

# TRANSFORMING TRANSITIONS



## Aims of the Project:

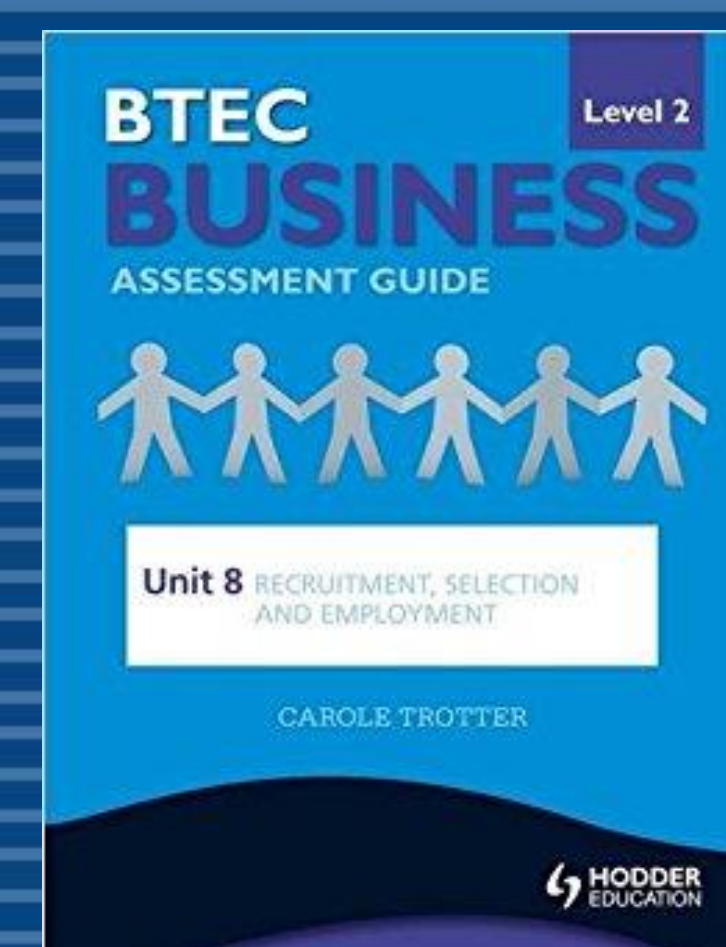
The purpose of the project is to develop evidence-based interventions to transform the transition of BTEC students into HE and in this way to reduce differential educational outcomes. This project aims to better understand and reduce the differential educational outcomes of BTEC students at selecting universities by:

- conducting an investigation intervention to explore BTEC students educational experiences across the FE/HE transition;
- designing, implementing and evaluating evidence-based interventions to address identified issues of transition.



## The Research 'Problem':

UCAS data indicates that selecting universities, such as those involved in this project, are less likely to recruit BTEC students than those with traditional qualifications. At the same time, recent research highlights differential outcomes for BTEC students as they progress through University. In terms of final outcomes, A level students are more likely to achieve a first than vocational students and students taking the BTEC Award and Diploma have a significantly lower probability of a first or at least an upper second than students taking an Applied A level. Evidence also suggests that BTEC students are more likely to drop out of university when compared with those on a traditional academic pathway, even when accounting for prior attainment. BTEC students in Russell Group universities are less likely to complete than those elsewhere; and the salary gap between BTEC students and traditional students, although narrowing, is significant and at its largest in Russell Groups universities.



## What are we going to do?

### Phase 1: Investigation

An in-depth exploration of the issue through:

- a statistical analysis of access, progression and employment of BTEC students in Sports Science, Business, and Computer Science
- a document analysis of curriculum content and assessment practices in the degree subject and in the corresponding FE accessing subjects (both A level and BTEC);
- a specific analysis of numeracy and literacy expectations in these subjects;
- an analysis of pedagogical approaches in these subjects through focus group interviews with teaching staff and students in both FE and HE settings;
- an analysis of student experiences of transition from FE to HE and the learning cultures they have experienced through focus group interviews with Year 1 students.

### Phase 2: Design and Implementation

Drawing on the findings of Phase 1, we will:

- Design and develop a suite of interventions to address identified issues;
- Develop a Theory of Change model for the interventions;
- Implement the interventions in at least two of the partner institutions.

### Phase 3: Evaluation

- Develop an Evaluation Framework to evaluate the interventions.

## The Project Team:

University of Exeter  
Exeter College  
University of Birmingham  
Hereford Sixth Form College  
Loughborough University  
Leicester College  
Queen Mary, University of London  
City and Islington College  
Pearson

## Legacy and Impact

- ❖ Partner Symposium to determine recommendations from the project, and a dissemination and publications strategy;
- ❖ a Widening Participation seminar in each institution, bringing together Deputy Vice-Chancellors with responsibility for Education, Widening Participation teams, and relevant subject academics to consider the final report and determine substantive actions as a consequence for each institution.
- ❖ host a cross-institutional and cross-sector (FE/HE) National BTEC Transitions Conference, with Pearson, to be held beyond the project timeframe to bring together key stakeholders to share, discuss and consider the implications of our work.

