

Access to HE Diploma (Sport and Physical Activity)

Diploma Guide

Valid From August 2025
Learning Aim Code: 4001292X



skillsandeducationgroupaccess.co.uk



0115 854 1620



@SEG_Access

Table of Contents

Access to HE Diploma Background and Aims	3
Diploma development.....	3
Diploma Specification.....	4
About this qualification	4
Intended Progression Routes.....	6
Access to HE Diploma provider assessment strategy advice	7
Rules of Combination.....	9
Appendix 1 - Units of Assessment – Access to HE Diploma (Sport and Physical Activity)	10
Grading Standards (Applied to all graded units)	10
Inclusion and Exclusion Rules of Combination	11

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 (Sport and Physical Activity). 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 Access to HE Diploma	Main Classification (Sector Subject Area)	Sub- Classification
(Sport and Physical Activity)	8: Leisure, Travel and Tourism	8.1: Sport, Leisure and Recreation

This Diploma specification is valid from: 01/08/2025

Diploma revalidation date: 31/07/2026

The Access to HE Diploma (Sport and Physical Activity) provides students with a comprehensive understanding of sport sciences and their applications. This course is designed to prepare students for Higher Education leading to careers in sport, physical education, coaching, and related fields. Students will acquire key knowledge, subject-specific skills, and transferable skills essential for success in these areas.

A. Key Knowledge:

1. Sport Science and Physiology:

- Understanding exercise physiology, including the cardiovascular and respiratory systems.
- Knowledge of nutrition in sports, hydration, and its impact on performance.
- Insight into the mechanics of motion, fitness testing, and sports conditioning.

2. Psychology and Sociology in Sport:

- Understanding aggression, social learning theory, and motivation in sport.
- Knowledge of arousal, stress, anxiety, group dynamics, and social cohesion in sport.
- Insight into the psychology of sport and exercise, and the acquisition of skill in sport.

3. Contemporary Issues and Development:

- Understanding contemporary and cultural issues in sport.
- Knowledge of sports values, ethics, and technological developments in sport.

- Insight into sports development, health-related fitness, and planning effective training programmes.

B. Subject-Specific Skills:

1. Coaching and Training:

- Skills in planning, delivering, and reviewing coaching sessions.
- Techniques for improvement and addressing specific exercise needs in clients.
- Ability to plan and execute effective fitness training programmes and know how to handle sports injuries.

2. Sports Science Applications:

- Understanding and applying the principles of exercise physiology in sports settings.
- Skills in fitness testing, sports conditioning, and mechanics of motion.
- Competence in addressing nutrition, hydration, and performance in sports contexts.

3. Professional Practices:

- Knowledge of sports values, ethics, and dealing with contemporary issues in sport.
- Skills in understanding and using technological advancements in sport.
- Competence in practical application in sports settings.

C. Transferable Skills:

1. Research and Academic Skills:

- Development of strong research skills, including planning and conducting research projects.
- Proficiency in academic writing, reading, and note-making.
- Understanding opportunities and tools for success in higher education, including the higher education toolkit.

2. Communication and Professional Skills:

- Improved presentation skills, information literacy skills, and reflective practice.
- Development of organisational and evaluative skills for study.
- Develop skills in planning and delivering exercise sessions, and working effectively in diverse environments.

3. Critical Thinking and Technological Proficiency:

- Enhanced ability to critically analyse issues in sport and develop reasoned arguments.
- Skills in using information and communication technology for research and practice.
- Understanding the safe and ethical use of generative artificial intelligence in sport and physical activity contexts.

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 (Sport and Physical Activity), subject to the course entry requirements and application process.

- Sport and Exercise Science
- Physical Activity, Sport and Health
- Sport Coaching
- Physical Education and School Sport
- Sport Development
- Sport Business and Event Management
- Sport Psychology
- Sports Performance
- Sports Studies
- Sport Therapy.

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).

Assessment guidance specific to this diploma:

Further to the guidance above, tutors could consider the merits of the following assessment methods:

- Presentations
- Screencast
- Gallery walks
- Top table
- Viva Voce approaches
- Verbal Questions and Answers session
- Observations
- Posters
- Written work but then students asked to give salient points verbally

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 (Sport and Physical Activity)	
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. 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. 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: a) registered and certificated for units to a maximum value of 60 credits 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 (Sport and Physical Activity)

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

There are no mandatory units. 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.

Optional Units

Graded Units. Choose 45 credits from:

Unit Title	National Code	Level	CV
Aggression and Social Learning Theory in Sport	MA1/3/AA/01G	Three	3
Arousal, Stress and Anxiety in Sport	MA1/3/AA/02G	Three	3
Motivation in Sports	MA1/3/AA/04G	Three	3
The Acquisition of Skill in Sport	MA1/3/AA/05G	Three	3
Contemporary Issues in Sport	MA1/3/AA/06G	Three	3
Fitness Testing	MA1/3/AA/07G	Three	3
Health Related Fitness	MA1/3/AA/08G	Three	3
Mechanics of Motion	MA1/3/AA/09G	Three	3
Nutrition: Hydration and Performance	MA1/3/AA/10G	Three	3
Sports Conditioning	MA1/3/AA/11G	Three	3
Sports Injuries	MA1/3/AA/12G	Three	3
Technological Development in Sport	MA1/3/AA/13G	Three	3
The Body in Sport	MA1/3/AA/14G	Three	3
Coaching in Sport: Plan, Deliver and Review	MA4/3/AA/01G	Three	3
Coaching in Sport: Techniques for Improvement	MA4/3/AA/02G	Three	3
Plan an Effective Fitness Training Programme	MA4/3/AA/03G	Three	3
Planning and Delivering Exercise Sessions for Clients with Specific Exercise Needs	MA4/3/AA/04G	Three	3
Exercise Physiology: Cardiovascular System	PB4/3/AA/01G	Three	3
Exercise Physiology: The Respiratory System	PB6/3/AA/01G	Three	3
Group Dynamics and Social Cohesion in Sport	MA1/3/AA/03G	Three	6
Work Based Learning in Sport	MA1/3/AA/15G	Three	6
Psychology of Sport and Exercise	MA1/3/AA/16G	Three	6
Nutrition in Sports	MA1/3/AA/17G	Three	6

Unit Title	National Code	Level	CV
Sport, Values and Ethics	MA1/3/AA/18G	Three	6
Contemporary and Cultural Issues in Sport	MA1/3/AA/19G	Three	6

Ungraded Units. Choose 15 credits 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
Researching and Understanding Opportunities in Higher Education	HC7/3/AA/04U	Three	3
Organisation and Evaluation of Study	HC7/3/AA/07U	Three	3
Reflective Practice	HC7/3/AA/16U	Three	3
Research Skills	HC7/3/AA/17U	Three	3
Presentation Skills	HC7/3/AA/18U	Three	3
Numeracy	HD4/3/AA/01U	Three	3
Sports Development	MA1/3/AA/01U	Three	3
Health Related Fitness	MA1/3/AA/02U	Three	3
Research Skills: Project	HC7/3/AA/20U	Three	6

Inclusion and Exclusion Rules of Combination

Barred Unit 1	ID 1	CV	Barred Unit 2	ID2	CV
Health Related Fitness	MA1/3/AA/08G	3	Health Related Fitness	MA1/3/AA/02U	3