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**Access to HE Diploma**

**Access Validating Agency (AVA) Diploma Specification**

All information included within this document complies with the

QAA Access to Higher Education Diploma Specification.

**https://www.qaa.ac.uk/access-to-he/access-to-he-resources**

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| **AVA Diploma**  **Access to HE Diploma** | **Main Classification**  **(Sector Subject Area)** | **Sub-Classification** |
| (Business) | 15: Business, Administration and Law | 15.3: Business Management |

**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.**

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## 1. Diploma Background and Aims

Business has been a core and stable curriculum area for Skills and Education Group Access. The existing Access to HE Diploma (Business) has historically been delivered by one Provider with other Providers adopting similar Diplomas or offering Business-related units within their “Combined” or Humanities and Social Sciences provision. Providers and Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) evaluated the existing Diploma content with the Access to HE Diploma Specification in mind, and the AVA presents this Learning Programme Plan (LPP) to reflect the wishes of Providers.

This Diploma was prepared for validation, following a review of the existing Access to Higher Education Diploma (Business), which was first validated in May 2014.

The aims of the Access to HE Diploma (Business) are as follows:

* Prepare students who are returning to education for progression to HE, 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.
* 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 their future progression routes.
* Develop specific business skills and knowledge to enhance employment prospects.
* Help students to understand the role of business in the world at large.
* Support students in developing business skills, expertise and knowledge.
* Support students in their understanding of the ethical, moral and legal obligations of business organisations.

## 2. Course Recognition

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

Skills and Education Group Access has worked with curriculum specialists and business development managers to co-ordinate and oversee the development of the Access to HE Diploma (Business), including 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, if unable to attend these events, to contribute electronically, in order to meet the agreed upon 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](http://www.accesstohe.ac.uk/AboutUs/Publications/Pages/Default.aspx)

Skills and Education Group Access 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 (Business) 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

Skills and Education Group Access has developed the Access to HE Diploma (Business) specifically for students who wish to develop their academic study and vocationally related skills and aptitudes to prepare for the application and progression into HE programmes related to Business. 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 a number of subjects related to Business before moving on to higher level study in the UK.

## 5. Intended Progression Routes

Skills and Education Group Access has worked with further education (FE) and higher education (HE) experts, employers and specialised recruitment agencies during the development process to agree the units and any Rules of Combination (RoC) so that the Access to HE Diploma (Business) provides a suitable preparation for HE and future employment. Providers and others wishing to adopt or use this Diploma have suggested the following possible progression routes for students:

* Business Management
* International Business Studies
* Business Studies
* Marketing
* Business
* Events Management
* Accounting and Finance

## 6. Rules of Combination

### 6.1 Required Achievements for the Access to HE Diploma

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 delivered.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Access to HE Diploma (Business) | |
| Access to HE Diplomas titles must conform to a common format: Access to Higher Education Diploma (name of subject/area of study/progression route).  If a Diploma is intended to provide progression to combined or less specific progression routes, the name must reflect this, by specifying the particular subject area(s) referenced to any of the major subject groupings (arts, humanities, sciences, social sciences) either singly (e.g. Access to Higher Education Diploma (Combined Science)) or in any combination (e.g. Access to Higher Education Diploma (Social Studies combined with Arts)). Current QAA guidance on Access to HE Diploma titles can be found in the Access to Higher Education Diploma Specification which can be found in the Regulation section of the Access to HE website:  <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/access-to-he/access-to-he-resources> | |
| Credit value of the Diploma: | 60 |
| Students must achieve 60 credits from this 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. | |
| Students can achieve up to a maximum of 9 credits at Level 2, and 21 from 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:   1. Registered and certificated for units to a maximum value of 60 credits 2. 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 an HE course through UCAS or any other application process, whichever date occurs first. | |

### 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

It is expected that “information provided about unit content, delivery and assessment methods is sufficient to ensure consistency in the required standards of achievement, whenever and wherever the Diploma is delivered”. Skills and Education Group Access expects that all teaching staff will have the professional competence, skills and subject expertise to teach and assess the Diploma units using the modes of delivery selected. Tutors will be qualified to at least one level above the Diploma level. Providers who are approved to run the Diploma will be provided access to the Diploma Specification and associated unit content in order to prepare their teaching curriculum and assessment practice and schedules.

### 6.4 Recognition of Prior Learning and Credit Transfer

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 15 credits required for the award of the Access to HE Diploma may be awarded through RPL.**

Students registering onto the Access to HE Diploma (Business) may have undertaken a Level 2 “pre-Access” course. It is expected that Providers will have offered students written guidance on Skills and Education Group Access’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. Skills and Education Group Access may recognise credits awarded to a student through another AVA, provided they have been awarded in accordance with the terms of the Access to HE credit framework. Credit transfer can be graded and will be considered on a case-by-case basis by Skills and Education Group Access as the receiving AVA.

### 6.5 Successful Completion Criteria

Skills and Education Group Access 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 small skills rooms’ may be recommended.

### 6.7 Supporting Students

Skills and Education Group Access 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 Access to HE Provider Handbook.

The Access to Fair Assessment Policy and Procedure section in the Provider 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 (Business) but may also do this through the processes of credit transfer and through the recognition of prior learning.

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 (Business). 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 (Business).

Skills and Education Group Access expects that where the Diploma 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. Providers have a responsibility to ensure that students have completed this research in advance of enrolling onto the Diploma.

## 7. Quality Assurance

Higher Education Institution operates robust quality assurance arrangements for the proposed Diploma and maintains the quality and standards of this recognised Access to HE Diploma. It makes Access to HE awards to students who have met the specified requirements for achievement and performance. Please visit the Skills and Education Group Access website for the Access to HE Provider Handbook or contact the Skills and Education Group Access team on accesstohe@skillsedugroup.co.uk for the relevant documentation and guidance.

### 7.1 Operation of Moderation Processes

Skills and Education Group Access 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 Access 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 Access 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 Access 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 Quality Intervention fee that is chargeable to the Provider.

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

### 7.2 Review of Moderation Guidance to Ensure Continued Currency

Skills and Education Group Access 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 Access 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 Access 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 Access 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 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 Access 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 Access will introduce a Moderation Report that summarises the findings and outcomes for all Diplomas delivered by a Provider. The Provider moderator liaises with Quality contacts and curriculum leaders throughout the academic year.

### 7.4 Course Monitoring and Review

On a regular (normally annual) basis, Skills and Education Group Access monitors and reviews Access to HE Diplomas delivered by Providers, using two visit reports with associated risk-rates and supplementary visit reports, as appropriate. Skills and Education Group Access also collects and analyses statistical data about Access to HE Diplomas, students and their individual achievement.

### 7.5 Standardisation

Skills and Education Group Access takes steps to ensure that equivalent standards and requirements for achievement apply to different Access to HE Diplomas, within the organisation 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 Access 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 always a focus, with an emphasis on a different element each year. Grading is also a key feature of all events.

Skills and Education Group Access 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 Access 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 Access 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 Access within one working day of convening 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 Access 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. Issues related to the registration and certification of Access to HE students are recorded and, where relevant, may impact on a Provider’s overall risk rating.

### 7.7 Data Systems

Skills and Education Group Access 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 Access 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. Providers are required to confirm arrangements for secure receipt, storing and onward transmission of student certificates, including unclaimed certificates.

Students will also receive login details of a Digital Certification Website (DC Web) that will enable them to gain access to their Access to HE Diploma results at any time, and to be able to share them with receiving HEIs or potential employers.

**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) | Julie Knowles |
| Signature: |  |
| Date: | 11/05/2021 |
| Post held: | Head 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 (Business) 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.

Mandatory (3 credits)

| **Unit Title** | **Unit Id** | **Level** | **CV** | **Grading** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Study Skills: Academic Writing Skills | YHS243 | Three | 3 | Ungraded |

Optional Units

Graded (45 Credits)

| **Unit Title** | **Unit ID** | **Level** | **CV** | **Grading** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Business: Business Structures | CER029 | Three | 3 | 1257 |
| Business: Communications (Business) | CER047 | Three | 3 | 1257 |
| Business: Customer Service | CER065 | Three | 3 | 157 |
| Business: Developing a Business Plan | CER075 | Three | 6 | 1234567 |
| Business: Finance for Business | CER106 | Three | 6 | 12457 |
| Business: Human Resources in Organisations | CER139 | Three | 6 | 1247 |
| Business: International Trade and Development | CER149 | Three | 3 | 1257 |
| Business: Marketing Concepts | CER169 | Three | 3 | 1267 |
| Business: Organisation Structures | CER196 | Three | 3 | 127 |
| Business: Principles of Leadership | CER217 | Three | 3 | 127 |
| Business: Principles of Management | CER218 | Three | 6 | 1257 |
| Business: Principles of Marketing | CER219 | Three | 6 | 1267 |
| Business: The Business Environment | CER273 | Three | 6 | 127 |
| Business: The Economic Environment | CER276 | Three | 6 | 127 |
| Business: UK Economic Environment | CER291 | Three | 6 | 12457 |
| Business: Using the Internet for Business | CER297 | Three | 3 | 127 |
| Computing: Database Development | YHS229 | Three | 6 | 137 |
| Computing: IT in Organisations | CER152 | Three | 3 | 247 |
| Computing: Spreadsheet Modelling | CER260 | Three | 6 | 1237 |
| Computing: Systems Analysis | YHS230 | Three | 6 | 237 |
| Computing: Web Site Design and Production | YHS231 | Three | 6 | 1357 |
| Law: Consumer Law | CER054 | Three | 3 | 1247 |
| Law: Employment Law | CER085 | Three | 6 | 1247 |
| Law: The Formation of a Contract | CER278 | Three | 3 | 1257 |
| Mathematics: Numerical Analysis of Statistical Data | CER189 | Three | 3 | 137 |

Ungraded (12 credits)

| **Unit Title** | **Unit ID** | **Level** | **CV** | **Grading** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Business: Exploring Marketing Concepts | CER580 | Three | 3 | Ungraded |
| Business: Exploring Principles of Leadership | CER581 | Three | 3 | Ungraded |
| Mathematics: Exploring Numerical Analysis of Statistical Data | CER614 | Three | 3 | Ungraded |
| Mathematics: Number and Graphical Representation | CER476 | Two | 3 | Ungraded |
| Study Skills: Advanced Information Technology | CER007 | Three | 6 | Ungraded |
| Study Skills: Communication Skills | CER045 | Three | 6 | Ungraded |
| Study Skills: Communications | CER046 | Three | 3 | Ungraded |
| Study Skills: Databases | CER070 | Three | 3 | Ungraded |
| Study Skills: Exam Techniques and Practice | CER099 | Three | 3 | Ungraded |
| Study Skills: Group Processes | CER118 | Three | 3 | Ungraded |
| Study Skills: Higher Education Toolkit | CER132 | Three | 6 | Ungraded |
| Study Skills: Information Literacy Skills | CER147 | Three | 3 | Ungraded |
| Study Skills: Interview Skills and Group Presentations | CER150 | Three | 3 | Ungraded |
| Study Skills: Numeracy | CER188 | Three | 3 | Ungraded |
| Study Skills: Organisation and Evaluation of Study | CER194 | Two | 3 | Ungraded |
| Study Skills: Organisation and Evaluation of Study | CER195 | Three | 3 | Ungraded |
| Study Skills: Presentation Skills | CER215 | Three | 3 | Ungraded |
| Study Skills: Reading and Note-Making | CER228 | Three | 3 | Ungraded |
| Study Skills: Reflective Practice | CER230 | Three | 3 | Ungraded |
| Study Skills: Research Skills | CER236 | Three | 3 | Ungraded |
| Study Skills: Research Skills: Project | CER238 | Three | 6 | Ungraded |
| Study Skills: Researching and Understanding Opportunities in Higher Education | CER240 | Three | 3 | Ungraded |
| Study Skills: Spreadsheet Software | CER261 | Three | 3 | Ungraded |
| Study Skills: Use of Information and Communication Technology | CER293 | Three | 3 | Ungraded |
| Study Skills: Using IT for Study | CER296 | Two | 3 | Ungraded |
| Study Skills: Using Word Processing Software | CER613 | Two | 3 | Ungraded |
| Study Skills: Word Processing | CER306 | Three | 3 | Ungraded |
| Study Skills: Work Experience | CER307 | Three | 6 | Ungraded |

## Appendix 2 – Exclusion Rules of Combination

| **Barred Unit 1** | **ID 1** | **CV** | **Barred Unit 2** | **ID 2** | **CV** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Business: Marketing Concepts | CER169 | 3 | Business: Exploring Marketing Concepts | CER580 | 3 |
| Business: Marketing Concepts | CER169 | 3 | Business: Principles of Marketing | CER219 | 6 |
| Business: Principles of Leadership | CER217 | 3 | Business: Exploring Principles of Leadership | CER581 | 3 |
| Business: Principles of Marketing | CER219 | 6 | Business: Exploring Marketing Concepts | CER580 | 3 |
| Mathematics: Numerical Analysis of Statistical Data | CER189 | 3 | Mathematics: Exploring Numerical Analysis of Statistical Data | CER614 | 3 |
| Study Skills: Advanced Information Technology | CER007 | 6 | Study Skills: Spreadsheet Software | CER261 | 3 |
| Study Skills: Advanced Information Technology | CER007 | 6 | Study Skills: Use of Information and Communication Technology | CER293 | 3 |
| Study Skills: Communication Skills | CER045 | 6 | Study Skills: Communications | CER046 | 3 |
| Study Skills: Group Processes | CER118 | 3 | Study Skills: Interview Skills and Group Presentations | CER150 | 3 |
| Study Skills: Higher Education Toolkit | CER132 | 6 | Study Skills: Interview Skills and Group Presentations | CER150 | 3 |
| Study Skills: Higher Education Toolkit | CER132 | 6 | Study Skills: Presentation Skills | CER215 | 3 |
| Study Skills: Research Skills | CER236 | 3 | Study Skills: Research Skills: Project | CER238 | 6 |
| Study Skills: Spreadsheet Software | CER261 | 3 | Study Skills: Use of Information and Communication Technology | CER293 | 3 |