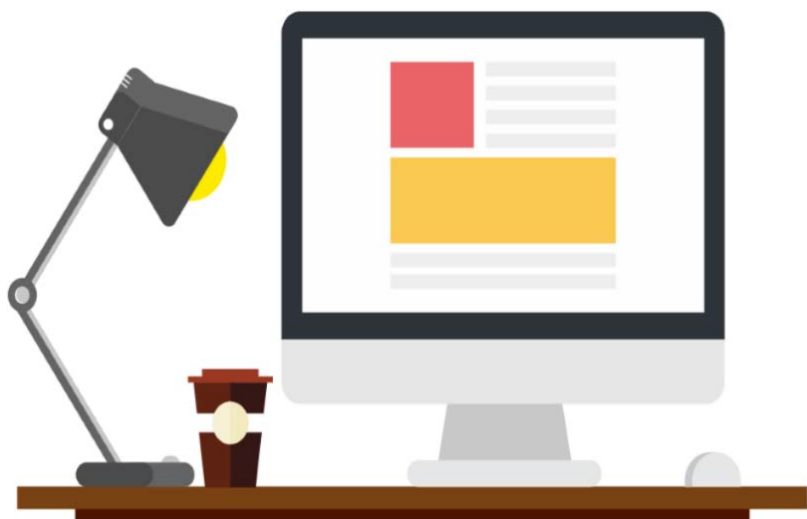




DIGITAL



Access to HE Diploma









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The Access to Higher Education (HE) Diploma Overview

The Access to HE Diploma is regulated by the Quality Assurance Agency for HE (QAA). It is a qualification which prepares people that generally do not have traditional qualifications for study at degree level. Most Access to HE courses can be completed in one year. However, learners can also study part-time over two or more years. Diploma courses can be delivered by classroom or distance learning or a combination of the two – blended learning. The Access to HE Diploma is widely recognised by most UK universities and many actively encourage applications from Access to HE learners. Each year, around 25,000 Access to HE learners are accepted onto a degree course at a UK university to study in a wide range of subjects.

The Access to HE Diploma attracts UCAS tariff points. Learners are registered for mandatory units to the value of 60 credits at the start of their course. Open Awards Access to HE units are either 3 or 6 credits each. The combination of units in a Diploma is chosen when it is submitted for approval by the course provider. Diploma titles reflect the intended progression route or main area of study, e.g. Access to HE Diploma (Nursing), Access to HE Diploma (Humanities).

Open Awards currently offers Access to HE Diplomas in the following subject areas. If you are an Access to HE Diploma course provider and you would like to offer a Diploma from a different subject, please contact the team to discuss on 0151 494 2072 or AHED@openawards.org.uk

	Business and Management		Creative and Performing Arts
	Digital		Construction and the Built Environment
	Health		Humanities and Social Science
	Science and Engineering		Leisure, Travel and Tourism

If you are a learner and would like to enquire about Access to HE Diploma courses, you can contact Open Awards at AHED@openawards.org.uk or your local colleges.

About the Qualification

Subject pathway	Digital
Sector(s)	6.1 ICT Practitioners
Level	Level 3
Pricing Information	Please click here for more information
Review Date	The date your Diploma will be reviewed will depend on when it was validated. Validity dates of Diplomas can be found on Diploma approval confirmation letters and from Open Awards. All Diplomas will be re-validated, as a minimum, every 5 years.

Diploma Titles

Titles of Access to HE Diplomas are important as the title must reflect the intended HE destination for those learners undertaking the Diploma. The titles must conform to a QAA prescribed format:

Access to HE Diploma (name of subject/area of study/progression route)

Examples:

- Access to HE Diploma (Engineering)
- Access to HE Diploma (Humanities)
- Access to HE Diploma (Medical Health Professions)

Open Awards has a wide range of approved Access to HE Diploma titles which should be used in the first instance. If you are unable to find a suitable title, new titles can be considered. Contact the Access to HE team on 0151 494 2072 who will be able to advise on how to do this.

Recommended Diploma Titles

- Access to HE Diploma (Computing and ICT)
- Access to HE Diploma (Computing)
- Access to HE Diploma (Computer Science)

Qualification Structure

These are the rules which govern the combination of modules and units required to use to build your Access to HE Diploma.

Our Diploma Creator Tool (Merlin) and supportive Access to HE team will help guide you through the design process and make sure you follow the correct Rules of Combination.

Rules of Combination	
Credit Value	60 credits from modules within one pathway
Graded units	45 credits (at Level 3) These credits must have academic content.
Ungraded units	15 credits (at Level 2 or 3) These units may have academic or developmental content.
Using Alternative Modules	<p>You may include a choice of alternative module combinations in your Diploma where appropriate. For example for Careers in Business, you may choose to have both of the following module combinations in the same Diploma;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computing, Developmental and Commercial Aspects of Computing • Computing, Developmental and Maths for Computing <p>To do this you should submit your Diploma with some interchangeable modules of the same credit value. The Merlin Diploma Creator Tool will guide you through your selection.</p> <p>Please note: If you build your Diploma in this way, Administration Staff, Assessors, Internal Verifiers and anyone else involved in the registration and award of learners must be aware of the alternative combinations of units.</p>

Each pathway contains a number of modules including units that cover specific subject areas.

Diplomas must contain a minimum of 2 and no more than 4 modules from academic subjects to ensure that the content is coherent and relevant to the intended progression routes.

Modules and Units

Module: Commercial Aspects of Computing

Unit Name	Unit Reference Number (Graded)	Unit Reference Number (Ungraded)	Credit Value	Level
Communities and Sharing on the World Wide Web	GA33COM10	UA33COM10	3	3
Developing Spreadsheet Applications	GA33COM12	UA33COM12	3	3
Website Design and Development	GA33COM11	UA33COM11	3	3

Module: Computing

Unit Name	Unit Reference Number (Graded)	Unit Reference Number (Ungraded)	Credit Value	Level
Building Computer Systems	GA33COM13	UA33COM13	3	3
Computer Memory Architecture	GA33COM06	UA33COM06	3	3
Computer Systems Architecture	GA33COM01	UA33COM01	3	3
Database Principles and Design	GA33COM04	UA33COM04	3	3
Digital Forensics	GA33COM20	UA33COM20	3	3
Digital Graphics	GA33COM14	UA33COM14	3	3
Event Driven Programming	GA33COM09	UA33COM09	3	3
ICT Systems Lifecycle	GA33COM02	GA33COM02	3	3
Interactive Media Industry	UA33COM16	UA33COM16	3	3
IT Systems Security	GA33COM17	UA33COM17	3	3
Network Infrastructure Security	GA33COM21	UA33COM21	3	3
Networks and Communication Protocols	GA33COM07	UA33COM07	3	3
Principles of Computer Programming	GA33COM05	UA33COM05	3	3
Programming Using Objects	GA33COM03	UA33COM03	3	3
Stop Motion Animation	GA33COM18	UA33COM18	3	3
Structured Programming	GA33COM08	UA33COM08	3	3
Web Animation	GA33COM19	UA33COM19	3	3

Module: Maths for Computing

Unit Name	Unit Reference Number (Graded)	Unit Reference Number (Ungraded)	Credit Value	Level
Algorithms, Pseudocode and Trace Tables	GA33MTH07	UA33MTH07	3	3
Computer Logic	GA33MTH10	UA33MTH10	3	3
Coordinate Geometry	GA33MTH13	UA33MTH13	3	3
Integration	GA33MTH06	UA33MTH06	3	3
Matrices	GA33MTH15	UA33MTH15	3	3

Number Systems and Data Representation	GA33MTH11	UA33MTH11	3	3
Series and Partial Fractions	GA33MTH20	UA33MTH20	3	3

Module: Developmental

Unit Name	Unit Reference Number (Graded)	Unit Reference Number (Ungraded)	Credit Value	Level
Communication: Academic Essay Writing	N/A	UD33DEV23	3	3
Communication: Portfolio of Writing Exercises	N/A	UD33DEV29	3	3
Communication: Presentation Skills	N/A	UD33DEV25	3	3
Communication: Punctuation and Grammar Skills	N/A	UD23DEV21	2	3
Communication: Reading Strategies	N/A	UD23DEV20	2	3
Communication: Report Writing	N/A	UD33DEV24	3	3
Communication: Speaking and Listening Skills	N/A	UD23DEV19	2	3
Communication: Writing for Meaning	N/A	UD23DEV22	2	3
ICT: Advance Use of ICT	N/A	UD33DEV10	3	3
ICT: Advanced Word Processing	N/A	UD33DEV15	3	3
ICT: Using ICT	N/A	UD23DEV09	2	3
ICT: Using Presentation Software	N/A	UD23DEV11	2	3
ICT: Using Spreadsheets	N/A	UD23DEV13	2	3
ICT: Word Processing	N/A	UD23DEV14	2	3
Personal Development: Applying for HE	N/A	UD33DEV27	3	3
Personal Development: Setting Targets and Reflective Practice	N/A	UD33DEV28	3	3
Personal Development: Study Skills	N/A	UD33DEV26	3	3
Professional Behaviours	N/A	UD33DEV31	3	3
Research: Practical Research for Psychology	N/A	UD33DEV30	3	3
Science: Biological Practical Skills	N/A	UD33DEV31	3	3
Science: Introduction to Biology	N/A	UD23DEV06	2	3
Science: Introduction to Chemistry	N/A	UD23DEV08	2	3
Science: Introduction to Physics	N/A	UD23DEV07	2	3
Study Skills: Critical Analysis	N/A	UD33DEV18	3	3
Study Skills: Developing Research Skills	N/A	UD33DEV16	3	3
Study Skills: Using Research Skills	N/A	UD33DEV17	3	3
Use of Number: Data Handling and Probability	N/A	UD23DEV02	2	3

Use of Number: Maths Project	N/A	UD23DEV03	2	3
Use of Number: Measure and Shape	N/A	UD23DEV04	2	3
Use of Number: Numbers and Algebra	N/A	UD23DEV01	2	3

How to Build Your Access to HE Diploma with Open Awards

Open Awards allow providers to design bespoke Diplomas so long as the rules of combination can be met and the Diploma content is appropriate for the planned progression route. We provide a Diploma Creator Tool (also known as 'Merlin') which ensures that you are providing the right information.

Building your Access to HE Diploma is as easy as 1, 2, 3...



Selecting a Diploma Title: Firstly, consider what degree course(s) and career pathway(s) you would like to prepare your learners for and select a Diploma title that reflects this.



Choosing Content to Satisfy Rules of Combination: Secondly, build your Diploma by choosing modules and units from our bank according to the Rules of Combination set out above. When deciding upon the content, consideration should be given to the requirements of the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to which your learners are most likely to progress.



Submitting your Proposal: Thirdly, submit your proposal to us for review. We will consult with a range of stakeholders, such as HEIs themselves, other providers and moderators who will ensure that the content meets the intended purpose.

Submit your proposed Diploma for validation via the Open Awards secure portal. The team will check it through and seek stakeholder approval through a validation panel. The Diploma will then be presented to the Open Awards Access to HE Committee and Board of Trustees for final approval. You will be formally notified of the approval outcome including a date for commencement of delivery. This will be the date you requested on your Merlin.

Important: Once a named Diploma has been approved, the title and the units attached to the Diploma are fixed. Any changes required to a Diploma should be made according to the guidance below.

It is the provider's responsibility to ensure that learners are taught and assessed on the correct units. **If a learner has been taught and assessed for different units to those approved in the Diploma, they will not achieve the Diploma qualification.**

Amendments to Diplomas

Once your Access to HE Diploma has been approved by the Open Awards Board of Trustees it can only be amended through a formal change process. This section explains how this process works and gives an indication of the timescales involved.

Depending on the size and scope of the change you propose to your Diploma, it will be classified as either a minor or major change. The classification will determine the process that the change must follow to be approved.

The following table shows how we categorise these changes and the subsequent actions required.

Change Type	Change Description	Action Required
Minor Change	A change of up to 15 credits selected from existing modules within a validated Diploma as long as Open Awards consider that the change will not detract from the coherence of the Diploma, its suitability for the stated progression route, and the rules of combination are still met.	Minor Change Form to be completed and submitted through the Secure Portal.
Minor Change	Change to Diploma title using an existing Open Awards' approved title that aligns to the content and rationale of the Diploma.	
Minor Change	Addition of an alternative module to an existing validated Diploma, as long as this has the same credit value as the original module, and the alternative module is comparable in demand to its alternative. It must also align to the content and rationale of the Diploma.	
Major Change	A change to an existing approved Diploma involving 16 credits or more.	To be classed as a new Diploma. Diploma Creator Tool (Merlin) to be completed and submitted through the Secure Portal.
Major Change	A replacement of one or more modules by another from the same pathway.	

Other requested changes may also be considered and we will use our discretion as to the process to be followed to approve any change. Please refer to [Provider Handbook](#) for further information.

Diploma Revalidation

Once approved, your Diploma will be given a review date, normally 5 years from the Diploma Validation date. At this point, your Diploma will need to be revalidated. Revalidation follows a similar process as initial development and ensures that the content remains relevant and appropriate to the intended progression route.

Requesting New Units

If you cannot find the unit content you are looking for you may propose the content for a new unit. The unit will be considered by a panel of subject specialists from other Access providers, Higher Education Institution contacts and moderators before being submitted to the Open Awards Access to HE Committee and Board of Trustees for approval. Once approved, you will be able to include the unit in your Diploma from the start of the next academic year by requesting the change according to the guidance provided in the [Access to HE Provider Handbook](#). Please make sure that the replacement units do not affect the Rules of Combination for the Diploma e.g. only replace a graded unit with another graded unit, only replace Level 3 unit with another Level 3 unit.

Requesting New Modules and Pathways

We welcome business cases for the proposal of new modules and pathways, which can be submitted via AHED@openawards.org.uk. As changes to the programme structure may impact on some or all users of the Diploma, we will ensure that all relevant stakeholders are involved in the consultation process before any change is agreed and implemented. Changes should not be implemented in your Diplomas until you have written confirmation that the changes have been approved and you have requested the change to or a new Diploma.

All Open Awards Access to HE units are valid for a maximum period of 5 years following approval by the Access to HE Committee and Board of Trustees. Open Awards conduct reviews of a selection of units across the academic year to ensure that they remain fit for purpose.

Providers are invited to comment on the suitability of units as part of the review process before they are taken to panel for renewal.

Delivering this Qualification

Becoming a Centre

To deliver this qualification you must be a recognised Open Awards centre. For more information, [click here](#) or contact the team on 0151 494 2072.

Already Recognised? How to Deliver

If you are already a recognised Open Awards centre but you haven't delivered Access to HE before, please contact the team on 0151 494 2072 or AHED@openawards.org.uk to discuss your curriculum with the team.

Registering Learners

Access to HE learners should be **registered within 6 weeks** of the learner's individual start date or before the learner's official (usually UCAS) application deadline via the Open Awards [Secure Portal](#). Please make sure that learners are registered with the correct details and on the correct Diploma. If learners are registered incorrectly, there will be an administration charge to rectify errors. Learners can be added onto existing course runs but are subject to the 6-week registration deadline.

Amendments or late registrations may be requested up to 26 weeks from the learner's start date but are only considered in extenuating circumstances and on an individual basis. These requests may result in further investigations by Open Awards and control measures may be applied.

Learner registration data can be submitted using the provided 'LRF (Access to HE)' template or via a report generated from your own MIS system. The data provided must be in accordance with the **Access to the HE Data Specification** document which is available via the secure portal.

You will need to register your learners via the Open Awards portal. More information can be found in our [Access to HE Provider Handbook](#).

Assessment and Quality Assurance

Delivery of this qualification must be done so in accordance with QAA regulatory guidelines and in line with Open Awards' quality assurance processes. Please see our [Access to HE Provider Handbook](#) for more information.

Centre Staff Requirements

It is expected that centres will have occupationally competent staff with relevant sector experience for their role in the delivery of the units/qualifications being offered.

For the delivery and assessment of this qualification, it is expected that staff have a qualification at the level higher than the qualification in a related academic subject and have up-to-date working knowledge and experience of best practice in assessment and quality assurance.

Centres are responsible for ensuring that their staff are occupationally competent

and have access to appropriate training and support. They are also responsible for notifying Open Awards of staff changes.

Assessment

Each Access to HE Diploma must be supported by assessment plans to ensure that students are able to demonstrate the skills, knowledge and confidence that will prepare them for the rigorous assessment regimes in higher education.

Tutors must develop plans which show how they intend to assess each unit and the Diploma as a whole. These plans must be internally moderated. The assessment plan should cover the whole Diploma and include:

- Number of assignments
- Type and range of assessments
- How tasks will allow for differentiation
- An assessment strategy for the whole Diploma
- A schedule of delivery and assessment/ scheme of work
- Consideration as to whether the strategy prepares learners for Higher Education

In order to achieve the Diploma, learners must meet all Learning Outcomes and associated Assessment Criteria in all units approved in the Diploma specification.

Each Assessment Criterion must be assessed only once. All grade descriptors assigned to a unit by Open Awards (as indicated in the unit content document) must be included in the assessment of assignment(s) for that unit. Descriptors that have not been formally assigned to the unit must not be used. A single grade descriptor may be included more than once where more than one assignment is used to measure achievement for a single unit. Grade Descriptor 7 must be used for all assignments.

A variety of assessment methods should be used which will allow learners the opportunity to develop experience and skills required for HE study. At least one unit from each module should be assessed using a formal and controlled assessment method e.g. examinations.

Where a unit is assessed by more than one assignment, the assessment strategy must clearly state which graded descriptors will be considered for each assignment and how you will apply a single grade for the unit.

Assessment practices must reflect the Equality and Diversity Policy of Open Awards. Reasonable adjustments may be required for individual learners to enable them to undertake assessments fairly. Please see our Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy for more information.

Preparing Assignments

One of the many benefits of an Open Awards Access to HE Diploma is that tutors design the assignments for their own provision to suit the context of delivery and to make the most of the variety of assessments methods available in individual circumstances. Please see our [Access to HE Provider Handbook](#) for more information.

Drafts, Submissions and Re-submissions

It is a requirement that you publish procedures for the formal submission of work for assessment in your course handbook. These procedures must be the same for all the Access Diplomas that you are approved to deliver.

Your procedures must conform to QAA requirements as set out in the [Grading Scheme Handbook](#) (Sections C and E).

Please see our [Access to HE Provider Handbook](#) for more information.

Recording Results

Once a learner's assignment(s) for a unit have been assessed and an overall grade given for the unit, the grade should be recorded on the Open Awards Markbook via the Secure Portal.

Results for a course run must be entered by a single portal account holder. This may be the Access to HE Administrator or by another nominated contact. Portal accounts must not be shared or logged on multiple times simultaneously as this can lead to duplicated results.

Please see our [Access to HE Provider Handbook](#) for more information.

Verification and Standardisation

Internal Verification

Internal verification is a process by which the provider systematically samples and evaluates its assessment practices and decisions, and acts on the findings to ensure consistency and fairness. The main purpose is to improve and standardise practice in the assessment of learners.

The Access to HE Coordinator must take responsibility for internal verification of all Access to HE Diplomas at your organisation and we will expect that you have the appropriate levels of resources to implement these processes.

Verification activities must include:

- Pre-delivery verification
- Verification of achievement

Internal Standardisation

Standardisation is a vital component of any robust quality assurance system and as a condition of provider approval all Open Awards Access to HE providers agree to participate in standardisation activities.

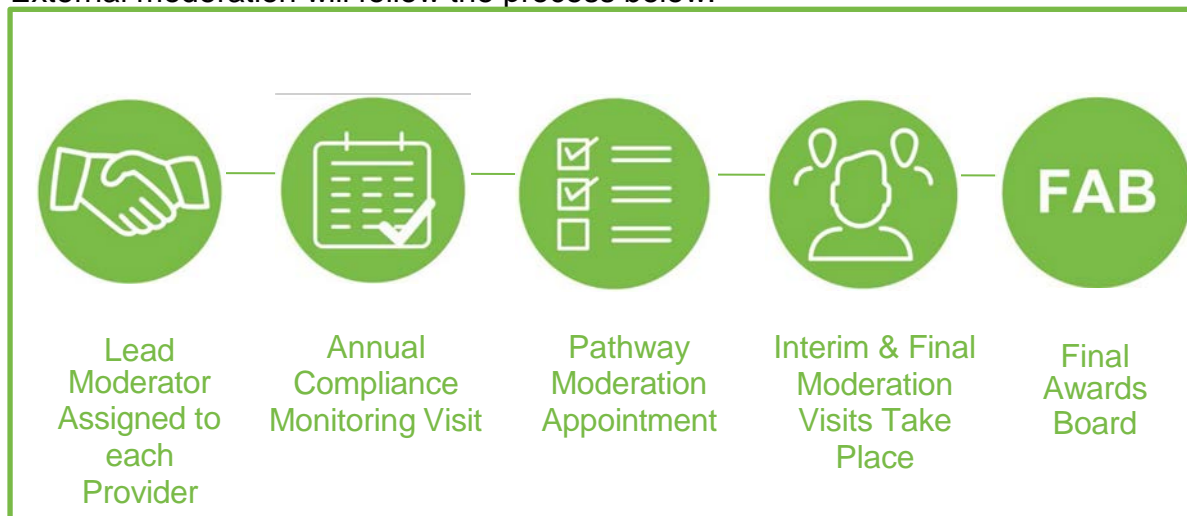
Where more than one tutor / assessor makes assessment decisions and recommendations for the award of credit to learners on the same Diploma or similar courses it is essential that internal verification processes include the standardisation of their practice.

Open Awards expect providers to plan and undertake standardisation of internally-set tasks and the outcomes of internal assessment **at least twice a year**.

Please see our [Access to HE Provider Handbook](#) for more information on verification and standardisation activities required.

External Moderation

External moderation will follow the process below:



For more information on each of these processes, please see the [Access to HE Provider Handbook](#).

External Standardisation

Standardisation is a vital component of any robust quality assurance system and as a condition of provider approval all Open Awards Access to HE providers agree to participate in standardisation activities, both internally and externally.

Open Awards runs a series of standardisation activities that are accessible to all Access to HE providers.

Open Awards runs live standardisation events for each pathway to allow practitioners to peer review and learn from each other through networking. We are aware that some staff may wish to participate in standardisation activities but will be unable to attend events at the Open Awards office.

We also offer online standardisation activities. You will be provided with access to an online repository of standardisation activities, training and opportunities to share best practices.

Recognition of Prior Learning and Achievement (RPL)

Learners presenting evidence of accredited prior learning on non-Access courses can apply for exemption for credit on relevant Level 2 and Level 3 units where appropriate.

Learners who have achieved Access to HE Diploma credits (either from Open Awards or another AVA) may wish to claim credit towards an Open Awards Diploma. Credit transfer is dependent on the content of the unit/s from which those credits were gained matching the content of the unit/s for which they wish to claim.

For more information, please see our Recognition of Prior Learning Policy.

Appendices and Links

Appendix Name
Open Awards Provider Handbook
QAA Access to HE Diploma Specification 2013
QAA Grading Scheme Handbook
Enquiries, Complaints and Appeals Policy
Equality and Diversity Policy
Invoicing Policy
Plagiarism Policy
Privacy Policy

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