Getting set for delivering
BTEC Esports

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BRITISH
ESPORTS

Introduction

Pearson has partnered with *British Esports*, the not-for-profit organisation established to promote and support grassroots esports, to create the world's first qualification of its kind for a career in esports.

Starting the process of delivering a new qualification in a sector that is brand new to your centre can be daunting – but it doesn't need to be.

This guide will help you get set for delivering BTEC qualifications in esports.

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What is esports?

Esports is **organised, competitive, human-versus-human video-gaming** where people play against each other online and at live spectator events.

It is played by both **amateurs and professionals** and is open to all, regardless of gender, physical or mental ability.

It can be played on **PCs, consoles, and mobiles**. Depending on the game, the format can be 1v1, 2v2, 3v3, 4v4, 5v5, 6v6 and so on. At the top level, leading global teams and players can earn significant sums in wages and prizemoney each year.

Esports can be **team-based** and is always played against another person or people, therefore it is more social and more beneficial than the stereotypical perceptions of solo video-gaming.

In the UK, esports is **classified as a game**, like chess and bridge, not a sport. In some other countries around the world, where 'mind' games are classified differently, esports is recognised as a sport.

What is esports?

Before you start

What are the key things you need to think about before starting to deliver the Level 3 BTEC in Esports? The most important aspects to consider can be broken down into three primary areas:

• **Staffing**

• **Facilities**

• **Digital infrastructure**

Staffing

So, let's start with staffing. The first, and perhaps most important thing to remember is that you don't need to head out to find and employ a qualified teacher with a background in esports, which is handy because there are very

few of those in existence. That's the beauty of the BTEC in esports, it's fresh, new, and exciting! But don't panic, there is a solution and it's probably already in place at your school or college.

Without going into extensive details and dissecting the specification of the twenty units available as you can do that, let's simplify the list of units into staffing groups.

When you look at the table (right) suddenly, the situation looks far from scary, in fact it looks more than achievable.

Introduction to Esports (mandatory)	Esports Skills, Strategies and Analysis (mandatory)	Enterprise and Entrepreneurship in the Esports Industry (mandatory)	Health, Wellbeing and Fitness for Esports Players (mandatory)
Esports Events (mandatory)	Live-streamed Broadcasting	Producing an Esports Brand	Video Production
Games Design	Business Applications of Esports in social media	Shoutcasting	Esports Coaching
Psychology for Esports Performance	Nutrition for Esports Performance	Ethical and Current Issues in Esports	Corporate Social Responsibility in Sport
Sports and Esports Law and Legislation	Launching Your Esports Enterprise	Customer Immersion Experiences	Computer Networking

Key

Requires Specialist Esports knowledge
Requires some knowledge of Esports that can be learnt
Can be delivered by existing staff

As you can see, **18 of the units are deliverable by existing staff** including teachers from business, sport, law, media, IT, computing, games design, marketing, and accountancy. I would suggest that two of the units require a level of knowledge of esports and / or gaming, those being Unit 2 (Esports Skills, Strategies and Analysis) and Unit 12 (Esports Coaching). Both units discuss and require the delivery of elements that are specific to esports, but at the same time they're related to an understanding of gaming. In both instances this knowledge can be quickly picked up by a teacher, but you will find that one of your staff is a keen gamer and will already understand those elements.

More importantly the students will understand all those elements which makes the teaching of them much easier. Unit 12 is an optional unit so you may choose not to deliver this if it becomes problematic, but Unit 2 is mandatory for all qualifications within the BTEC, so it does need to be tackled, but it really isn't anything to be worried about. This is discussed more in a **previous blog on the Pearson website**.

The most important part of the above table is that there are **no red units!** That is because the qualification has been designed in such a way that makes it **deliverable by any college or school across the country**. Do not fear the BTEC in esports – be excited!

Staffing

Facilities

This can be viewed in a few ways; is it a tricky one? Is it an expensive option? Is it an amazing opportunity? The answer - potentially all three; but it represents an amazing opportunity.

As with anything like this you will be restricted by budget and depending what that budget is will dictate the level of facilities you will decide upon. Again, the beauty of the BTEC is that you **don't need to have a huge esports arena** with 50 top end gaming PCs to run the course. However, you do have to have some gaming facilities which I'll talk about in a bit.

Appreciating a budget consideration, if I was to take an overview of setting up your esports facility I would recommend two key points. Firstly, try to create an **esports centre that offers maximum capability at the first time of trying**. I have been involved in numerous projects around the country where esports centres have been created and whatever the build, the demand will soon outstrip the facility and it becomes much more expensive to then extend or build another arena than it is to do it right the first time round. Your recruitment will justify the expense and all the other opportunities creating such an environment will offer you.

You may be interested to read more on this subject in **'The Wow Factor'** where I discuss the wider context of creating an esports facility in your school or college. One thing to bear in mind while discussing this is the expectation of students. When they sign up for an esports course they will have a level of expectation when they think of the facilities. Many will have their own gamer set-ups at home so they'll be looking for that 'wow factor' which will also impact on your recruitment.

The second key bit of advice I would offer is that due to the complex nature and requirements of setting up a centre I would **highly recommend using a company who can deliver all elements of the build including the furniture, lighting, PCs, chairs, peripherals, software,** etc. Here at QMC our arena **partners** did a fantastic job creating a first class environment and have since gone on to build many more.
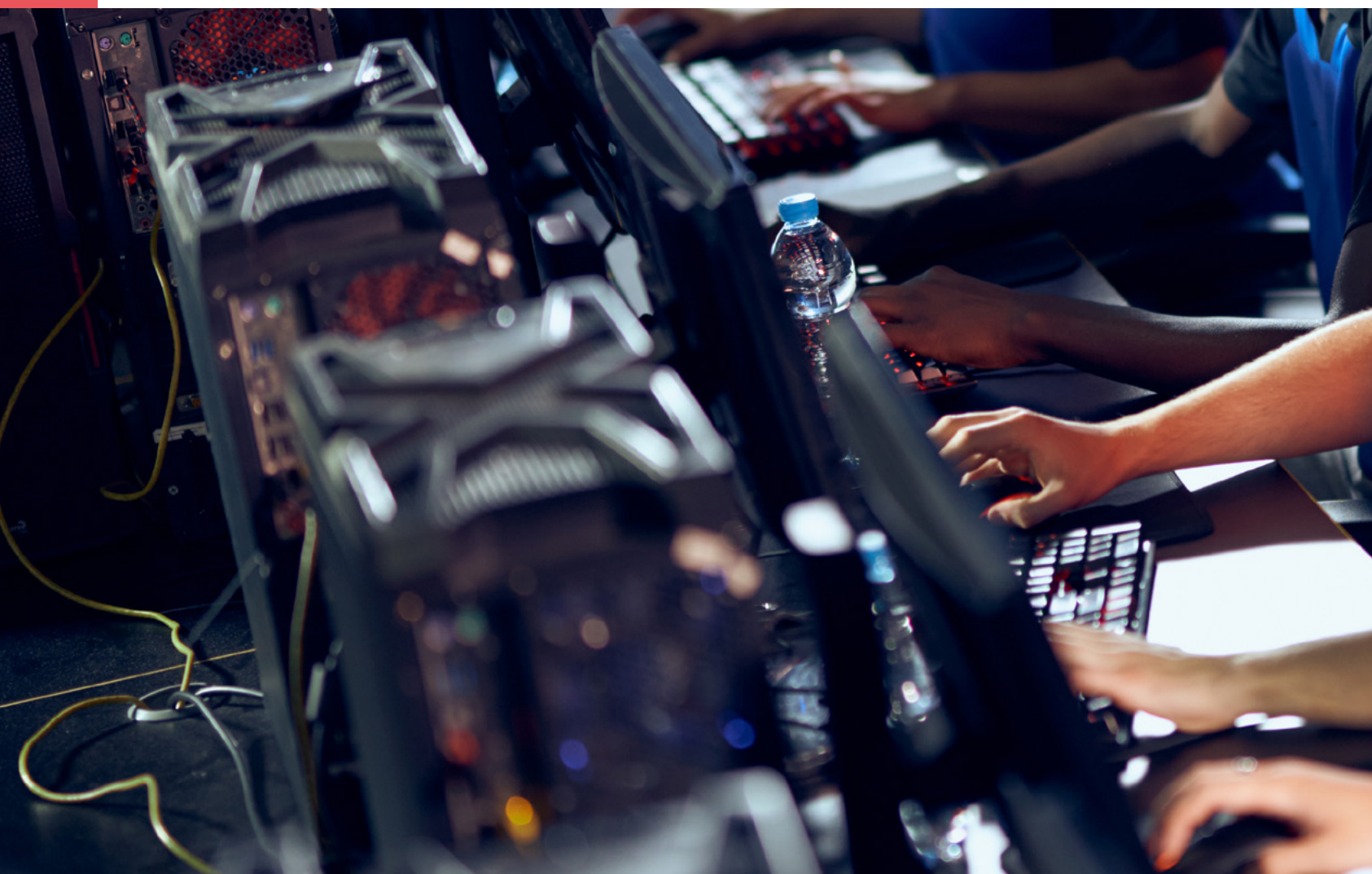
The next area to tackle is what sort of gaming PCs should you install. Your IT team will be able to support you with this but after a quick discussion with **Dan Brooks**, our IT esports apprentice who looks after our arenas, the kind of 'minimum' specification for a PC you should be looking at is as follows:

Minimum Hardeware specification

- **GTX 1080 / i5-8600k @3.60GHz / 16GB Ram / 1TB HD / 250GB SSD / A compatible Motherboard** (I.e., Prime Z370-P) / compatible and good fans / a powerful enough power supply

- **In terms of a monitor, you'd want a 144hz monitor at minimum** (I.e., AOC Gaming 24G2U 144hz)
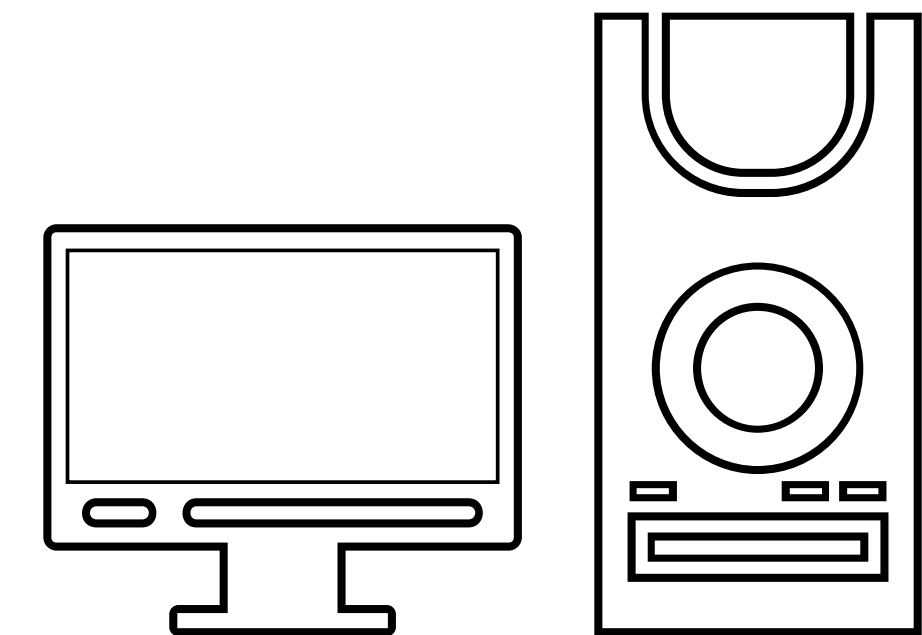
Then you need to consider the software to install on the machines. I would highly recommend an arena software management programme such as **GG Leap** and **GG Rock** which are packages offered by **GG Circuit** but there are others available. Then we get down to the nitty gritty of the gaming side. Here is a recommended list of software to use:

Finally, you have your peripherals to think about, these are things like a **mouse, keyboards, mouse mats and don't forget your chairs**. There are a wide range of these available which includes a very wide range in prices. It's important that you spend your money wisely and in the right places!

Recommended software

- To access games (free): *Steam, Origin, Epic Games, Riot, BattleNet,*
- For communication you'll need Discord (free) and for streaming and recording you won't go far wrong with *OBS/Streamlabs OBS* which are free.
- The following games are all free to play: *Rocket league (Epic Games), League of Legends (Riot), Valorant (Riot), Apex Legends (Steam/Origin)*
- The following games are paid for games: *Overwatch (BattleNet), FIFA (Steam/Origin), Minecraft (Minecraft)*
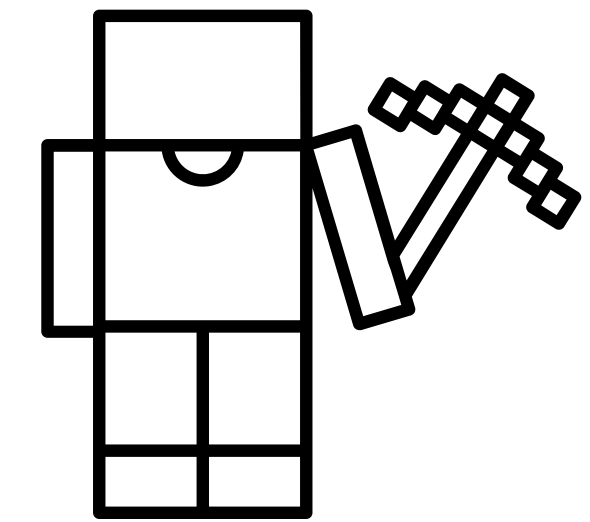
All these games require logins and accounts that should be set up beforehand and can be managed by software as mentioned above. Most students/users will have their own logins, but it is immensely helpful to have your own.

Facilities

Digital infrastructure

Now the digital infrastructure required for the installation of an esports facility **will depend on what sort of centre you are building, and the requirements will be different**. This side of the arena build is way too complex for me to explain, but I think the following will help and IT staff will be able to relate.
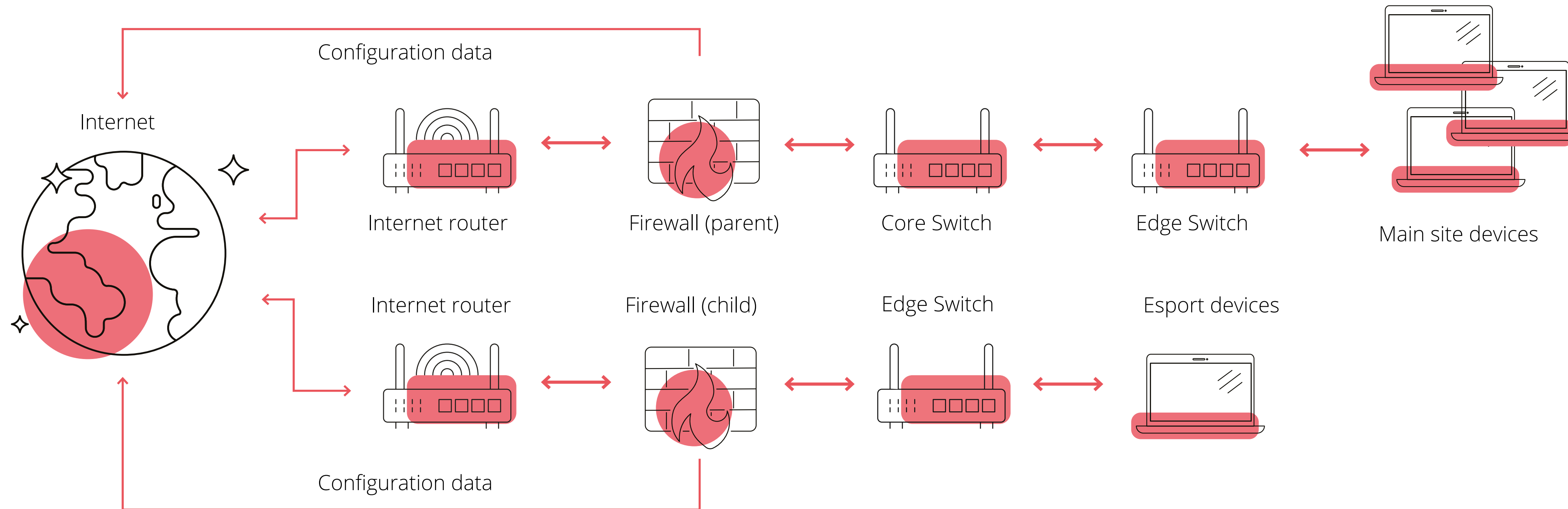
The excerpt below comes from an open-source document produced by Shahpor Golshani who is the Head of IT & Digital Solutions at Queen Mary's College.

*Right from the beginning of the development of our esports facilities at QMC it was established that **the only way to successfully allow for the security and usability of this solution was to isolate it from the main site systems**. This approach would not only meet the data security requirements, but also allows for a granular approach for access, along with benefiting from more robust performance availability. To that end, it was decided that a dedicated Internet Leased Line would be implemented, as well as physically distinct connectivity via the use of isolated switches and cabling. In addition, a new Firewall was included to complete the total disconnection between esports and main site systems. The systems were configured as follows: As shown, the firewalls were logically connected to allow for ease of configuration changes between the two. However, the setup allowed only one-way communication via a Parent-Child solution, with the main network firewall permitting its configuration to be replicated to the esports device but not visa-versa...* **Continued ›**

Configuration data

Internet

Internet router

Firewall (parent)

Core Switch

Edge Switch

Main site devices

Internet router

Firewall (child)

Edge Switch

Esport devices

Configuration data

It should also be noted that, again, the firewalls were not physically connected to each other despite sitting in the same network cabinet. This was achieved by using the two available Internet connections to transfer the data between the firewalls. The computers used were procured specifically for the esports activity and are of a much higher specification than would normally be considered for an education device. This was a necessary requirement because of the need to ensure good performance whilst playing games, which is a very important factor, especially when the competitive component of esports is considered."

Digital infastructure

Delivering esports

Back in September 2021, I began writing a blog for Pearson, 'A Year in the Life of Teaching Esports BTEC' with the first instalment **Game, set and match Eesports!** I have been adding to the blog since and will continue to do so, but I'd like to highlight a couple of key considerations when delivering the BTEC in esports for this guide.

The first point for discussion is the notion that **'esports' is quite different from 'gaming'** despite the fact the two are intricately linked. When students start their studies there is clearly an excitement that you can almost taste which means you've already got them hooked and if you deliver the course well your engagement, retention and achievement will look after itself. I document in the blog my experiences delivering the course from the start of the year and I decided to rip up my plans after the first lesson. It was very evident there was a clear need to facilitate a way to get the students to change their mindset from gaming to esports.

I set an **initial diagnostic test** which required the learners to create a glossary of 30 words they associated with esports. This enabled me to look gain an insight into their perceptions of esports and more importantly it identified several types of students and how they interacted or engaged with both gaming and esports. From this information a series of short research tasks were set specifically relating to esports in a bid to change the mindset and get them thinking about esports as an industry. The teaching of Unit 1 could then begin which is a great starting point to embed industry knowledge into their learning as the organisations, leagues, tournaments, and the relationship between esports and traditional sports could be firmly understood. This provided the foundation for the rest of the course.

There are many ways in which you can sequence your delivery across the units, but I would recommend **taking this planning very seriously**. There are learning aims on different units that can be quite similar, for example the discussion of organisations in Unit 1 is closely linked to the way in which ethical issues are upheld and who upholds them in Unit 15. Through careful planning you can avoid repetition, explore opportunities for combined delivery of units and / or calculate optimum points for recap and reinforcement of key learning points. Time spent in the planning will reap the rewards in the long term.

The last point I'd like to mention involves resources you may need for delivery. **Pearson offer a wide range of resources which are freely available in additional to online training sessions** and roadshows to support colleges and schools across the country.

Another vital source of information that can't be ignored is the **British Esports** *(Formerly known as the British Esports Association)* website. There is an abundance of useful information, articles, interviews, contacts, and material relating to education backed by a wealth of knowledge and support.

Finally, if you're looking a kick start for teaching materials, there are full resources for Unit 1 and Unit 2 at my **TES Shop** and I'll be adding more along the way. Feel free to contact me if you wanted to discuss any of the above and I'll be more than happy to help

Delivering esports