Qualification Specification

iBT4C9 – VTCT Skills (ITEC) Level 4 Certificate in Hair Reduction Treatments using Intense Pulsed Light (IPL) Systems

610/7816/5

About VTCT Skills

VTCT Skills is a market-leading specialist vocational and technical Awarding Organisation.

We offer a comprehensive range of qualifications, assessments and services in 17 sectors, including Hairdressing, Beauty, Logistics and Early Years. Working closely with employers and training providers, our ranges are backed by industry and trusted around the world.

With over 3,000 training locations, we help over 120,000 learners achieve professional skills that transform their lives, every year.

For more information, please visit our website or contact our dedicated Customer Support Team via email; customersupport@vtctskills.org.uk or call +44 (0)23 8068 4500.

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1 Qualification at a glance

Qualification title	VTCT Skills (ITEC) Level 4 Certificate in Hair Reduction Treatments using Intense Pulsed Light (IPL) Systems
Qualification number	610/7816/5
Product code	iBT4C9
First registration date	1st September 2026
Age range	18+
Total Qualification Time (TQT)	241
Guided Learning Hours (GLH)	168
Assessment	To be awarded this qualification, learners must successfully achieve the following assessments: • Theory examinations • Assignments – Short Answer Response (SAR) • Formative Treatment Portfolio • Summative practical examination
Grading	The overall qualification is graded: • Pass/Fail
Entry requirements	Learners are required to hold a level 3 beauty therapy or equivalent qualification that includes level 3 anatomy and physiology, or the level 3 certificate in access to aesthetic therapies.

2 About this qualification

2.1 Who is this qualification for?

The VTCT Skills (ITEC) Level 4 Certificate in Hair Reduction Treatments using Intense Pulsed Light Systems is an advanced non-medical aesthetics therapy qualification aimed at level 3 qualified practitioners aged 18 and over, who wish to add hair growth reduction to their repertoire of treatment offerings.

Learners are required to hold a recognised level 3 beauty therapy qualification, or an equivalent qualification.

2.2 What does this qualification cover?

This qualification has been designed to reflect current industry expectations and relevant professional and regulatory guidance for advanced non-medical aesthetic therapies. It includes the required elements for practitioners to work effectively and safely as hair growth reduction practitioners using Intense Pulsed Light (IPL) systems.

Learners must achieve all mandatory units, which encompass the competencies, knowledge and professional standards expected within advanced non-medical aesthetic practice. These units ensure that practitioners are able to evidence their competence and work in accordance with agreed standards of professional and ethical practice.

This qualification integrates professional and regulatory guidance relevant to light-based hair growth reduction procedures, with a strong emphasis on professionalism, health and safety, client consultation and treatment planning.

Learners must achieve all mandatory units which include:

- Core of knowledge for laser and light-based devices
- Principles, practices, and ethical considerations for advanced aesthetic therapies
- Consultative techniques in advanced aesthetic therapies
- Dermatological science for advanced aesthetic therapies
- Provide hair reduction treatments using Intense Pulsed Light (IPL) systems

Throughout this qualification, learners will develop their knowledge and understanding of relevant anatomy and physiology and health and safety requirements applicable to level 4 non-medical aesthetic therapies. They will also develop the knowledge, understanding and practical skills required to consult with, analyse and assess clients, and to provide safe and effective IPL hair reduction treatments in line with professional and regulatory expectations.

2.3 Why is this qualification the most suitable?

This qualification is highly suitable for individuals aiming to advance their careers in the aesthetics industry. The demand for non-medical aesthetics practitioners has grown significantly, extending beyond the scope of level 3 Beauty Therapists. This qualification addresses this demand by providing comprehensive training in hair growth reduction. The qualification ensures practitioners can evidence their competence, commitment to public safety, and adherence to agreed standards of practice.

2.4 What could this qualification lead to?

The primary purpose of this qualification is to prepare learners for employment in the advanced aesthetic industry providing hair reduction treatments using Intense Pulsed Light (IPL) systems.

Additionally, learners may choose to further develop their knowledge and skills by completing supplementary specialist qualifications at level 4 and 5 in one or more of the following areas:

- Level 4 Award/Certificate in Hair Reduction Treatments using LASER Systems
- Level 4 Award/Certificate in Skin Rejuvenation Treatments using LASER Systems
- Level 4 Award/Certificate in Skin Rejuvenation Treatments using Intense Pulsed Light (IPL) Systems
- Level 5 Certificate in LASER Tattoo Removal
- Level 5 Certificate in Non-surgical Aesthetic Procedures for Skin Rejuvenation

3 Qualification structure

To be awarded the VTCT Skills (ITEC) Level 4 Certificate in Hair Reduction Treatments using Intense Pulsed Light (IPL) Systems learners must achieve all mandatory units.

To be awarded this qualification learners must achieve a Pass grade in:

- Theory examinations
- Assignments – Short Answer Response (SAR)
- Formative Treatment Portfolio
- Summative practical examination

The minimum TQT required to achieve this qualification is 241 hours.

Product code	Unit title	Level	GLH	Unit reference number
Mandatory units				
UBT533	Core of knowledge for laser and light-based devices	4	5	L/652/3150
UBT501	Principles, practices, and ethical considerations for advanced aesthetic therapies	4	40	J/651/6101
UBT502	Consultative techniques in advanced aesthetic therapies	4	43	K/651/6102
UBT503	Dermatological science for advanced aesthetic therapies	4	50	L/651/6103
iUBT534	Provide hair reduction treatments using Intense Pulsed Light (IPL) systems	4	30	D/652/3165

4 Centre requirements

4.1 Approval and recognition

Existing centres that wish to deliver this qualification must obtain recognition using the standard qualification recognition procedures.

New centres that want to deliver this qualification must gain both centre approval and qualification recognition. Please refer to the VTCT Skills website for further information.

Centre staff should be familiar with current practices and standards in the sector and with the qualification structure, content, assessment and quality assurance arrangements before designing a course programme.

4.2 Resources

Centres must possess the physical resources needed to support the delivery of the programme and the assessment of knowledge and skills, which should therefore be of industry standard. Centres must ensure they have sufficient resources to enable learners to work independently during their summative practical examination. Where specific resources are required, these have been indicated in individual units.

4.3 Teaching staff

Teaching staff will assess and mark the assignments (SARs) and formative treatments. Teaching staff must ensure assessment decisions are consistently applied and that learners' work is to the required standard. The VTCT Skills external examiner will verify a sample, in situ either on the day of the practical examination or remotely on e-portfolio. Assessment decisions must be standardised to ensure that all learners' work has been assessed to the same standard and is fair, valid and reliable.

In order to deliver this qualification, teaching staff must:

- Be occupational experts and have knowledge and understanding in the area for which they are delivering training. This knowledge must be at the same level as or higher than the training being delivered
- Hold an appropriate qualification or accredited training in the subject to be taught. In the absence of a regulated qualification, staff members will be required to demonstrate Continued Professional Development (CPD) with accredited training providers, for each qualification that the approval application lists. Staff would then be required to agree to update their training to a full qualification within 18 months of being approved to deliver. If for any reason the staff member fails to achieve the qualification, the centre would be required to find another competent member of staff to deliver the program or forfeit the right to deliver the qualification
- Understand the qualification's structure and content, and the learning outcomes they are delivering
- Have recent and relevant industry experience in the specific area they are delivering
- Have credible experience of teaching and/or providing training
- Hold or be actively pursuing an appropriate teaching/training qualification
- Undertake activities which contribute to their Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

4.4 Record keeping

Centres must produce and retain records that include:

- Learners on programme, including learner name, date of birth, contact details, teacher's/assessors name, and registration date with VTCT Skills
- Formative treatment portfolio to include assessment forms, consultation forms for each treatment and a pre-examination assessment form

4.5 Total Qualification Time (TQT)

TQT is defined by regulators, as the number of notional hours which represents an estimate of the total amount of time that could reasonably be expected to be required in order for a learner to achieve and demonstrate achievement of the level of attainment necessary for the award of a qualification.

TQT is comprised of the following two elements;

- the number of hours which an awarding organisation has assigned to a qualification for Guided Learning, and
- an estimate of the number of hours a learner will reasonably be likely to spend in preparation, study or any other form of participation in education or training, including assessment, which takes place as directed – but, unlike Guided Learning, not under the immediate guidance or supervision of – a lecturer, supervisor, tutor or other appropriate provider of education or training.

The TQT for this qualification is detailed in Section 3 of this specification.

5 Assessment

5.1 Summary of assessment methods

This qualification comprises internal and external assessments. Learners must achieve the assessments detailed in the table below.

Assessment method	Overview of controls
Theory examination	Externally set and externally marked examination.
Assignment – Short Answer Response (SAR)	Externally set and internally marked.
Formative treatment portfolio	Externally set and internally marked. Learners must complete **a minimum of 5 treatments** on **at least 3 different clients** covering the scope and range related to the performance criteria.
Summative practical examination	Externally set and externally assessed.

Internal assessment materials are available to download from the VTCT Skills website.

5.2 Unit assessment methods

The table below identifies the assessment methods used to assess mandatory units.

Unit product code	Theory examinations	Assignments – Short Answer Response (SAR)	Formative treatment portfolio	Summative practical examination
UBT533	✓			
UBT501	✓	✓		
UBT502	✓	✓		
UBT503	✓	✓		
iUBT534	✓		✓	✓

5.3 External assessment

5.3.1 Test specification

The specification for the theory examination is detailed below.

Theory examination – iBT4C9.OEX	
Availability (Exam sessions)	On demand
Assessment controls	Task setting – high control. The external examination is set and marked by VTCT Skills. Task taking – high control. The examination must take place under controlled examination conditions. Centres must ensure that learners are suitably prepared for assessment. Task marking – high control. The examination is marked by VTCT Skills.
Duration	112 Minutes
Number of marks	54
Grading model	Pass/Fail
Units covered	• UBT501 – Principles, practices, and ethical considerations for advanced aesthetic therapies • UBT502 – Consultative techniques in advanced aesthetic therapies • UBT503 – Dermatological science for advanced aesthetic therapies
Type of examination	An individual subject specific examination made up of multiple-choice questions, to cover the assessment criteria within the above units.

Theory examination – UBT533	
Availability (Exam sessions)	On demand
Assessment controls	Task setting – high control. The external examination is set and marked by VTCT Skills. Task taking – high control. The examination must take place under controlled examination conditions. Centres must ensure that learners are suitably prepared for assessment. Task marking – high control. The examination is marked by VTCT Skills.
Duration	36 minutes
Number of marks	18
Grading model	Pass/Fail
Units covered	• UBT533 – Core of knowledge for laser and light-based devices
Type of examination	An individual subject specific examination made up of multiple-choice questions, to cover the assessment criteria within the above unit.

Theory examination - iUBT534	
Availability (Exam sessions)	On demand
Assessment controls	Task setting – high control. The theory examination is set and marked by VTCT Skills. Task taking – high control. The theory examination must take place under controlled examination conditions. Centres must ensure that learners are suitably prepared for assessment. Task marking – high control. The examination is marked by VTCT Skills.
Duration	90 minutes
Number of marks	45
Grading model	Pass/Fail
Units covered	• iUBT534 – Provide hair reduction treatments using Intense Pulsed Light (IPL) systems
Type of examination	An individual subject specific examination made up of multiple-choice questions, to cover the assessment criteria within the above unit.

Examinations must be undertaken by learners under controlled examination conditions in accordance with VTCT Skills policies and procedures for external assessment.

5.3.2 Retaking theory examinations

Learners who fail to achieve the required Pass mark are permitted to re-sit after having sufficient teaching and additional study time. There is no limit to the number of retakes a learner can carry out.

5.3.3 Reasonable adjustments and special considerations

Information on the reasonable adjustments allowed for the theory examinations within this qualification can be found in the Policies section on the VTCT Skills website.

5.3.4 External practical examination

Practical examinations are externally set, externally examined, graded and quality assured by VTCT Skills. Information on how to operate practical examinations can be found on the VTCT Skills website.

In preparation for the external practical examination, centres must ensure learners have carried out a series of formative practical treatments, in accordance with the awarding organisation's marking criteria, which must be observed and marked by the teaching staff. All treatments must be deemed commercially acceptable by the teaching staff.

It is essential centres use the 'Practical Examination Marking Criteria' document in order to make assessment judgments when preparing for examinations. This can be found on a secure portal area on the VTCT Skills website.

The practical examination preparation must take place in a realistic working environment on a real client and in a commercially acceptable time frame for each mandatory unit that contains a practical element.

Summative practical examination	
Availability (Practical exam sessions)	To be taken on the scheduled date for examination purposes as agreed by VTCT Skills and the external practical examiner.
Assessment controls	Task setting – high control. The external practical examination is set and examined by VTCT Skills. Task taking – high control. The examination must take place under controlled examination conditions. Centres must ensure that learners are suitably prepared for assessment. Task marking – high control. The examination is marked by VTCT Skills.
Grading model	Pass/Fail
Units covered	• iUBT534 – Provide hair reduction treatments using Intense Pulsed Light (IPL) systems
Type of examination	All practical examinations must be conducted in a controlled environment defined by VTCT Skills. The practical examination will be conducted by an external examiner; however, the centre is responsible for ensuring the examination can operate seamlessly by organising the process. You must adhere to the 'Regulations and Procedures for Operating Practical Examinations' which can be found on the website. The marking criteria and marking scheme can be found under each individual unit within the qualification. Failure to operate examinations as documented in the 'Regulations and Procedures for Operating Practical Examinations' may result in sanction(s) against the centre for example, withdrawal by VTCT Skills for a particular qualification and/or withdrawal of VTCT Skills recognition from the centre due to maladministration and/or malpractice.

5.3.5 Retaking external practical examination

Learners who fail to achieve the required Pass mark are permitted to re-sit after having sufficient teaching and additional study time.

5.4 Internal assessment

5.4.1 Assignments A & B – Short Answer Response (SAR)

These on demand summative assignments will be used to measure the learner's knowledge and understanding of the supporting theory linked to advanced non-medical aesthetic treatments. The short answer response assignments will target indicative content from within the mandatory unit specifications which is of a lower priority compared to the knowledge and understanding assessed in the theory examinations. For example, the historical context of aesthetic treatments. Centres can access the short answer response assignments via the VTCT Skills website.

5.4.2 Formative treatment portfolio

The formative treatment portfolio is an evidence requirement which must be completed prior to learners undertaking the summative practical examination.

VTCT Skills specifies the amount of formative treatments to be carried out and evidenced in the portfolio within the unit specifications. These can be found on the VTCT Skills website on the relevant qualification page.

Formative treatments must cover the assessment criteria and the defined scope and range in the unit specifications, while supporting learners in preparing for the practical examinations. The purpose of this portfolio is to evaluate learner performance and use the information gathered to shape and improve learners' performance in preparation for summative practical examination. Centres should also consider the use of formative self and peer assessment as part of the learning journey.

The formative treatments will be marked pass or fail by the centre teaching staff and sampled by the external examiner.

5.4.3 Authentication of learner work

Whilst the majority of units in this qualification require evidence to be produced for assessment under direct supervision and highly controlled conditions, some units require learners to produce evidence without supervision.

Where this is the case, centres must be confident that learners' work is authentic. In such cases, learners must complete a Declaration of Authenticity to confirm that the work produced is their own. This must be countersigned by an assessor. A Declaration of Authenticity form is available to download from the VTCT Skills website.

Centres must ensure that all learner evidence is available to the examiner.

The authentication of learner evidence is the responsibility of the centre.

6 External Examiner

6.1 External Examiner visits

This qualification is externally examined by VTCT Skills. Centres delivering this qualification will have a quality assurance visit each time an examiner visits the centre.

On a centre visit an examiner;

- examines all learners entered for the external practical examination
- samples learners' internal assessments
- verifies that appropriate staff and sufficient resources are in place, and that the centre is continuing to meet the criteria specified in the centre contract
- checks that the centre's policies and procedures continue to meet the awarding organisation's requirements
- verifies internal assessments.

6.2 Spot checking

In addition to the scheduled practical examination visits, targeted and unannounced spot checks of centres delivering this qualification will be undertaken as part of the awarding organisation's formal quality assurance process.

6.3 Support and guidance

Unit specifications, consultation sheets and internal assessment materials are available to support qualification delivery and assessment.

For more information, visit the VTCT Skills website.

7 Unit structure

Units are available as separate specifications and can be downloaded from the VTCT Skills website. Units that make up this qualification are structured as follows:

Product code	The code allocated by the awarding organisation. This should be used when communicating directly with the awarding organisation.
Title	Reflects the content of the unit.
Unit reference number	This is the unit reference number as detailed on Ofqual's Register of Regulated Qualifications.
Level	This represents the level of achievement. The National Qualifications Framework level descriptors and similar qualifications at this level inform the allocation of the unit level.
Guided Learning Hours (GLH)	All units have GLH assigned to them. This is the time a learner spends: • being taught or given instruction by a teacher or other appropriate provider of education or training
Overview	Provides a summary of what learners will cover in a unit, and outlines the knowledge, understanding and skills to be developed.
Learning outcomes	Specify what a learner will know, understand and be able to do as a result of completing a unit.
Assessment criteria	Assessment criteria specify the minimum standard required by the learner to achieve the Pass grade. Learners must provide sufficient and valid evidence to achieve the grade.
Taught content	Provides the basis for the teaching, learning and assessment of each learning outcome. Teachers should ensure that the full breadth of unit content is delivered.
Assessment requirements	Details the assessments that must be completed and achieved to be awarded a unit. For more information on assessment methods see Section 5 of this specification.

Document History

Version	Issue Date	Changes	Role
v1	01/09/2026	First published	Development Administrator
v2	16/10/2026	UBT533 exam amended to 18 questions	Development Administrator