials with your designated tutor, where

you will be able to ask questions about lesson content, gain clarity around formative feedback received and raise queries about development work on project based assessments.

You are encouraged to undertake independent research outside of what is provided as part of the course material and are provided with reading lists with recommended sources relevant to topics covered throughout the programme as well as sources specific to each assessment.

The Online Learning Centre also provides an online student forum, where you are encouraged to engage in informal peer discussions, share work derived from practice activities and project based development work in order to facilitate collaborative learning.

You may choose to join the programme with a blended learning approach. Within the blended learning classes, there are 12 classes delivered by a number of specialised tutors for the HNC programme and 12 classes delivered for the HND programme. Normally, each class is delivered by two tutors to facilitate workshops and in-class activities. Classes take place in a venue carefully selected for each centre (Ireland and UK) on weekday evenings and/or Saturdays. Some classes feature guest speakers (industry professionals) who deliver workshops on specialised topics. Classroom students can also participate in class trips organised by the Academy in conjunction with classroom tutors. Throughout the programme, you will be advised of industry events, seminars, webinars and other relevant events that would be worthwhile attending and beneficial to your education.

You will be assigned a tutor who you can email should you require additional support. The Student Services team is also available to answer your queries by email or phone.



Assessment

You will be given 2-3 project-based assignment briefs to assess the skills development units (A1 and B1). Assignments may be subdivided into tasks, which will be delivered at key stages in your learner journey. These assignments are designed to build your skill set through practice and reflection and will evaluate your capabilities in:

- contextual knowledge,
- ideas generation and development,
- technical knowledge and skill,
- professional practice and
- communication.

You will be encouraged to work on these projects as you progress through the lessons and will have the opportunity to submit development work for formative feedback prior to the submission of project work for summative assessment. You will have 1 opportunity for formative assessment for each piece of summative work.

For the creative project and professional project units (A2 and B2), you will be given 1 assignment brief where you will be required to complete a personalised design project of significant scope. The project will be designed to reflect a real world industry scenario and you may be able to use your completed project as part of a portfolio of work when entering the workforce or pursuing higher education. At the beginning of your learner journey, you will receive a 'project handbook' with key details and requirements to support you as you develop your project for summative assessment. In addition, lessons will be delivered at key stages in the programme to provide guidance in developing your project work. There will be 2 - 3 opportunities for you to receive formative feedback (depending on the unit) for development work on your project.

Learner evidence required to fulfil summative assessment and demonstrate ability to meet the learning outcomes set out by the awarding body BTEC may include (but is not limited to):

- formal essays or case studies,
- sketchbooks
- client brief analysis
- concept or mood boards,
- research and reflective journals
- logbooks,
- project proposals
- portfolio of design work
- style guides
- digital or video presentations

All assessments are delivered and submitted online through the Online Learning Centre



Grading of Assessment

In Units A1 and B1, you will be required to submit your development work for formative assessment 5-3 times, respectively. In these assessments, you will receive detailed qualitative feedback for your development work in advance of submitting work for summative assessment.

Units A2 and B2 will be assessed by a single project-based assessment, respectively, which you will submit at the end of the end of the course/module. For each assessment, you will be required to submit your development work 2-3 times for formative assessment. You will receive detailed qualitative feedback for your development work in advance of submitting work for summative assessment.

For each summative assessment, you will receive either a fail, pass merit or distinction, demonstrating the level to which you have met (or not met) the learning outcomes for that assessment.

The overall grade for a module (and the overall qualification grade) will be calculated in accordance with points per assessment unit criteria and point boundaries outlined in 7.6.2 of the Pearson Higher Nationals in Interior Design Specification (first teaching September 2023).

All results (for individual assessments, units, modules and overall qualification grades) are provisional until verified by the BTEC External Examiner during the External Examiner visit.

Duration of Programme

You may take up to 3 years to complete the HNC (Level 4) and may take up to 4 years to complete the HND (Level 5). You are able to study at a guided pace, with appropriate deadlines ensuring the completion of learning activities, formative and summative assessments.

Appropriate time for reflection and critical engagement with your own work, and the work of others is built into the cadence of the programme. You will be provided with an assignment calendar at the start of their programme, enabling you to plan your approach to both formative and summative assessment, and to promote timely completion of the programme within the overall maximum timeframe.



Entry Requirements

To give you a reasonable chance at successful completion, the programme begins with a non-credit, preparatory **Foundation Unit to support your transition into Higher Education**. This unit forms the foundation of your success on the Interior Design programme. It introduces the core principles of interior design, equipping you with a baseline understanding of spatial planning, form, and function within built environments. You will engage with essential design concepts, explore common materials and processes, and begin to apply industry-relevant techniques such as technical drawing and model making. The unit also supports the development of key transferable skills including time management, visual communication, and critical thinking. Through self-directed activities and reflective tasks, you will begin to build the habits of independent learning and professional awareness expected of emerging designers.

This unit is a valuable foundation for everything that follows in your Higher National studies. The foundation unit consists of four lessons and assessments, preparing you with the skills and knowledge essential to study at level 4 (HNC). The final assessment will test the overall knowledge acquisition.

Alternatively, you may skip the Foundation Unit if you have one of the following formal academic qualifications:

There are no formal academic requirements for entry into the programme. However, in order for you to have a reasonable chance at successful completion you are likely to hold one of the following:

- a BTEC Level 3 qualification in Art and Design or Media
- a GCE Advanced Level profile that demonstrates strong performance in a relevant subject or adequate performance in more than one GCE subject. This profile is likely to be supported by GCSE grades at A* to C (or equivalent) and/or 9 to 4 (or equivalent) in subjects such as maths and English
- relevant work experience, or
- an international equivalent to the above qualifications.

If English is not your native language you will need to demonstrate your capability in English meets the standard equivalent to the levels identified below.

- Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) level B2
- Pearson Test of English (PTE) Academic 51
- IELTS 5.5; Reading and Writing must be at 5.5
- or equivalent.

Academic Team

The academic team comprises a Programme Leader who oversees the effective delivery of the programme and who is supported by an Academic Administrator. Additional Tutors support you for the duration of your course through the Online Learning Centre and in live group tutorials. Tutors also provide you with formative feedback on development work and assess completed work for summative assessment. The interior design tutors form part of a highly skilled and knowledgeable team.

Some of the tutors have more specialised qualifications and others have a broader knowledge of various, relevant topics. You will benefit from their varied and vocationally relevant industry knowledge. Assessment decisions are internally verified by the academic team in line with BTEC standards.



External Examiner & Quality Assurance

The Pearson BTEC Higher National Certificate (HNC) and the Pearson BTEC Higher National Diploma (HND) are higher education qualifications, aligned to the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) benchmarks, and are part of the Ofqual Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF).

The Academy is a BTEC Centre approved to offer BTEC qualifications. The programme adheres to the standards of BTEC which are verified as part of the BTEC External Examiner (EE) visit. There are normally two EE visits per year and these visits include the verification of student results, sampling student work and verification of the Academy's QA Policies and Procedures.

These policies and procedures are available to students within the student area of the Online Learning Centre and it is recommended that students periodically review these.

The Academy is also accredited by the British Accreditation Council as an online, distance and blended learning provider and is recognised by the International Approval and Registration Centre (IARC).

Additional Information:

Our Interior Design programme is the result of years of industry insight and educational expertise, carefully synthesised to meet the demands of contemporary design practice. The academic and teaching team comprises professionals who are deeply passionate about interior and spatial design and bring direct experience from a variety of commercial and creative contexts. The programme has been designed to be accessible and inclusive, supporting learners from diverse backgrounds in building a solid foundation of skills and knowledge.

We begin with the fundamentals of interior design, enabling students to develop a comprehensive understanding of spatial principles, design processes, materials, and professional standards. This structured approach provides a strong platform for progression—whether into employment within the design industry or into further study at Level 6 in a UK university.

While our focus remains on the practical and professional realities of working in interior design, the programme maintains a broad enough scope to enable students to explore related creative pathways, such as commercial and residential design, home staging, 2D and 3D CAD specialist, project management, or furniture design. Ultimately, interior design is a multifaceted discipline with a wide range of applications, and our programme blends hands-on learning with academic rigour to produce well-rounded, reflective, and adaptable designers, ready to thrive in a competitive and evolving creative industry.



