Skills & Education Group Access

Access Recognised by QAA

Access to Higher Education
Subject Descriptor Compliant

# Access to HE Diploma (Radiography)

## Diploma Guide

Valid From August 2025
Learning Aim Code: 4001471X

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## Access to HE Diploma Background and Aims

The Access to Higher Education Diploma is a full Level 3 UK qualification. It is regulated by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) which licenses Access Validating Agencies (AVAs) to accredit and award the Access to Higher Education Diploma in the UK.

Access to Higher Education Diplomas enable students to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to progress to higher education. They are key to widening participation from groups traditionally underrepresented at higher education institutions and are therefore aimed particularly, though not exclusively, at adults without traditional qualifications.

The aims of the Access to HE Diploma are to:

- prepare students who are returning to education for progression to Higher Education, further training in a related vocational or occupational area
- help students develop the skills and knowledge they need to achieve on their chosen HE course or career pathway
- familiarise students with the teaching and learning methodologies and assessment strategies found in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)
- help students to gain confidence in their abilities, to review and monitor their own progress and to become independent students
- develop students' research, planning, analytical and evaluation skills
- enable students to make informed choices about future progression routes.

## Diploma development

Skills and Education Group Access has worked with curriculum specialists and higher education colleagues to develop the Access to HE Diploma (Radiography). Every Diploma is validated by the AVA through a robust and rigorous peer panel process which then recommends approval to the AVA's Access to HE Committee. By taking into consideration the views of Further and Higher Education practitioners, the AVA ensures that the Diploma meets all QAA requirements and that it enables students to complete 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).

**LC 50a: This QAA recognised Access to HE Diploma is validated for delivery within the UK by a provider with a main base in the UK (including the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man) only.**

**LC 50c: Only students with a UK address (including BFO) can be registered for an Access to HE Diploma.**

## Diploma Specification

The QAA Diploma 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.

## About this qualification

| AVA Diploma<br>Access to HE Diploma | Main Classification<br>(Sector Subject Area) | Sub-Classification |
|---|---|---|
| (Radiography) | 1 - Health, Public Services and Care | 1.2 - Nursing and Subjects and Vocations Allied to Medicine |

**This Diploma specification is valid from: 01/08/2025**
**Diploma revalidation date: 31/07/2029**

The Access to HE Diploma (Radiography) equips students with the knowledge and skills essential for a career in radiography and medical imaging. This course is designed to prepare students for Higher Education in the radiography field, providing key insights into human biology, medical physics, and the ethical use of imaging technologies. Students will acquire comprehensive knowledge, subject-specific skills, and transferable skills necessary for success in radiography and related healthcare professions.

**A. Key Knowledge:**

**1. Human Anatomy and Physiology:**

- Understanding the structure and function of the human musculoskeletal and nervous systems
- Knowledge of cellular biology, including the structure and function of cells

**2. Medical Physics and Radiography:**

- Insight into the principles of radiography, electrocardiograms (ECGs), and the application of waves and optics in medical contexts
- Understanding the properties and applications of the electromagnetic spectrum and radioactivity in medicine.

**3. Chemistry and Disease Control:**

- Comprehension of the chemistry of drugs and medicines and the foundational concepts of kinetics, energetics, and equilibria in Kinetics, Energetics, Equilibria & Acid-Base Equilibria.
- Knowledge of disease causation and control mechanisms

**B. Subject-Specific Skills:**

**1. Radiographic Techniques and Technology:**

- Proficiency in the application of physics principles to radiographic techniques
- Skills in understanding and using advanced radiographic technology, including safe practices with radiographic equipment and the ethical use of generative artificial intelligence.

**2. Professional and Ethical Conduct:**

- Developing a strong understanding of professionalism and working effectively within multidisciplinary teams
- Ensuring ethical practice in radiography and the nuanced use of advanced AI technologies.

**3. Pharmaceutical and Disease Knowledge:**

- Applying chemistry knowledge, particularly related to pharmaceuticals and their interactions, in medical contexts.
- Identifying and controlling diseases pertinent to radiographic practice.

**C. Transferable Skills:**

**1. Research and Academic Skills:**

- Development of strong research, academic writing, and critical reading skills supported by units like Academic Writing Skills and Reading & Note Making.
- Mastery of complex problem-solving abilities and analytical thinking through science units.

**2. Technical and Communication Skills:**

- Enhancing technical skills relevant to radiography through practical applications of physics and chemistry.
- Improving professional communication abilities and information literacy crucial for healthcare environments.

**3. Ethical and Reflective Practice:**

- Reflective practice skills to continually improve personal and professional development.
- Ethical reasoning and understanding of the safe use of technology in healthcare settings.

## D1.1 (45) Subject Descriptor Compliance

The Access to HE Diploma (Health Science Professions) complies with the subject descriptor requirements as mandated by QAA in the **Subject Descriptor for Nursing and Health Professions** document. Please note that the table below shows the minimal credit requirements as set out by QAA, Skills Education Group Access may have increased the minimum credit requirements in Skills Education Group Access in subjects in the Rules of Combination.

**Content of the descriptor**

**Summary of essential requirements for this descriptor**

| Essential subject content | Minimum credit requirement at Level 3 | | Minimum credit requirement at Level 2 |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Graded | Ungraded | Ungraded |
| Biology | 15 | | |
| Numeracy in Health Context | | | 3 |
| Professional Behaviours: Nursing and Health Professions | | 3 | |

| | Level 3 | Level 2 or 3 | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total minimum credits for essential subject content | 18 | 3 | 21 |
| Credits remaining for recommended or other subject content | 27 | 12 | 39 |

**Essential requirements**

**Subject: Biology Level: 3 Minimum credit value: 15**

**About this subject**

A firm grounding in the key principles and processes of biology is essential for pursuing a career in nursing and health professions. While undergraduate courses will also include the study of biology, the inclusion of the minimum content defined here will ensure that Access to HE students are well prepared to gain maximum benefit from their degree studies.

**Required content:**

- cell structure
- cell function
- transport - for example, osmosis
- homeostasis
- human anatomy and physiology to include a minimum of **THREE** systems from the following: cardiovascular; respiratory; digestion and nutrition; muscular-skeletal; excretion; endocrine; nervous system; genetics.

- additional content may include immunity/defence against disease, reproduction, thermoregulation.

In addition, to the essential biology content, students will also need to cover the essential elements for **numeracy at Level 2** and **Professional Behaviours at Level 3**. Further specific information can be found in the subject descriptor document via the QAA website, which also contains guidance on the use of recommended, not mandatory, subject content which could be used to deliver the Diploma to students.

## Intended Progression Routes

**LC 61a and 61b: Access to HE Diplomas are intended to provide a preparation for study in UK higher education, but the award of a Diploma does not provide guaranteed entry to UK higher education programmes.**

The following progression routes were agreed at the point of validation as being appropriate choices for students who achieve the Access to HE Diploma (Radiography), subject to the course entry requirements and application process.

- Radiography
- Diagnostic Radiography
- Sonography
- Radiology
- Medical Imaging
- Therapeutic Radiography
- Medical Technology

**It is essential that providers delivering this Diploma consult receiving HEIs themselves to ensure that suitable and relevant progression opportunities are sound. Evidence of HEI consultation and progression possibilities will be identified in the provider's Programme Submission Document.**

## Access to HE Diploma provider assessment strategy advice

QAA states that the Access to HE Diploma provides *'HE progression opportunities for adults who, because of social, educational or individual circumstances may have achieved few, if any, prior qualifications'. They also state that, 'Students who are awarded the Diploma will have completed a planned, balanced and coherent programme of study, through which they have been able to acquire subject knowledge and develop academic skills which are relevant to the intended progression route(s)'*. Therefore all approved providers need to develop diploma assessment strategies which outline what assessment activities the students will undertake, how they will be used and why they have been chosen in order to achieve the learning aims:

1. **What** is the aim of the diploma assessment strategy?
2. **How** will it be achieved?
3. **Why** has this approach been chosen?

**Assessment design:**
Access to HE Diplomas should be assessed using innovative and contemporaneous methods, tailored to prepare students studying at Level 3 for study at Higher Education. Assessment design should be holistic, ensuring students can demonstrate attained knowledge, skills and behaviours in and across units and assessments should reflect those likely to be encountered on Higher Education courses in the same field of study. Specific assessment guidance should be provided for each unit to ensure consistency and fairness across all student achievements.

In addition, providers must ensure that assessment methods are chosen which afford students opportunities to demonstrate the requirements of the three Grading Standards; Knowledge and Understanding, Subject Specific Skills and Transferable Skills.

Assessment design should comply with the requirements of the QAA Grading Scheme (2024) and also be aligned to the principles of assessment: Validity, Authenticity, Reliability, Currency and Sufficiency (VARCS).

**LC 50g: Tutor/Assessor qualifications and experience specifically required for delivery and assessment of this diploma:**
Generally, and as a minimum, it is expected that provider staff teaching on the Diploma have the required professional competence and skills necessary for the mode(s) of delivery to be used, and the level of subject expertise necessary to teach and assess the units available on the Diploma.

## Rules of Combination

Where options are available within a single set of rules of combination, which allow alternative requirements for the achievement of a named Diploma, the alternatives permitted by the options are consistent, in terms of academic challenge and demand, and will require equivalent standards for achievement, whenever and wherever it is delivered.

| **Access to HE Diploma (Radiography)** | |
|---|---|
| Credit Value of the Diploma: | **60** |
| Students must achieve all the units within the Diploma. | |
| All Diplomas are 60 credits, irrespective of the place, subject or mode of study.<br>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.<br>In addition, all students must study a minimum of **ten 3 credit units** and at least **one 9 or 6 credit unit up to a maximum of 30 credits**, which may or may not be graded. | |
| Students can achieve up to a maximum of 30 credits at Level 3 through credit transfer and the award of credit through the recognition of prior learning. | |
| Students undertaking any Access to HE Diploma, whatever their mode of study, must be:<br>**a)** registered and certificated for units to a maximum value of 60 credits<br>**b)** 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. | |

## Appendix 1 - Units of Assessment – Access to HE Diploma (Radiography)

For every unit included in the table, further information is included in the Unit Specifications, including learning outcomes and assessment criteria.

## Grading Standards (Applied to all graded units)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **1** | **Knowledge and Understanding of the Subject** | **KU** |
| **2** | **Subject Specific Skills** | **SS** |
| **3** | **Transferable Skills** | **TS** |

**Students must study a minimum of TEN, 3 credit units and at least ONE 6 or 9 credit unit up to a maximum of 30 credits.**

To comply with the QAA Subject Descriptor for Nursing, Health Professionals and related courses the following Rules of Combination must be followed.

Students must take a minimum of **15 credits** from the mandatory biology graded units below.

**Mandatory Graded Units (15 credits as a minimum)**

| Unit Title | National Code | Level | CV |
|---|---|---|---|
| Cellular Structure and Activity* | RH3/3/AA/16G | Three | 3 |
| The Structure and Function of Cells* | RH3/3/AA/26G | Three | 6 |
| Endocrine System | RH4/3/AA/26G | Three | 3 |

(*Providers must take the **Endocrine System** unit*)

**These may not be taken together, only one OR the other is permitted.*

**Select the remaining mandatory biology graded unit credits from:**

| Unit Title | National Code | Level | CV |
|---|---|---|---|
| Human Musculoskeletal System | RH4/3/AA/04G | Three | 3 |
| Human Urinary System | RH4/3/AA/07G | Three | 3 |
| Nervous System | RH4/3/AA/14G | Three | 3 |
| Systems Physiology | RH4/3/AA/18G | Three | 6 |

(Providers must take these two mandatory ungraded units.)

**Mandatory Ungraded Units**

| Unit Title | National Code | Level | CV |
|---|---|---|---|
| Numeracy in a Health Context | HD4/2/AA/01U | Two | 3 |
| Professional Behaviours: Nursing and Health Professions | PH1/3/AA/01U | Three | 3 |

## Recommended (NOT mandatory) Optional Graded Units

| Unit Title | National Code | Level | CV |
|---|---|---|---|
| Human Sex and Reproduction | RH4/3/AA/28G | Three | 3 |
| Genetics | RH3/3/AA/02G | Three | 6 |
| Infection and Immunity | RH4/3/AA/29G | Three | 6 |

## Optional Graded Units. Choose from:

| Unit Title | National Code | Level | CV |
|---|---|---|---|
| Waves and Optics | RC1/3/AA/04G | Three | 3 |
| The Properties and Applications of the Electromagnetic Spectrum | RC5/3/AA/03G | Three | 3 |
| Radioactivity in Medicine | RC8/3/AA/03G | Three | 3 |
| The Cause and Control of Disease | RH4/3/AA/10G | Three | 3 |
| The Laws of Physics | RC1/3/AA/03G | Three | 6 |
| Medical Physics: Waves ECGs and Radiography | RC8/3/AA/01G | Three | 6 |
| Kinetics, Energetics, Equilibria & Acid-Base Equilibria | RD1/3/AA/09G | Three | 6 |
| Chemistry of Drugs and Medicines | RD6/3/AA/01G | Three | 6 |

## Optional Ungraded Units. Choose from:

| Unit Title | National Code | Level | CV |
|---|---|---|---|
| The Safe and Ethical Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence | CK5/3/AA/01U | Three | 3 |
| Academic Writing Skills | HC7/3/AA/01U | Three | 3 |
| Reading and Note Making | HC7/3/AA/02U | Three | 3 |
| Atoms, Bonds and Structure | RD3/3/AA/01U | Three | 3 |

## Inclusion and Exclusion Rules of Combination

| Barred Unit 1 | National Code | CV | Barred Unit 2 | National Code | CV |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cellular Structure and Activity | RH3/3/AA/16G | 3 | The Structure and Functions of Cells | RH3/3/AA/26G | 6 |