



Skills &
Education
Group Access

Access to HE (Humanities)

Diploma Guide



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1. Diploma Background and Aims

The Humanities are a popular area of study for adult students particularly those seeking a career in education. A dedicated diploma to the Humanities has been requested by Providers.

The aims of the Access to HE Diploma (Humanities) are:

- to introduce students to the fundamental knowledge base on which successful careers in this area are built
- to provide students with study skills and support to explore options in higher education within the field of Humanities and careers in this sector.

Extensive research has been undertaken into the typical entry requirements of Humanities degrees and other higher education opportunities which accept Access to HE Diplomas. The credit values available within this diploma have been designed to meet those requirements as at the date of validation. Periodic review of these entry requirements will be undertaken and amendments made where deemed necessary.

The Access to HE Diploma does not guarantee entry to any Higher Education qualification.

2. Course Recognition

The Access to HE Diploma (Humanities) meets the AVA's policies and priorities for new provision. Skills and Education Group's approach to developing the new Access to HE Diploma (Humanities) is transparent, systematic and as consistently applied as to all other named Access to HE Diplomas. Skills and Education Group ensures that all Access to HE Diplomas are fit for purpose in providing an appropriate preparation for study in higher education for adults from defined target groups.

Skills and Education Group has worked with curriculum specialists and business development managers to co-ordinate and oversee the development of the Access to HE Diploma (Humanities). This has involved meetings to agree curriculum content, level, grading descriptors and general rules of combination. A pre-determined timetable of events was drawn up where providers were invited to meetings, or to contribute electronically if unable to attend these events, to meet the agreed deadlines.

3. Diploma and Credit Specification

The QAA Diploma and Credit Specification states that the Access to HE Diploma is a:

- unitised qualification, based on units of assessment which are structured in accordance with the Access to HE unit specification
- credit-based qualification, operated in accordance with the terms of the Access to HE credit specification

- graded qualification, as determined by the Access to HE Grading Scheme.

www.accesstohe.ac.uk/AboutUs/Publications/Pages/Default.aspx

Skills and Education Group has ensured that the proposals within this document meet the requirements of The Access to Higher Education Diploma and Credit Specification and any other regulatory information about the Access to HE Diploma, and that students who are awarded the Access to HE Diploma (Humanities) will have completed a planned, balanced and coherent programme of study, through which they have been able to acquire a subject knowledge and develop academic skills which are relevant to the intended progression route(s).

4. Target Groups

The AVA has developed the Access to HE Diploma (Humanities) specifically for students who wish to develop a fundamental understanding of the knowledge base required of a higher education student in this field of study.

This Diploma is aimed at a range of target groups, including people who are returning to education after being employed in similar sectors; people seeking qualifications to enable them to change their career path and students seeking a foundation in several subjects related to this area before moving on to higher level study in the UK.

Access to HE is open to younger students however, it is designed with mature students in mind, therefore, the inclusion of study skills and preparing to apply to higher education is included in the ungraded units of this diploma to support those returning to education after a break.

Access to HE diplomas are a vital tool in widening participation in Higher Education, targeted directly at mature students attracting mostly people from areas of disadvantage who are either unemployed or low-earners.

5. Intended Progression Routes

This diploma has been designed to offer progression into the following areas of higher level study:

- Humanities
- History
- English Literature
- Politics
- Social Studies
- Social Sciences
- Education
- Cultural Studies

Students could also apply to courses such as biology or psychology depending upon entry requirements of the specific Higher Education Institution (HEI),

however, if this is the student's intention from the outset there are other diplomas which would better suit the student's planned progression.

Students should always check the entry requirements of the higher education course they intend to apply to before enrolling on an Access to HE Diploma.

The design of diplomas must be appropriate to the primary purpose of Access to HE courses, which is to provide higher education progression opportunities for adults who, because of social, educational or individual circumstances, may have achieved few, if any, prior qualifications.

The award of a Diploma does not provide guaranteed entry to UK Higher Education programmes.

5.1 Entry Requirements

There are no formal entry requirements for this diploma, however based on the level of study it is suggested that students have the following qualifications upon entry:

English – Level 2 Functional Skills, Grade C/4 GCSE

Mathematics – Level 2 Functional Skills, Grade C/4 GCSE

Many HEI's have the above Level 2 requirements in addition to Level 3 qualification requirements.

6. Rules of Combination

6.1 Required achievements for the Access to HE Diploma

Access to HE Diploma (Humanities)	
Credit Value of the Diploma:	60
Students must achieve all the units within the chosen pathway of the Diploma.	
All Diplomas are 60 credits, irrespective of the place, subject or mode of study. Students accumulate credits through the completion of units worth either 3, 6 or 9 credits each.	
Of the 60 credits 45 must be from graded units concerned with academic subject content, with the remaining 15 credits to be achieved from ungraded units.	
Students undertaking any Access to HE Diploma, whatever their mode of study, must be:	

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) registered and certificated for units to a maximum value of 60 creditsb) registered for units to the value of 60 credits no later than 84 days from the start date of their Access to HE course, or before the student makes a formal application to a higher education course through UCAS or any other application process, whichever date occurs first. |
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6.2 Differentiated Performance

Consideration has been given to the allocation of Grading Descriptors 'to ensure that they provide opportunities for differentiation of performance consistent with the requirements of the grade descriptors'.

6.3 Curriculum, Delivery and Assessment

This diploma is designed for in-person, blended/hybrid and online delivery and assessment however, Providers who wish to use a delivery method which differs from that which is stated on their approval to run, they must contact the AVA to obtain approval.

All assessments are set and internally assessed by the Provider. There are no external assessments in this diploma.

This diploma requires internal and external quality assurance of assessments.

The Provider is responsible for ensuring that the assessment methods used during the course of this diploma are:

- Valid and reliable methods of assessing the learning outcomes given in unit specifications
- Appropriate to the given grading descriptors of the unit specifications
- Inclusive in consideration of the students on programme and any additional/alternative needs; and,
- Varied to include a range of methods relevant to the study of this diploma.

Some potential assessment methods which are suggested for this diploma include;

- Case Studies
- Debate
- Essays
- Examinations (open or closed book)
- Presentations
- Reports
- Research Reports
- Roleplays/Simulations
- Viva examinations.

The list above is not exhaustive, and not all methods must be used however, a range is expected.

6.4 Credit Transfer and Recognition of Prior Learning

Credit Transfer provides a means by which students who have already achieved units of an Access to HE Diploma, either with the same centre/AVA or another, can transfer their credits and grades, if applicable, to a new diploma registration.

The Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) provides a means by which students who have already achieved some of the requirements for the award of the Access to HE Diploma, through some means other than study on an Access to HE course, can be awarded the Access to HE Diploma without necessarily being required to undertake units for which equivalent achievement has already been demonstrated.

No more than 30 credits required for the award of the Access to HE Diploma may be awarded through Credit Transfer or RPL.

Students registering onto the Access to HE Diploma (Humanities) may have undertaken a Level Two 'pre-Access' course. It is expected that providers will have offered students written guidance on Skills and Education Group's application process for RPL of these credits or other credit or work achievement that may allow exemption from some units within the Access to HE Diploma. Students must be advised that RPL cannot be graded.

6.5 Successful Completion Criteria

Skills and Education Group expects that any successful completion criteria that is in addition to the Diploma's rules of combination do not make demands which impacts on achievement.

6.6 Special Requirements

There are no special requirements needed for this Diploma although laboratory facilities, computing environments equipped with PCs and specialist software appropriate to the course may be recommended.

6.7 Supporting Students

Skills and Education Group expects all students will be offered appropriate support during their course of study until they have completed the qualification. Students will be encouraged to use a range of resources to support their progress and to engage with appropriate staff in their organisation for further information and advice. The assessment methodology must be appropriate and rigorous for an individual or groups of students.

For students with particular requirements, Providers should refer to the Access to Fair Assessment Policy and Procedure which can be found in the Provider Handbook.

The Access to Fair Assessment Policy and Procedure section in the Skills and Education Group handbook gives clear guidance on the Reasonable Adjustment and Special Consideration arrangements that can be made to take account of particular needs or learning difficulty, without compromising the achievement of the assessment criteria.

6.8 Credit Accumulation and Recognition of Student Achievement

Students accumulate credit towards the award of the Diploma. In general they do this by achieving units of a particular credit value (3, 6 or 9 credits) through the process of assessment on the Access to HE Diploma (Science), but may also do this through the processes of credit transfer and RPL.

Student achievement is recognised both through the award of level, credit and grades (as identified on an achievement transcript) and the award of the Diploma (as identified on a certificate), subsequent to the student having satisfied the requirements of the rules of combination of the Access to HE Diploma (Humanities). The award of the Diploma will, therefore, indicate that a student has successfully met the generic requirements for achievement of an Access to HE Diploma, as well as the particular requirements of the Access to HE Diploma (Humanities).

Skills and Education Group expects that where the Access to HE Diploma (Humanities) is intended to lead to further study for a professional qualification, students must be made aware of any additional entry requirements that are needed to study at a Higher Education Institution.

7 Quality Assurance

Skills and Education Group operates robust quality assurance arrangements for the proposed Diploma and maintains the quality and standards of this recognised Access to HE Diploma. Skills and Education Group makes Access to HE awards to students who have met the specified requirements for achievement and performance. Please visit the Skills and Education Group website for the Access to HE Provider Handbook.

7.1 Operation of moderation processes

Skills and Education Group maintains a system of regular external moderation, conducted by appointed external moderators. External moderator training is scheduled during the year in preparation for their visits to allow Skills and Education Group to update external moderators. Where a provider is new to Access to HE, or is running a new Diploma for the first time, or has transferred from another AVA, a 'support visit' is also scheduled.

Skills and Education Group may arrange for support or supplementary visits in the following situations:

Support Visits

- The first run of a new Diploma as a support to the provider. A member of Skills and Education Group's Access to HE team may

- also accompany the external moderator
- When a provider has transferred from another AVA.

Supplementary Visits

- When a Diploma has undergone substantial quality assurance or curriculum development or is in fragile circumstances. This additional visit usually incurs a chargeable Quality Intervention fee.

Where a provider offers various start points, an external moderator will arrange a first visit and the final moderation and Awards Board at the most appropriate time within the academic year.

7.2 Review of moderation guidance to ensure continued currency

Skills and Education Group routinely reviews and updates its guidance to ensure its continuing currency. Moderation guidance updates are generated from external moderator visits and final moderation reports, external moderator mandatory training events and Skills and Education Group standardisation events. The requirements of the Access to HE Diploma Specification have been incorporated within moderation guidance.

7.3 Moderation Reports

External moderators report regularly to Skills and Education Group on all aspects of course organisation, including registration, content, assessment design and practice (including internal moderation, assessment and grading decisions) - for which they are responsible.

Skills and Education Group operates standard procedures for responding to external moderators' reports, including receiving and responding promptly to individual external moderation reports, providing copies of external moderators' reports to appropriate provider/centre staff, and ensuring that matters raised in reports that require specific action by providers are brought to providers' attention, a clear timescale for action is given, and implementation of actions is confirmed.

Skills and Education Group uses a risk rating approach; the outcomes of external moderator visits contribute to risk ratings for individual Diplomas. Higher level risk rates are likely to instigate sanctions and provider quality assurance teams are required to address all resulting conditions with some urgency.

Skills and Education Group will introduce a Centre Moderation Report that summarises the findings and outcomes for all Diplomas delivered by a Centre.

7.4 Course Monitoring and Review

Skills and Education Group monitors and reviews Access to HE Diplomas delivered by providers on a regular (normally annual) basis. Two visit reports with associated risk rates and supplementary visit reports as appropriate are used to review provision. Skills and Education Group collects and analyses statistical data about Access to HE Diplomas, students and their individual achievement.

7.5 Standardisation

Skills and Education Group takes steps to ensure that equivalent standards and requirements for achievement apply on different Access to HE Diplomas, within Skills and Education Group and across different student cohorts, with reference to QAA's Access to HE Diploma qualification and credit specifications and grading requirements.

Skills and Education Group holds annual standardisation events that are mandatory for all Access to HE providers. Fines are incurred where an Access to HE Diploma has not been represented at an appropriate event. The agenda for each event is based on recommendations from the Lead Moderator Standardisation Report of the previous year. Study Skills is often a focus, with an emphasis on a different element each year. Grading is also a key feature of all events.

Skills and Education Group also expects that providers hold internal standardisation events. The external moderator is tasked to discuss this activity and outcomes during visits.

7.6 Award of the Access to HE Diploma

Skills and Education Group operates standard specified procedures for the award of Access to HE Diplomas to students that are consistent with the Access to HE Diploma and credit specifications, grading requirements and assessment regulations. The external moderation process ensures that all external moderator decisions to recommend the award of the Access to HE Diploma are made with confidence that all regulations and specification requirements have been met. The formal Awards Board is made up of appropriate personnel in line with Skills and Education Group guidelines and formal decisions to award credit and the Access to HE Diploma are agreed before the Recommendation for the Award of Credit (RAC) is signed by the tutor, the internal moderator and the external moderator for each Diploma. Award Board minutes and copies of the signed RACs are received by Skills and Education Group within one working day of the Awards Board.

The AVA takes immediate action to record and remedy any errors relating to the award or certification of the Access to HE Diploma. Skills and Education Group advises QAA immediately of any major errors in the issuing of Diploma certificates, including providing information on how errors were remedied and how such errors will be avoided in the future.

7.7 Data Systems

Skills and Education Group has a dedicated and secure data system for Access to HE. All current Diploma, provider and student information is maintained and all student certification is generated from this system.

7.8 Issue and Dispatch of Access to HE Diplomas and Achievement Transcripts

All students who have been awarded the Access to HE Diploma are issued the AVA's Access to HE Diploma certificate which has a standard format. Skills and

Education Group operates a service standard that ensures that all unit transcripts and Diploma certificates are forwarded on to providers within 15 working days of the Awards Board. Providers commit to return any unclaimed certificates to the AVA. All certificates are numbered and kept secure.

8. Person authorising development of the Diploma Specification

I confirm that the Diploma meets QAA’s qualification requirements and will be quality assured in accordance with this Diploma Specification. All providers delivering this Diploma and external moderators responsible for quality assuring it will have a copy of this Diploma Specification.

Name: (please print)	Jennie Lawson
Signature:	<i>Jennie Lawson</i>
Date:	2nd October 2023
Post held:	Director of Access to HE

This agreement will be reviewed by the AVA regularly.

Appendix 1 - Units of Assessment

Grading Descriptors

1	Understanding of the Subject	US	5	Communication and Presentation	CP
2	Application of Knowledge	AK	6	Autonomy/ Independence	AI
3	Application of Skills	AS	7	Quality (Mandatory)	QU
4	Use of Information	UI			

Access to HE Diploma (Humanities) Units

For every unit included in the table, further information, is included in the Unit Specification, including learning outcomes and assessment criteria. All units must be set out using the AVA standard format. All units are mandatory.

Graded Units

Unit Title	Unit ID	Level	CV
English Language: Social Media and the Use and Change in Language	YHS643	Three	3
English Literature: Analysing a Short Story	YHS646	Three	3
English Literature: Film Adaptations	YHS649	Three	3
English Literature Themes, Plotlines and Character Development in Shakespearian Plays	YHS651	Three	6
English: Male and Female Speech	YHS653	Three	3
History: 18 th and 19 th Century Public Health	YHS667	Three	3
History: 1914-1939 How Britain Changed	YHS668	Three	3
History: An Examination of British Industrial Change During the Period of 1700-1850	YHS669	Three	3
History: Theories of Late 19th Century Imperialism and its Impact on Africa	YHS670	Three	3
History: Fundamentals of Political Ideology	YHS688	Three	3

Psychology: Biological and Psychological Approaches to Stress	YHS689	Three	3
Psychology: Interpersonal Relationships	YHS691	Three	3
Sociology: A Sociological Perspective of the Mass Media	YHS711	Three	3
Sociology: Defining, Measuring and Explaining Poverty	YHS713	Three	3

Ungraded Units

Unit Title	Unit ID	Level	CV
Criminology: Exploring Theories of Crime and Deviancy	YHS613	Three	3
English Literature: Exploring the Analysis of a Novel	YHS648	Three	3
Psychology: Exploring an Introduction to Psychological Research and Approaches	YHS695	Three	3
Study Skills: Planning and Writing an Assignment	YHS560	Three	3
Study Skills: Writing and Studying Academic Texts	YHS561	Three	3