Access to HE Provider Handbook 2026-27

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Section 1: Introduction

Welcome

Thank you for using Skills and Education Group Access for your Access to HE Diploma accreditation. This handbook outlines the key requirements and responsibilities of the delivery, assessment and quality assurance of Access to HE courses, and is intended to support Access Provider staff to run high-quality provision, as effectively as possible.

The following sections describe the processes which must be followed when delivering a Skills and Education Group Access approved and Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) recognised Access to HE Diploma (Diploma), including:

- Delivery against specified rules of combination
- Registration of students
- Internal and external moderation, and standardisation of student work
- Consideration of student achievement by the Final Award Boards (FAB)
- The issuing of Diploma certificates and unit transcripts to students.

This handbook provides the information required by Providers to gain approval to run, deliver and quality assure Diplomas. Information is also included about how to register and claim certification for students and how to make requests for changes to units or Diplomas.

As well as providing an overview of the requirements of Skills and Education Group Access and QAA, this handbook signposts Providers to other supporting guidance documentation and website resources.

It is important to familiarise yourself with this document and make it available to relevant colleagues who are involved in Access to HE within your Provider.

Skills and Education Group Access abide fully with all requirements of GDPR. For further information on how we use and store your data, please refer to the Skills and Edcation Group GDPR Policy.

Skills and Education Group Access and Access to HE

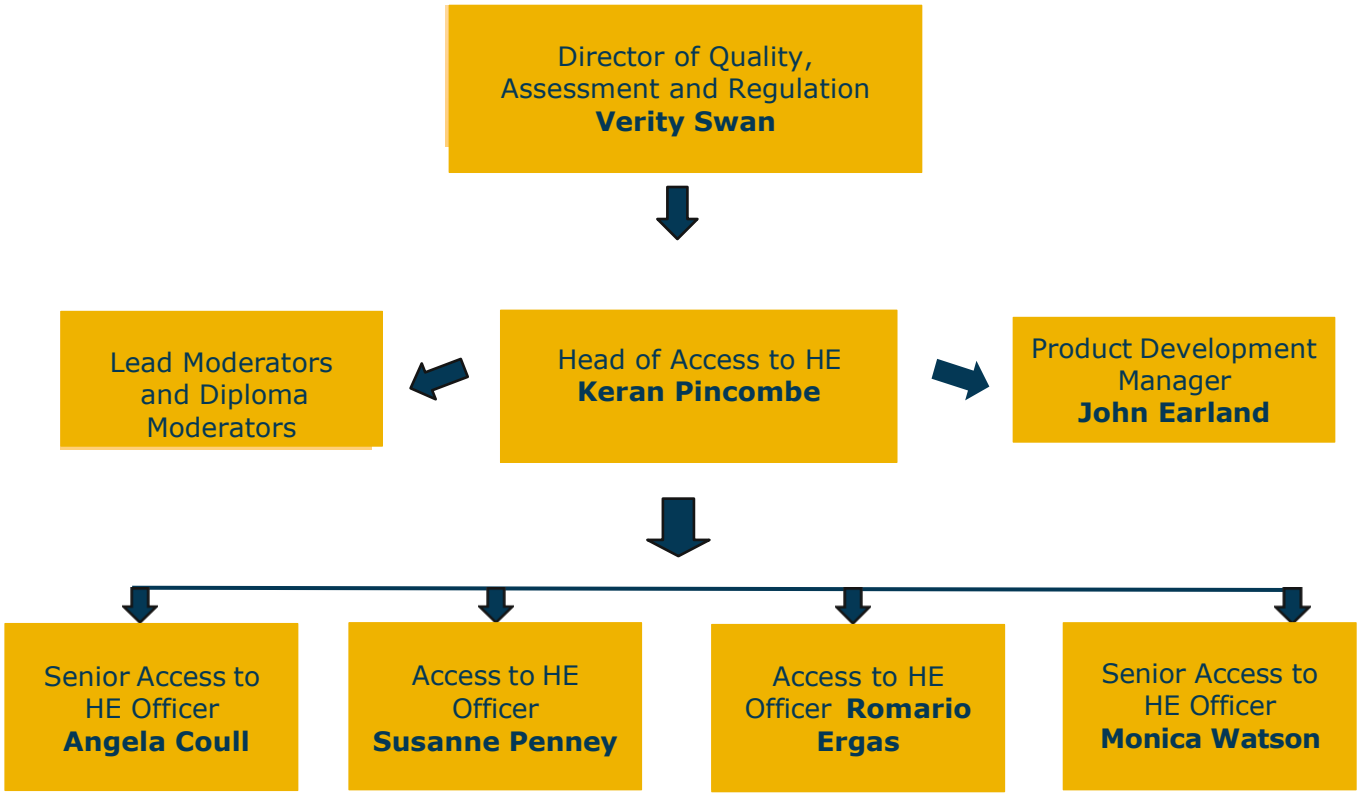
Skills and Education Group Access is a not-for-profit Charity and Access Validating Agency (AVA) licensed by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), to develop, approve and quality assure Access to HE Diplomas. The QAA provides an integrated quality assurance service for Higher Education in the UK and is also responsible for assuring the quality and integrity of Access to HE Diplomas.

Who should use this Handbook?

The following Provider staff should have access to, and be familiar with the content of this handbook:

- Tutors and Assessors
- Course Co-ordinators and Managers
- Internal Moderators
- Administration Contacts
- MIS and Examinations Officers and Managers
- Quality Assurance Contacts.
- External Moderators

The Access to HE Team



We hope that you will find all the information you need to run your Diploma courses well, but if you require particular support, resources or training that are not featured in this handbook, please get in touch:

Access to HE Team contact details	Website: www.skillsandeducationgroupaccess.co.uk Email: accesstohe@skillsedugroup.co.uk Tel: 0115 8541620 and **select Option 5 – Access to HE**

Please note that text in *italics* throughout this document is QAA wording verbatim. Information within blue boxes is important as a reminder.

Resources to Support you in delivering Skills and Education Group Access to HE Diplomas

We want you to be able to deliver the best quality Access to HE Diploma provision possible and in order for you to do this, we make a range of resources and updates available to you:

- **SharePoint** – a secure and dedicated Provider site that has a landing page which may have important updates on it, and subfolders within it. All Provider contacts will receive access to this folder, and be directed to it for documents throughout the year. Please familiarise yourself with the contents of the following folders:
    - **Policies, Guidance, Forms** – AHE Forms, Handbooks and Guidance, Policies, Templates. You will also find exemplar documents and guidance videos to help you in preparation of assessment and moderation activities
    - **Bulletins** – usually monthly and will have a range of important updates and deadlines for you and your team to respond to
    - **Definitive Documents** – all of the Access to HE Diplomas and associated units that you are approved to run as a Provider
    - **Working Documents** – this is where you will find all of your moderation reports, standardisation activity, copies of your eRACs for review, outcomes of AVA student surveys, Grade Analysis and the list of contacts we currently hold for you.
    - **Applications** – all applications submitted to the AVA should be placed in this folder to abide with GDPR. Once an application has been added the folder the AVA automatically receives notification to process the application
    - **Upcoming Moderator Meetings** – key information about moderator meetings
    - **Archive** – will have all previous years' documentation
- **Quartz** – the portal that you will register your students and their associated unit choices and upload student results following your Final Awards Board. The AVA will then produce student certificates and unit transcript from Quartz, via our Digital Certification Website (DC Web)
- **DC Web** – a website that provides your students with their electronic results once we have verified and processed results. Once they have created an account, they can share their electronic results with their receiving Higher Education Institution (HEI) and be in a position to accept their places before they receive their printed certificate.

- **Skills and Education Access Training Calendar** – is available to all Provider staff and is set each year, based on the needs of your staff so that they can undertake their specific role appropriately. The AVA will provide annual training on best practice in assessment, internal moderation, course leadership and the implementation of the QAA Grading Scheme. Sessions on preparing for moderation visits and Final Awards Boards will also be available

  Training is normally free to all attendees; some specific training may have a fee attached. New Providers will be invited to staff induction sessions. The AVA will also provide bespoke training for our Providers. Fees will apply and can be found in our Fees and Charging list in SharePoint. The AVA also provides drop-in sessions throughout the year, where Providers can ask the AVA for advice, guidance and support on any subject. The link for you to book onto events is on the homepage of SharePoint.

- **The AVA and Moderator teams** – are available to help you with your enquiries, either by contacting your allocated Lead Moderator, or by contacting the AVA team on accesstohe@skillsedugroup.co.uk

- **Moderator Reports** – are completed following sampling and feedback meetings with your quality and tutor teams. The findings and recommendations will help you continue to develop your good practice across your provision; conditions are required actions that enables your Provision to be compliant with AVA and QAA regulation requirements.

The Access to HE Diploma

All Skills and Education Group Access to HE Diplomas have been developed, validated and approved through a rigorous process that involves subject specialists and stakeholders involved in Access to HE. Each Diploma has a generic title that approved through the AVA's validation process.

As of 1st August 2026, Providers must use the correct QAA Diploma title verbatim; the use of marketing titles will no longer be permitted.

The following Skills and Education Group Access Diplomas are currently available to Providers:

- Access to HE Diploma (Art and Design)
- Access to HE Diploma (Business)
- Access to HE Diploma (Computing)
- Access to HE Diploma (Criminology)
- Access to HE Diploma (Education Professions)
- Access to HE Diploma (Engineering)
- Access to HE Diploma (Health and Social Care)
- Access to HE Diploma (Health Science Professions)

- Access to HE Diploma (Humanities and Social Sciences)
- Access to HE Diploma (Humanities)
- Access to HE Diploma (Land Based Science)
- Access to HE Diploma (Law)
- Access to HE Diploma (Medicine)
- Access to HE Diploma (Midwifery)
- Access to HE Diploma (Nursing)
- Access to HE Diploma (Paramedic Science)
- Access to HE Diploma (Policing)
- Access to HE Diploma (Psychology)
- Access to HE Diploma (Radiography)
- Access to HE Diploma (Science)
- Access to HE Diploma (Social Sciences)
- Access to HE Diploma (Social Work)
- Access to HE Diploma (Sport and Physical Activity)
- Access to HE Diploma (Veterinary Science)

The Diploma Specifications and units, each provider is approved to deliver are available in the provider SharePoint Site (Definitive Documents folder)

Rules of Combination:

- 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, which may or may not be graded**
- 60 credits is equivalent to 600 hours Total Qualification Time (TQT): 10 hours per credit
- Of the 60 credits, 45 credits must be achieved at Level Three from graded units concerned with academic content
- The remaining 15 credits must be achieved at Level Two[1] or Level Three from units which are ungraded and can be generated from either study skills or academic units
- All units have a value of 3 (30 hours), 6 (60 hours) or 9 (90 hours) credits
- Study skills units are not graded.

The requirements for a named Diploma, including the full set of units, should be made available to students. Information about how these units must, or

[1] Not all Diploma's will include level 2 units, further details can be found in the Diploma specification.

may be combined, are contained within the Rules of Combination of the Diploma Specification; a document which summarises the regulatory requirements for each Diploma, which has been approved at a Diploma validation panel.

Section 2: Setting up an Access to HE Diploma Course with Skills and Education Group Access

Becoming an Approved Access to HE Provider

Anyone using this handbook as a reference tool will already hold approved Provider Recognition status with Skills and Education Group Access.

Once approved, Skills and Education Group Access recognised Providers can seek approval to run Access to HE Diplomas. These two processes are often completed alongside each other. Existing Providers may wish to add further Diplomas to their provision. This can be done through an Approval to Run Addendum form which can be found in the forms folder within the Provider SharePoint site.

Following approval to deliver a Diploma, the details of the Provider and the course(s) are included on the QAA's Access to HE database as a recognised Access to HE course. A funding code will be assigned, and Providers can begin to deliver the Diploma(s). Until such times as Provider Approval to Run has been confirmed by the AVA, Providers must include **'subject to approval'** in all marketing and public information related to the Diploma(s) in question.

Providers wishing to develop a new Diploma will be provided with an expression of interest form. Please contact John Earland, Access Product Development Manager, to discuss further at johne@skillsedugroup.co.uk .

Diploma Development, Validation and Approval

Each Access to HE Diploma has an associated Diploma Specification. This document lists the units that form the specific Diploma, together with its associated Rules of Combination (RoC). The Diploma Specification will also indicate the conditions under which Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), including credit transfer (see Section 3, How to Register Students and Award Credit) can be used in each Diploma.

The Diploma Specification

Consultation with the higher education sector ensures that the Access to HE curriculum is not only appropriate to the needs of adult students but also appropriate to the requirements of higher education.

In preparing each Diploma Specification', Skills and Education Group Access works with curriculum specialists from both HE and FE to consider the type and

volume of content needed to prepare students for studying at a higher level. The unit combinations and the set of learning outcomes and assessment criteria contained within the units will be made available to you through SharePoint.

The most current versions must always be used, and older versions disposed of.

If you would like to make a request to change the content of a unit or create a new one, please contact the Access to HE team on accesstohe@skillsedugroup.co.uk who will advise you of the process and timescales involved.

Marketing the Diploma

QAA expects AVAs to monitor Provider websites and marketing materials periodically, and to alert a Provider if Access to HE Diplomas are not correctly marketed.

Skills and Education Group Access expects the following logos be included in the design of any marketing material:

- Skills and Education Group Access Logo
- QAA Access to HE Logo is used when promoting Access to HE Diplomas.

Guidance and templates for the QAA and AVA logos can be found in the Policies, Guidance and Forms folder on SharePoint. This document can be forwarded to your marketing departments.

You should:

- State clearly within your marketing material the minimum entry requirements for enrolment to the Diploma
- Consider the requirements of Higher Education Institutions where the students may eventually study - entry requirements may include GCSE Maths, English or Science (A* to C) where these may be required to continue into higher education
- Be clear about the age restriction of any application for the Diploma course and make sure it complies with the Equality Act 2010, with reference to Part 6, Chapter 2.

The following additional information is strongly recommended:

- Fees and remission conditions (including the Student Loan Write-off if applicable)
- Support for students with specific needs
- Programme links with HE
- Progression routes possible for successful students.

The Diploma title used in any marketing material should be promoted exactly as described in the Diploma Specification for that Diploma.

We will make regular checks of your websites and will contact the Provider Quality Manager should any changes be required. The Access to HE Committee has a responsibility to oversee the periodic checks of Provider marketing material. More information is available in the document folder of your SharePoint site.

Funding Access to HE Diplomas

Access to HE courses delivered by colleges in England and approved for public funding are co-funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency. Students aged 19, can be funded for their first Level Three qualification. Fees apply for subsequent Level Three qualifications, but in England students can apply for a loan under the Government's Advanced Learning Loans Scheme to cover the cost of these fees. You may be able to draw down funding for students who are under 19 years of age if they are entitled to Level 3 funding. Please contact the AVA to confirm if you are considering enrolling students who are under 19 years old. Students who take out a loan, progress to and achieve their HE course will have their loan written off. You can find more information here to guide your students.

Closure or Transfer of an Access to HE Diploma or Withdrawal of an Approved Provider

The closure of an Access to HE course may result from either action on the part of the AVA, or an action taken on behalf of the management of the Provider.

Skills and Education Group Access has a Diploma Withdrawal Policy and Transfer of Business Policy, which is available in all Provider SharePoint Policy folders. The key principles of this policy state that in consideration of withdrawal of approval, and in the interests of students, Providers will:

a) co-operate fully with Skills and Education Group Access in cases where either the Provider or the AVA decides it needs to withdraw from its role in delivering an Access to HE Diploma. This co-operation will be provided whether the withdrawal is voluntary or not from the Provider's perspective.
b) take all reasonable steps to protect the interests of students in the case of such a withdrawal as referred to in point 'a' above. This will apply whether the withdrawal is voluntary or not from the Provider's perspective.
c) adhere to the process specified by Skills and Education Group Access for the withdrawal of the Provider from the delivery of (the Access to HE Diploma), as set out in the Diploma Withdrawal Policy/Transfer of Business Policy.

Preparing to Deliver Access to HE Diplomas

Access to HE Team Meetings

The success of any Access to HE course depends on the ability of the tutors to work closely as a team. It is recommended that tutor teams meet formally at least once a month and more frequently if the situation demands. You can find a guide to monthly activity in Section 9 of this handbook, that you and your team can include in your planning, to ensure that you have a successful year.

Meetings of course teams may be part of an organisation's scheduling of quality assurance activities and may have standard agendas. In this case it is necessary to allow time or schedule additional meetings to cover Skills and Education Group Access and internal Access to HE items. Minutes from such meetings should include rolling action plans, held by the course coordinator, and informed by the recommendations of external and internal moderators, as well as staff and student suggestions for development and /or attention. Your Lead Moderator (LM) will want to have access to team meeting minutes during compliance visits.

First Meeting of the Diploma Team

The following agenda items should be addressed as early in the Diploma course as possible:

- Training requirements for each team member
- Any training or mandatory events that the AVA requires you to attend (such as standardisation, or those that have resulted in a condition)
- Quality assurance calendar
- Appointment of internal moderators for each unit
- Lead Moderator review and planning findings
- Action plans for the year – to include action points from external moderators, internal moderation reports and student feedback mechanisms
- Confirmation of the team process for registering students, registering units, liaising with Exams, and checking eRACs for accuracy
- Student requirements for RPL/Transfer of Credit (ToC)
- Any requests for changes to the units intended to be delivered should be identified and communicated to Skills and Education Group Access
- Communications that Skills and Education Group Access will send, including items for action or information within bulletins.

Subsequent Team Meetings

It is expected that each Provider will have some standing internal agenda items to include as well as those that deal specifically with AVA requirements. It is

important that relevant staff are allocated to respond to AVA required activity. Suggested Agenda items include:

- Accuracy of student and unit registrations
- Review of eRAC accuracy e.g., student names/registered units, end dates and completion of credit transfers
- Student progress in assessment
- Identification of those students at risk and action required
- Progress against action plans and new additions
- Recording of assessment and grading on the Recommendation for Award of Credit
- Planning for initial and final sampling activities
- Cascade of feedback from AVA events; checking on attendance at these and mandatory standardisation events
- Issues arising from the use of the current units
- Responding to student feedback
- Responding to AVA recorded issues that are highlighted by the CM
- Planning of a pre-Final Awards Boards (FABs) prior to the final moderation and FAB
- Completion of any AVA report or survey deadlines.

Annual Diploma and Course Reporting

Skills and Education Group Access is required to make regular compliance submission reports to QAA. As part of these submissions, the AVA is expected to report on outcomes related to the QAA, AVA Licencing Conditions to demonstrate our continued compliance as an AVA. Provider contribution to these reports are essential in helping Skills and Education Group Access remain compliant, as well as provide us with important information and data trends, that guide us in our planning and future reporting.

The AVA has a range of mechanisms to gather feedback from Providers in our reporting, including, but not limited to:

- Provider Annual team Self-Assessment Report (SAR)
- Lead Moderator and Diploma Moderator reports and sampling records
- Meetings with students and student surveys
- Various subject specific AVA Microsoft form surveys
- Student registration and grading data
- Student progression and destination data
- Provider data analysis
- Case studies.

The Student Handbook

Students on an approved Diploma course must be supported through a range of mechanisms; one of which is the Student Handbook. Providers must have their

own student handbook, and not utilise one made available to them by any 'service provider'.

An AVA student handbook template is available for all Providers in your SharePoint document folder. This can be adapted to fit your own Provider guidance and specific information.

Apart from details of the curriculum, assessment requirements specific to the named Diploma, and support mechanisms specific to the Provider, the following areas of information should be available:

- Contact details for the Provider, tutor details, learning resources and guidance facilities
- Attendance requirements and procedure for notification of absence
- Details of the course outline, unit information and types of assessment that will be used
- The credits and levels involved in the achievement of the Diploma (e.g. that although only 45 credits are graded, all 60 must be achieved)
- Information about grading, including how a unit grade is agreed by using the 'mid-point'
- How and when to apply for HE courses
- Arrangements for the Award and Assessment of Access to HE Diplomas
- Clear guidance on submission of assignments and process for applying for extensions
- Your procedure for submitting mitigating and extenuating circumstances and when it is appropriate to do so
- Acceptable use of 'drafts'
- Plagiarism, inappropriate use of Artificial Intelligence (AI), appeals and complaints and how your policies are implemented
- A statement that all credits and grades are provisional until ratified through the external moderation process in the form of initial and final sampling to allow recommendations to be made to the Final Awards Board (FAB)
- A cut-off date for when all student work must be completed and submitted to be included in the Final Awards Board
- Student responsibilities for tracking their own progress and confirmation of final results in advance of the Final Awards Board, checking of student registered name, any applicable credit transfers have been applied and the current student address for the posting of certificates
- Details of, and process for the on-course referral and Extenuation process
- The work of the Final Awards Board in relation to the student
- The post-Final Awards Board process towards receiving the Diploma certificate, unit transcript and access to the Digital Certification Website (DC Web) which provides access to electronic certificates and transcripts that can be shared with receiving HE Institutions (HEIs).

Student Representatives

The AVA encourages each Provider to facilitate the nomination of a student representative for each Diploma delivered by the Provider. Student representatives are likely to represent a wide variety of issues on behalf of their student cohorts including, but not limited to:

- Learning and teaching methods
- Assessment methods
- Support provided by personal tutors
- Learning and teaching resource
- Facilities
- Academic events
- Academic issues affecting student progression to HE.

The key tasks of student representatives are to:

- Make themselves and their role known to the students that they represent
- Receive, promote and disseminate our student surveys for completion by fellow students
- Proactively seek academic related views, questions and experiences of their fellow students
- Represent the academic related views, questions and experiences obtained from their fellow students
- Work with Provider staff to resolve any issues or questions that have been raised by their fellow students
- Disseminate updates and outcomes on issues discussed at joint meetings of staff and student representatives.

Student representatives should not take on the personal complaints or grievances of fellow students.

The AVA may contact student representatives during the year to:

- Advise of student guidance from QAA
- Request completion of questionnaires and surveys for feedback on current topics.

Section 3: How to Register Students

Student Registration

It is a QAA requirement that Access to HE students must be:

- Registered within **42** days of commencement of their course (6 weeks)
- Registered to 60 credits by **84** days – considering the units (including barred combinations) referred to in the Diploma Specification (12 weeks)

- Must be a UK resident with a UK address (including the Channel Islands) or BFPO.

If there is likely to be an issue in registering students and units by these deadlines, you must contact the AVA so that we can work out a solution for you. Any late registrations without AVA permission will incur a 'late registration' fee per student (please see Skills and Education Group Access charging fees in SharePoint) and be noted by the AVA as a compliance issue. Late registrations in the week leading up to the FAB will incur further fees. A Provider risk rating will be impacted by late registrations.

A Skills and Education Group Access student registration period is valid for a period of no longer than three years, after which, a student will need to be re-registered should they need longer to complete the Diploma or have returned to complete it after a study break. This registration period is most likely to be relevant for Providers that run roll-on, roll-off courses, or online provision where a student may take longer than the usual one or two years to complete the course. All students should take no less than 6 months to complete their programme of study, this is to ensure that students have time to engage in the learning materials and have the opportunity to achieve high grades. Please contact your Lead Moderator if you have any students progressing to Final Awards Boards who have completed in under 6 months.

Once unit registrations are complete, we ask that a copy of the eRAC is uploaded to SharePoint and added to the relevant folder in Working Documents. If you require any further information, please contact your Lead Moderator or the Access to HE team.

Accuracy in Registering Student Names

It is essential that there is consistency in the way a student name is recorded across enrolment with a provider, registration with the AVA and a student's UCAS application.

The spelling of a student name must be checked for accuracy against original identification documentation (usually Passport) seen at enrolment and be matched across all relevant documentation such as assignment submissions, grade trackers, e-RAC and Final Awards Board summary sheets so that Diploma certificates and unit transcripts are printed correctly, and issued without delay to ensure that students can accept their HE offer promptly.

Middle names should be included where noted on ID documentation. First and surnames should be recorded in the correct order.

Credit Accumulation, Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Transfer of Credit (ToC)

Students accumulate credit towards the Diploma by achieving units of a particular credit value (3, 6 or 9 credits) through the process of assessment on an Access to HE Diploma course. Students may also do this through the processes of credit transfer, and through RPL where a particular Diploma allows. Please check the relevant Diploma Specification for details as some Diplomas do not allow the facility of RPL.

The principle underpinning RPL is that students who have already achieved relevant learning, either through relevant work experience or through previously certificated achievement, should not have to repeat that learning unnecessarily. Good practice in RPL requires that the potential for any individual student to claim credit through any form of RPL should be identified within an initial assessment process. If a judgement is made at this time that there is evidence of appropriate prior learning, requests for such RPL should be forwarded to the AVA, using the Application for the Award of RPL form (see SharePoint). It is important that this process is undertaken **at the point of registration** of the student. The moderator will expect to see evidence of this at the first sampling visit.

A maximum of 50% of the credits for a Diploma can be gained through RPL and/or credit transfer. The RPL status of a Diploma is shown under the Rules of Combination in the Diploma Specification for that Diploma.

The process of RPL does not allow grades to be awarded but the process of credit transfer does. Credit transfer allows students to count credits awarded on other Access to HE courses (including grades awarded) towards their credit achievements on a new course. If a student wishes to proceed with a Transfer of Credit you must complete the application for the Award of RPL/Credit transfer **at the point of registration**. Please speak to the AVA if you would like further advice on this process.

Applications for the award of credits via credit transfer or RPL are made on a case by case basis and are time-consuming. Failure to apply for this at the point of registration may result in a refusal of award, and/or is likely to incur additional administration fees. A Provider risk rating is likely to be impacted.

Students must be made aware of the potential advantages and disadvantages of pursuing a claim for RPL or Transfer of Credit. It is essential to ensure that a student does not opt out of the teaching and assessments for a unit which is part of their Diploma because they hope to gain credits through any form of RPL or credit transfer, only then to discover that the claim has not been successful. It is also advisable that students are encouraged to make contact with their chosen HEI so that they are clear whether their HE place will be confirmed on a basis of RPL.

RPL/Transfer of Credit must not be used:

- Where a student does not yet have evidence of the achievement of learning (for example, for a qualification being taken concurrently with the Diploma)
- As a mechanism applied late in a course as a remedy for a student not achieving sufficient credits to be awarded a Diploma.

Tutors are encouraged to enquire as to any potential RPL/Transfer of Credit at the point of interview or at the very latest, induction to the course so that an application to the AVA can be made in good time.

Selecting Units from the Diploma

Providers will select the units for a cohort of students by accessing the AVA's online system Quartzweb, before the **84 day** deadline of student enrolment. It is likely that a tutor team will provide an exam's department with their choice of units and these will then be selected on Quartzweb by the exams department.

It is the responsibility of the Provider to:

- Ensure that units have been selected from the correct Diploma Specification available on SharePoint within the Definitive Documents folder
- ensure that the correct rules of combination are selected from the Diploma Specification located in the Definitive Documents folder on SharePoint – there is a check made automatically within the Quartz system. Your Diploma Moderator will also check that the correct units and codes are being used during their sampling activity.
- ensure that student and unit registrations have been made within the required timescales. Late registrations are considered to be a compliance issue which also incur late fees and an impact on a Provider risk rating. A tutor team should make contact with their Quality Manager if there are issues in timely student and/or unit registrations.

For those Providers using the Pearl platform to deliver an Access to HE Diploma, the choice of units available to you will not be the full suite of units that is available on that Diploma. Providers should make contact with Pearl to discuss any issues with unit availability.

Once your students have been registered and valid unit selections for each student have been made, the system will lock and you will be able to generate the electronic Recommendation for the Award of Credit (eRAC) from Quartzweb.

The downloaded eRAC identifies the units each student is registered to and allows you to input the grades they receive for each unit as they progress through the course. It is this document which must be made available to the CM prior to the FAB which validates all student achievements.

Once the system is locked, you must contact the AVA if you need to make any changes to student or unit information. There is likely to be a fee for any changes made.

Changing a Student's List of Registered Units

We recognise that in **exceptional circumstances**, students may need to make changes to the list of units they were registered for within the early weeks of their Diploma course. Therefore, we have put in place a form for amending the registered list of units, (see SharePoint). A request to change a list of registered units can only be made up to **9 credits** and within the first 26 weeks of a course. Any beyond 26 weeks require consideration and approval by the AVA. Incidents are reported to and monitored annually by the Access to HE Committee.

Requests to change the list of student's units will only be considered when made by a member of the Provider tutor or Quality teams.

Teaching or assessment of the replacement units **must not** commence without formal AVA approval. For any requests beyond **26 weeks**, these would be due to extreme student or Provider circumstances and are considered on a case-by-case by the AVA.

QAA expects that in all cases, some action by the student and/or tutor to substantiate the request to make a change to a registered list will have taken place prior to the request being received by Skills and Education Group Access.

Good practice in course delivery should ensure that students are given early information about any choices of optional units available to them on their chosen Diploma. Students should make their choices to reflect their interests and progression ambitions. However, it is recognised that there may be exceptional circumstances outside of a student's control that mean that an amendment to a registration needs to be made.

Definitions of exceptional circumstance where requests for changes to a list of units are acceptable:

1. Student changing choice of HE course during the Diploma course:

In this case, it is expected that the student will have contacted the higher education institutions (HEIs) to which they have applied, to indicate their change of course and, if relevant, will also have contacted any other HEIs that could offer the course they now wish to take. There should be reasonable grounds to indicate that the student will be offered a conditional place on the higher education course they now wish to take. Documentary

evidence to this effect may be requested by Skills and Education Group Access.

In some situations, the student may have been guided by subject tutors or guidance personnel to consider a different HEI either through lack of potential in receiving successful offers for their first choice, or through unexpected extenuating circumstances. The request for change must indicate that such guidance has taken place.

It is expected that ALL students will have fully researched their potential higher education courses before starting their Diploma and therefore should not normally need to change their unit choice.

2. Where a HE Institution makes an offer to a student that includes units that are not on their registered list:

Skills and Education Group Access encourages a student or supporting tutor to contact the HEI to discuss the offer so that an amendment to the offer can be made. It may be due to a lack of understanding of the unit or course content that can be resolved during a conversation with a department admissions' tutor. Where this step does not secure an updated offer, Skills and Education Group Access may be able to support by speaking to the HEI on the student's behalf. If this does not prove successful, a request to change a list of units will then be considered for that student.

3. Provider is unable to offer a registered unit through unexpected absence of delivery staff, where replacement staff were not available:

The tutor team must try to ensure that as far as possible, any new unit brought into the student's course will be in the same curriculum area as the one that has become unavailable. Many HEIs, place conditional offers on the number of credits or grades from Skills and Education Group Access in curriculum strands, such as 24 credits in Biology as an example.

We will accept applications on behalf of students, via their course team leader, by completion of a Request to Change Student's List of Registered Units Form. The policy for a request to change a student unit outlines this application process and is available in SharePoint.

Fees are applicable to any request to change a list of student's units. Please consult Skills and Education Group Access current Charging and Fees document (in SharePoint).

Responsibilities Regarding Changing a Student's Units

The AVA will implement our procedure for determining the exceptional circumstances under which an amendment to a student's unit registration will

be permitted.

We will ensure that the amendment **does not** give the student making the request, an advantage in relation to other students on their course. Amendments will **not be allowed** if requests do not meet any of the following criteria:

- Must not create a situation where a student is at any time registered for, or may be able to achieve, more than 60 credits
- Must be consistent with the rules of combination for the named Diploma for which the student is registered
- Must not be allowed if the unit to which the amendment relates is one that has already been delivered on the student's course and for which other students have already been assessed
- Must not be used in any way that allows a student to improve their grade profile through substitution of a new unit for one already achieved
- Must be completed no later than **26 weeks** after the planned start date of the course for which the student is registered.

Any requests beyond 26 weeks from enrolment will be considered by the AVA. Tutors must not begin delivery or assessment of an alternative unit until they have received acknowledgment from the AVA of formal approval.

Where the amendment is agreed, we will issue an official record of the amendment to the Provider, in the form of a statement of the changes made, identifying the unit(s) for which the student is no longer registered and the unit(s) for which they are now registered. Quartzweb will also be updated with the changes.

In considering requests to change a list of Student's units, Skills and Education Group Access will:

- Consider, and inform the student, via your organisation of their decision within **five working days** of receipt of the correctly completed form
- Keep records of all requests for amendments to a registration and the outcome of those requests
- Consider the exceptional circumstances that have given rise to the request
- Monitor the pattern of such requests and take action if Providers or course teams are making more than exceptional use of the procedure to amend registrations
- Present records of requests for such amendments to Skills and Education Group Access to HE Committee for monitoring
- Report on the use of this procedure to QAA where required
- Inform Providers that students who have requested to amend the details of their registration after they have applied to HE, should be advised to notify the higher education courses to which they have applied of this change. Failure to do this could lead to the withdrawal of the offer of a place when the higher education institute receives the results of student

achievement after the student has completed their Diploma
- Refresh the Recommendation for the Award of Credit (e-RAC) for the student(s) so that it can be downloaded by the Provider
- Request that the AVA considers a request to change a unit beyond the 26-week limit for a student with extreme exceptional circumstances
- Issue an invoice in accordance with our current charging policy for each student's request.

Your organisation will:

- Ensure that changed unit(s) sit within the same curriculum as the unit(s) that were originally offered
- Contact all HEIs to which students have applied advising them of the change of unit(s) delivery now being offered
- Advise any student that makes a request for a change to unit(s) beyond the **26-week** deadline, that this will be considered by the Access to HE Committee and not the Access to HE team. **Approval is not guaranteed**
- Advise the students to notify HEIs to which they have applied of the change in unit(s).

The student will:

- Ensure that that they receive early information and guidance from the Provider about any choices of optional units available to them within the diploma, so that they can make choices to reflect their interest and progression ambitions
- Be prompt in informing the course tutor for a request to a change of unit(s)
- Inform the Higher Education Institution of the change to unit(s) as failure to do so could lead to the withdrawal of an offer of a place.

The Request to Change Student's List of Registered Units Form can be found in SharePoint. After completion, the request form should be uploaded to the Application folder on SharePoint together with documentary evidence to our Access to HE Team.

Duplicated Student Registrations

From time to time, student records may appear to be duplicated on the system. In such cases, the following process should be followed:

- Where a potential duplicate is identified, Providers will be contacted with the following request:

"The student(s) listed below appear to be duplicated. Please confirm whether the registration has been duplicated. If so, indicate which record should be removed and provide a full rationale for the error."

- Providers are required to confirm whether duplication has occurred and, if so, specify which registration should be retained

- A full rationale must be provided for any confirmed duplication. This is essential not only for our internal quality assurance processes but also to enable accurate reporting to QAA
- The rationale should clearly explain how the duplication occurred, what checks (if any) were missed, and what steps will be taken to prevent similar errors in future.

Repeated or significant duplication of student registrations may impact the Providers risk rating. Providers are encouraged to implement robust checks at the point of registration to reduce the risk of duplicate records being created. Duplicate registrations will not be refunded.

Section 4: Assessing and Grading Student Work

The Importance of Assessment in Skills and Education Group Access Diplomas

The accreditation of learning depends on the ability to assess it accurately and effectively.

Tutors and assessors play a vital role in the whole process of students achieving credit and grades, as they have the most direct impact on the delivery and assessment of the Diploma. Tutors and assessors will:

- Deliver the Diploma according to the approved Diploma Specification and any subsequent approved documentation
- Assess student's work in accordance with Skills and Education Group Access requirements and QAA Licensing Conditions
- Ensure student's work is presented clearly with units, assignment briefs, student evidence, tutor feedback and internal moderator reports. Evidence of learning activities and tutor handouts should be kept separately as evidence of the learning journey
- Participate in internal quality assurance processes, external moderation and standardisation activity, and Provider Final Awards Boards as appropriate.

Note: the body of student work is likely to be electronic (Creative Art subjects more likely to be physical).

Considerable attention is given to the process of assessment at all stages, from Diploma Specification approval to final moderation which leads to the confirmation of achievement. The integrity of Skills and Education Group Access credits, grades and Diplomas depends on the integrity of the assessment procedures.

Definitions of Assessment

The QAA sees assessment and grading within the Access to HE Diploma as a dualistic system: Assessment of specific learning outcomes for a unit by using the specified assessment criteria to determine if a student can be awarded the credits assigned to each unit – effectively achieving a Pass for that unit.

Once this threshold has been met, grading can take place holistically (for graded units only). The QAA Grading Standards 2023 (revised July 2025) are used to determine how well a student has applied themselves to the unit assessments at either a Pass, Merit or Distinction.[2]

QAA expects Skills and Education Group Access to ensure that:

- The conduct of assessment and application of assessment regulations by Providers is thorough, rigorous and fair
- Minimum standards required for threshold achievement and performance are consistent with the requirements for achievement of the relevant learning outcomes
- Consistent standards are applied in assessment, so that equivalent student achievement and performance is reflected in recommendations for the award of credits and grades
- All assessments must provide students with the opportunity to evidence that they have met all learning outcomes by meeting all the assessment criteria through either a single assessment or multiple assessments within a unit[3].

QAA Grading Standards 2023 (revised July 2025) replace the former Grading Descriptors 1-7:

1. **Knowledge and Understanding**
2. **Subject Specific Skills**
3. **Transferable Skills**[4]

All three Grading Standards are used with every graded unit and across every assignment within a graded unit.

Assignments are not graded (no Grading Indicators). Grading only takes place once the tutor has determined that all Learning Outcomes for that unit have been achieved.[5]

The following terms may be useful to you in delivering and assessing on Access to HE Diplomas:

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[2] QAA, Access to HE Grading Scheme Toolkit
[3] QAA, Access to HE Grading Scheme Toolkit
[4] See Section B of the Grading Scheme Handbook 2023 (revised July 2025) for full details about how these are used for grading units
[5] See Section B of the Grading Scheme Handbook 2023 (revised July 2025)

Assessment: refers to the whole process leading to the tutor awarding credit and/or grading for a unit, i.e. the assignment (brief and student work) and the feedback with achievement/grading decisions where appropriate from the tutor.

Assessment is also:

- The way of finding out what a student has learned
- A source of evidence of the progress and achievement for both tutors and students.

Assignment: refers to the output of student work, both as described in terms of the expectations and requirements given in the assignment brief, and the major pieces of assessed work students produce in response to the brief.

Tasks: refers to individual items or stages of work within assignments.

Assessors

Assessors must be either experienced in teacher-assessed, credit-based assessment, or qualified, i.e. hold an appropriate assessment or teaching qualification. It is expected that all Access to HE tutors are qualified to at least one level (Level 4) above the Diploma level (Level 3). Tutors with little experience in devising assessment tasks must attend appropriate training. Your CM will expect to review new tutor Curriculum Vitae (CV).

All assessors must be employed by the Provider and hold a Provider email address.

Assessment Strategy

When making an application for Approval to Run a Diploma, Skills and Education Group Access expect that Providers will have developed an appropriate assessment strategy in line with your own organisation's policy.

The assessment strategy for each Diploma must enable students to develop all the personal and academic skills required in higher education. Your assessment strategy should include the types, and methods of assessment used in HE, such as essays, projects and timed constrained assignments, including exams, as appropriate.

An assessment strategy created and shared by the team will ensure that:

- No one method is over-used
- There are sufficient opportunities to develop oral presentation and communication skills
- The student gains adequate practice in taking time-constrained assignments
- There are sufficient assignments to ensure authenticity, reliability and fairness, and that these are scheduled appropriately throughout the Diploma course

- There are alternative assignments to accommodate on-course referral opportunities.

Personal development must be considered in the design of an assessment strategy. Students should be given opportunities to:

- Plan study time appropriately
- Identify own skills and potential
- Research opportunities for future employment and subsequent appropriate HE courses
- Be proactive in searching out advice and guidance
- Deal with stress in assessment i.e. through unseen tests, oral presentations
- Work to deadlines in time constrained assignments and through responses to assignment brief
- Work in a group
- Reflect on own and others' performances sensitively and constructively.

The process of development of a course will include identifying the details of a Provider's proposed assessment strategy. This proposal must meet the requirements of the approved Diploma Specification of a named Diploma. It will take account of the level, context, content, and delivery of the Diploma. It must address the questions "What is assessment for?" and "Why are we doing it this way?"

Assessment Tasks

Within the assessment strategy, Providers must ensure that student work for each task is assessed against the learning outcomes by using the assessment criteria and judged to be either achieved or not achieved. All learning outcomes and assessment criteria must be met in order for the unit to be achieved and grading applied where appropriate.

Assessors should ensure that:

- Assessment is planned, appropriate, consistent, fair and transparent and does not unintentionally discriminate against any student
- Students clearly understand assessment requirements
- Students' work is authentic, i.e. completed by the named student
- Work is sufficient, i.e. provides enough evidence from each student to enable robust judgements about achievement
- Student achievement is clearly mapped to the learning outcome.

Assessment tasks must:

- Map to the learning outcomes and assessment criteria
- Be developed as written documents in their own right

- Be internally verified before they are made available to students
- Be fit for purpose, i.e. valid, reliable, sufficient and accessible
- Cover a range of assessment methods wherever possible
- Be designed in such a way as to minimise bias
- Be the same for each group that is following the course
- Match the standard exemplified in any benchmark assessment tasks
- Enable evidence of authenticity
- Be different when used in response to approval of a referral opportunity
- Be stored in a secure place that ensures confidentiality where required.

Skills and Education Group Access offers scheduled and bespoke training in devising and developing assessment tasks. Please check the AVA training schedule for more details.

Making Assessment Assignments User-Friendly

The best way to make assessments user-friendly, clear, transparent and transferable is to set the assignment out clearly in a briefing paper. The use of a common briefing format across all curriculum strands in the Diploma is recommended.

The briefing sheet should contain the following:

- Diploma title
- Unit title(s) (where the provider is using integrated assessments/mapping opportunities)
- National unit code(s)
- Learning Outcome and Assessment Criterion(a) to be covered by the assignment
- The Grading Standards and associated components to be used (for graded units)
- An indication of the number of assignments used to complete the unit e.g., Assignment 1 of 2 and Assignment 2 of 2
- The assignment tasks
- The date the assignment was given to the student
- The deadline for the submission of the assignment – word processed into the briefing sheet
- An indication of word count if appropriate (1,000 -1,500 for three credits; 2,000-2,500 for six credits)
- Whether drafts are acceptable and if so, the associated deadline/method for any drafts. QAA expects that where drafts are allowable, they are used in the early part of a course to help students to become more academically able as they proceed through the course
- Some indication of the range and type of references to be used, if appropriate.

Making Achievement Transparent through Assessment

For a student to be awarded the Diploma there must be a transparent process of recording evidence of achievement against the learning outcomes and assessment criteria of the unit(s).

An assessment feedback sheet is essential, and must include:

- Student name
- Diploma title
- Unit title
- Deadline date
- Date of submission by the student (an agreed late deadline date must appear on this sheet and have auditable links to the mitigating circumstances submitted by the student) (non-agreed late submissions are capped at a 'Pass' for graded units, although there may be circumstances where an application for on-course referral is appropriate. Refer to the Policy for Dealing with On-Course Referrals, (see SharePoint)
- Clear mapping of evidence to the unit assessment criteria
- Achievement or non-achievement clearly identified with a field for a new submission date for non-achievement of a first submission
- Achievement or non-achievement that is clearly identified in a resubmission, with indication of the student instigating the on-course referral process where appropriate
- Late submissions clearly indicated. For graded units, late submission of one assignment without authorised mitigating circumstances, results in the overall unit grade being capped at a Pass grade regardless of the number of assignments within the unit
- Written feedback to the student from the assessor to cover constructive developmental comments, including where a Distinction indicator is given, identification of good practice and justification for the award of particular unit grade as appropriate, once all Learning Outcomes have been achieved for a unit.

Guidance on Assignments covering Assessment Criteria from more than one Unit

The QAA Diploma specification 2023 (Revised July 2025) states:
Assessed work for the unit must be undertaken solely for the achievement of that unit or set of units (that is, it is not 'cross-referenced' to or from the work submitted for assessment for another unit), Section 19.3 page 6
It is, therefore, acceptable to write an assignment that covers every assessment criterion from two (or more) units.

The AVA considers that:

- The definition of QAA Cross reference refers to missing Assessment Criterion(a) (AC) found in another assignment that did not indicate that the AC could be met in that assignment
- OR use of an assignment to meet ACs for a second unit, without the tasks allowing for the increase in number of credits involved for the two units with the brief lacking any reference linking both units
- Definition of mapping – identification of where in brief tasks ACs are to be met and/or where ACs are met in student response
- 'Set of units' – QAA meaning more than one unit
- An assignment **should not** be assessed twice for two units, unless the assignment clearly states that ACs from two (or more) units are covered by the tasks
- Brief document for assignment to cover two units should have:
    - Both units' titles with codes at top of brief
    - ACs to be achieved for each unit, given in separate sections
    - ACs to be achieved from both units mapped to the tasks in the brief
    - Any information on Grading Standards, e.g. components and the related contextualisation, assigned to each unit should be shown separately
    - Briefing for every unit must be separately pre-issued verified – so where there are two units involved in an assignment, then there should be two pre-issue verification reports, one for the complete assessment activity for each unit.
- Feedback must be given for each unit as a separate entity, either against the ACs for ungraded or against the Grading Standards for a graded unit
- It is possible to achieve one unit and not achieve the other unit.

The AVA would not expect that Assessment Criteria are split across assessments related to a Learning Outcome.

The use of Academic Writing Skills or other Study Skills unit with a subject specific unit in one assignment.

- Suggestion: to include in a brief that covers some ACs from a study skills unit and also from a subject specific unit should be a statement that the grading process can only be applied to the evidence for the subject specific unit when a robust attempt has been made to cover all the ACs included in the assignment, i.e. ACs from both units that have been selected to use in

the assignment – to try to mitigate against late submission of the ungraded unit

- If tutors offer opportunity for study skills unit ACs to be met from the student choice of one/two units from a given list, a study skills brief should make it clear how the student records their choice of the curriculum unit(s), with the brief for the optional units showing the study skills ACs in the brief.

Types of Assessment

Initial diagnostic	
Form:	Usually takes place before or at the start of a Diploma.
Purpose:	To identify current learning style and strengths to determine the potential needs and areas for development of individuals and/or the group.

Formative	
Form:	Developmental and continuous throughout the course.
Purpose:	To give feedback and support to the student about progress towards learning outcomes and to inform the tutor of possible action to take. It should be used to empower students to take responsibility for their own learning and assessment.

Summative	
Form:	Takes place during or towards the end of a unit of learning within the Diploma and counts towards final assessment. It is criterion-referenced and uses the assessment criteria in the units.
Purpose:	To measure the learning and achievement that has taken place by the end of a learning experience.

Assessment Methods

Assessment methods refer to the activity defined by the assignments that a student undertakes, and the ways in which assessors can mark and record the responses to these assignments. Any assessment strategy should include a variety of assessment methods, adapted as necessary to the needs of the target group and the curriculum.

Assessment methods include (but are not limited to):

- Observation of activities in the learning environment, such as role-play, group work, simulations, practical activities, discussion, performance
- Questioning, oral or written, informal or formally structured

sometimes referred to as Professional Discussion. Evidence of activities should be available for the internal moderator and AVA moderation activities using the Assessment Observation Template available in SharePoint

- Structured assignments undertaken in the student's own time, such as:
  - A project
  - A practical exercise
  - An essay
  - A case study or assignment
  - Production of an artefact; either physically or electronically, exhibition, show, display
  - Preparation of a report, (written or oral)
  - Structured assignments or tests undertaken in timed conditions, such as written, oral or practical examinations.

The merits of using examinations, both unseen and seen, are considered within HEIs to be essential preparation for higher education studies. The type and timing of exams is important when building a student's confidence in preparing for and responding to exam conditions.

The assessment process should empower students by including:

- Open, unambiguous and transparent briefing
- Developmental feedback on the process and results of assessment
- Opportunities to demonstrate learning by every student
- Relevance to and integration into the learning process
- The opportunity for students to reflect on their own learning
- The opportunity for students to appeal against assessment and grading decisions.

Characteristics of Assessment

All assessment methods should be valid, reliable, fit for purpose and inclusive.

Valid

Assessment should measure what it claims to measure and what is important to measure; in other words, there should be a close fit between the assessment method(s) and the learning outcome(s).

Reliable

The assessment result should be replicable and consistent either under different circumstances, or with a different assessor. For example, the conditions provided for an assessed presentation for one student group (lectern, PowerPoint etc.) should be made available for all.

Fit for Purpose

Assessment methods should be appropriate for the form of assessment. For example, an initial assessment should build confidence and not deter a student from appropriate progression. Tasks must generate sufficient evidence from each student to enable assessors to make robust judgements.

Inclusive

Assessment methods should not raise unnecessary barriers to demonstration of achievement. Tasks should be designed to minimise bias and to permit reasonable adjustments to be made, while minimising the need for them.

Evidence should be tailored to the needs of individuals or groups, and evidence should always be flexible, varied and appropriate. Therefore, a student with physical difficulties may provide visual or oral evidence such as photographs or videos rather than the notes and reports produced by the rest of the group. A student with dyslexia should not be asked to produce a timed assignment without support. Tutors must ensure that the evidence provided is genuinely appropriate to the level of the unit. New tutors must be supported in this area, and internally moderated to ensure these principles are adhered to.

The tutor team needs to ensure that students are given opportunity to provide the required evidence, but care must be taken not to give the student so much support that the work becomes essentially that of the tutor.

Word Count

Assessment should be appropriate to credit value. Writing a 3000-word essay would not be appropriate for a 3-credit unit; a word count of between 1000 and 1500 would be more appropriate depending on the type of assessment. Assessment must be appropriate to the credit level. Essays, formal reports, and presentations are some of the assignment types that are appropriate at Level Three. Your Moderator will review word counts on assessments.

Authentic

Assignments that lead to student evidence that is the result of the student's own performance activity are an essential part of any assessment strategy in a Diploma course. Appropriate mechanisms need to be in place to ensure that the student has done the work that is presented.

In courses where word-processed submissions of evidence are mainly used, it is necessary for tutors or assessors to require pieces of handwritten evidence such as drafts (where permissible), plans and notes as part of the assessment strategy in the majority of units. **The use of a signature from the student to agree that the work is his/her own is required.**

Providers are increasingly likely to make use of electronic plagiarism checking software. Please use your internal policy on plagiarism and academic malpractice where this is suspected and ensure that the external moderator is made aware of the process followed, and outcomes recorded in each case.

Management of Assessment

Record-keeping is essential. Anyone engaged in the assessment of students' work should log and maintain records of student achievement. There should be some facility for the co-ordination of assessment decisions for every student and every unit. The AVA strongly recommends the use of the AVA Grade Tracker which allows you to record all aspects of the student responses to the assignment brief, be it a first or resubmission, a late submission, capped at a Pass etc. This tracker must then be mapped to the results that are input into the eRAC and should be made available for AVA moderation and Final Awards Board activities.

Assessment by the Tutor

Tutors are responsible for planning, devising and managing the assessment strategy for the units of learning they deliver. Each tutor team is asked to complete an Assessment Plan (AP1) for each Diploma which outlines the type of assessment and timing of assessment across the Diploma course. Tutors are also responsible for sharing the learning outcomes and assessment criteria of units with students, recording assessment, giving ongoing feedback (formative and summative), and ensuring that all students have equal opportunities for their learning to be assessed.

Tutors will provide guidance to students where there are choices regarding assessment and are responsible for communication and liaison with any other assessor, informally as well as through regular team meetings. It is expected that a tutor of Access to HE is qualified to at least one level above that of the Diploma. Any tutor working towards a Level 4 qualification will need to be mentored and should not be the sole assessor of the unit/s they are teaching on. The Lead Moderator (LM) will check college policy on Human Resources (HR) and Recruitment and will expect this requirement to be explicit within such policy.

Assessment by People other than the Delivery Tutor:

Peer/Self-Assessment

Peer and self-assessment are usual forms of any learning process for both the student and the peer assessor. Many group activities will lend themselves to this form of assessment, particularly where the skills include communication or personal development. It is important that the tutor retains overall

responsibility, perhaps by countersigning to indicate agreement or adding further comment.

Key Points to Remember when Using Self/Peer Assessment:

- The criteria for making judgements must come from the unit being assessed
- There are many situations where peer and self-assessment will not be appropriate, for instance where students or tutors lack confidence, particularly in the early parts of the course
- Assessment evidence should be captured using appropriate observation sheets
- Students must be clear about which criteria are being assessed
- Students must understand that they are assessing only against those criteria and that personal judgements are not appropriate
- Peer and self-assessment must take place in a safe, supportive and transparent manner
- No more than **one third** of a student's overall assessment should consist of this kind of evidence. The AVA recommends that tutors consider inviting the internal moderator to a self/peer assessment activity where there is an opportunity to moderate a tutor's verbal feedback to students
- Tutors must:
  - provide training to students to develop their understanding and competence in making these assessment decisions
  - consider the need to provide for a de-briefing session
- Students must:
  - have sufficient knowledge and skill in the given curriculum area to effectively self and peer assess
  - understand the level at which they are assessing/being assessed
  - be supported to feel safe in making these assessment decisions.

Assessment by Others within and External to the Learning Environment

Support workers, care assistants, mentors, witnesses, line managers in work placement situations, and others who contribute to the learning process, may be involved in assessment. It is essential that these additional sources have full access to the unit specifications, i.e. title, credit value, learning outcomes and assessment criteria. They must work in liaison with the student and tutor.

Time Constrained Assignments

What are they?

A Time Constrained Assignment (TCA) is a form of assessment that requires students to complete assessed work in a clearly time-limited period but not necessarily under strict examination conditions. Where TCAs are employed, the conditions under which they will be delivered should be made clear to students in an assignment brief, which can be given well in advance. This form of a TCA brief should, of course, not include the actual tasks. Time Constrained Assignments may be in the form of:

1. Unseen Exam

An unseen exam is a TCA assessment task, presented to students for the first time. Unseen exams are usually hand-written and last at least one hour.

2. Seen Exam

A seen exam occurs where the TCA assessment tasks are presented to students in advance of the planned assessment time. The actual TCA is still taken under strict conditions with no external material allowed into the TCA room and with a time limit for completing the answers. This type of assessment may be useful for essay tasks.

3. Open Book Exam

An open book TCA is when students can bring in books or folders or a specific number of sheets of notes into the exam conditions.

4. Stimulated TCA

For this type of TCA, students could be given a journal article, a case study, a video to watch, a newspaper article etc, with the TCA to follow, once time to assimilate the information or even time to discuss the material with colleagues has been allowed.

Advantages

- Robust assessment – largely removes issues of plagiarism
- Opportunities for developing time management and personal management skills
- Preparation for examinations at University – raises issues of managing stress, opportunities for looking at examination and revision techniques
- Clearly defined assessment schemes for assessors.

Disadvantages

- Students may struggle with them

- Potential for some students to receive lower grades than they would achieve through other methods of assessment – increases pressure on the need to meet HEI offers.

Considerations

- Look at the advantages and disadvantages of TCAs from the students' point of view
- Try to develop strategies that increases confidence of students in this method.

Academic Misconduct, malpractice and AI use

Skills and Education Group Access recognises that generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools are becoming increasingly prevalent within education and may support learning when used appropriately.

Acceptable use includes limited and transparent use of AI tools for idea generation, planning, or explanation of concepts, where the student maintains full responsibility for the understanding, authorship, and academic integrity of the assessment submitted.

Unacceptable use of generative AI includes the production of assessment content in whole or in part by an AI tool, paraphrasing tools used to disguise copied material, fabrication or alteration of evidence or data, or any use of AI that replaces a student's own academic work. Unacceptable use will be treated as academic malpractice in line with this policy and may result in the full range of academic misconduct outcomes.

The AVA will maintain this position in accordance with relevant QAA guidance and any changes to sector practice or legislation. Providers are required to implement procedures to support the consistent application of this policy and ensure students are appropriately informed of acceptable and unacceptable uses of generative AI in Access to HE assessment.

Student malpractice

This list is not exhaustive but examples of student Malpractice may include:

- Plagiarism
- Collusion
- Copying
- Unauthorised aids during examinations or controlled assessments e.g. notes, mobile phone
- Inappropriate behaviour during assessments
- Inappropriate/abusive comments in assessment evidence
- Inappropriate use of Artificial Intelligence

Section 5: Grading

The QAA introduced a new Grading Scheme for 2024. Tutors must be aware of the key changes to the Scheme and ensure that they have attended AVA training and/or made use of the QAA and AVA resources that have responded to these changes. Key Features of the Access to HE Grading Scheme 2024 are:

What has stayed the same in the Grading Scheme 2024?

The Diploma requires the grading of only 45 credits at Level Three. A further 15 ungraded Level Three or Level Two credits are also awarded to enable a student to achieve the Diploma of 60 credits. A detailed description of the operation of grading can be found on the QAA Access to HE website, and within SharePoint.

- A grade is awarded for every graded Level 3 unit that a student completes successfully as part of a Diploma
- There is no overall or composite grade for the Access to HE Diploma
- The number of grades awarded to a student depends on the number of graded Level 3 units required for the Diploma. This number can vary because, although all Diplomas contain 45 credits from graded Level 3 units, these units can have a value of 3, 6 or 9 credits. The number of separate grades awarded to a student is therefore a consequence of the structure of the Diploma and not a reflection of the student's standard of performance
- The grade awarded for each unit is shown on the achievement transcript that is issued with Diplomas. (The transcript also shows how many credits were awarded for each successfully completed graded or ungraded unit). Further references in this document to 'units' means graded Level 3 units unless otherwise specified
- Ungraded units will be awarded an 'achieved'; a grade of Pass, Merit or Distinction is awarded for each graded unit
- The standard of performance required for a Pass grade is the minimum required to meet the specified assessment criteria for the learning outcomes of the unit. (There is no separate definition of a Pass grade). Merit and Distinction grades indicate higher levels of performance within level
- Students who **do not** achieve the specified learning outcomes for a unit cannot be awarded credit for that unit - the unit is therefore not eligible for grading
- Use of Numerical marking as part of the Access to HE Diploma Grading Scheme is not permitted
- Feedback language of 'generally' (in most cases)/instances for Merit and 'consistently' (all the time/in almost every case/reliability) for Distinction are used to indicate the standard of student performance
- The Mid-point grade continues to be the way a unit grade is determined, once grades are placed in ascending order. *E,g., MPM would become PMM*

and the midpoint grade would be Merit.

What has changed in the Grading Scheme (2024)?

Grade Standards (GSs)

There are three grading standards:

1. Knowledge and understanding
2. Subject Specific Skills
3. Transferable Skills

All three Grading Standards (GSs) are assigned to all assignments on any graded Level Three units. GSs are independent of the assessment method chosen. It is essential that tutors update themselves with the new regulation, processes and documents. They can be found in your Provider SharePoint site and on the QAA Access to HE Resources page

The QAA Tutor's Quick Guide to Grading states (Verbatim):

All three grading standards are used with every graded unit and across every assignment within a graded unit.

- *In units with more than one assignment, it is not permissible to award a grade to each assignment; grading takes place at the level of the unit only.*
- *In units with more than one assignment, it is not permissible to use individual assignments to grade individual grading standards (for example, assignment 1 cannot be used to grade only Knowledge and Understanding, with assignment 2 used to grade both Subject Specific Skills and Transferable Skills).*
- *The choice of sub-components at unit level is normally made during the construction of the unit assessment plan and should be appropriate to cover the range of individual assignments. Therefore, the sub-components are not assigned when a unit is validated.*
- *Only when all assignments for an individual unit are assessed and the tutor has determined that the student has met all the Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria for all unit assignments (and therefore has passed the unit) will grading of the unit take place. Grades for individual assignments must not be awarded.*
- *A grade indicator for each grading standard is awarded at Pass, Merit or Distinction. The tutor will review all assignments associated with the individual unit and determine if the student has demonstrated the standard for the grades of Merit or Distinction or whether the outcome remains as a Pass.*
- *The tutor must record in writing their justification for the grade indicator awarded for each grading standard.*
- *The tutor reviews the three grade indicators that have been awarded for the unit and determines the overall grade for the unit, using a standard method, which is detailed in Annex C2, Table 1. The overall grade is a recommendation to the Awards Board, where it will be considered and confirmed by the Board.*
- *For Grading Standard 3 (Transferable Skills), there is a choice of three components with a requirement that a minimum of two components are to be selected for all graded units (irrespective of size of unit) and that all three components must be*

used at least once in the grading of units across the Diploma. AVAs will need to have processes in place, at the level of the student, to ensure that all three components have been utilised.

Grade Components

Each Grading Standard is still made up of a set of related 'components'. These components describe different aspects of the performance associated with a performance for both Merit and Distinction. They also reflect the different aspects of performance valued by different subjects. QAA has provided updated requirements for each Grading Standard and tutors must be clear of these changes when writing assignment briefs to ensure that students are not disadvantaged by the changes to the Grading Scheme 2024.

Using the Grading Standards:

1. Knowledge and Understanding

Utilise both components (a. and b.). For component (b) for 3 credit units, select a minimum of 2 and maximum of 4 of the most relevant sub-components; for 6 and 9-credit units, select a minimum of 2 and maximum of 6. Choices must be consistent across merit and distinction.

2. Subject Specific Skills

For all units irrespective of size, select a minimum of 2 and maximum of 4 of the most relevant sub-components in (b). Choices must be consistent across merit and distinction.

3. Transferable Skills

There are 3 components for this grading standard: (a), (b) and (c). A minimum of 2 components must be selected for all graded units (irrespective of size of unit). All 3 components must be used at least once across the assessment of the Diploma Components (a) and (b) each have a set of sub-components. Select a minimum of 2 and maximum of 4 of the most relevant sub-components for both (a) and (b).

Grade Indicators

The grading process continues to generate a grade indicator (Pass (all Learning Outcomes have been met), Merit or Distinction) for each of the grading standards used in each unit assignment (**all three must be applied only once regardless of how many assessments there are for the unit.**

The final unit grade reflects the overall standard of work for the unit, based on a

review of the grade indicators for the unit (the unit grade profile) and any other relevant information.

When all the assignments for a unit have been completed then the awarded indicators are used to define the overall grade.

The final grade for each unit is established by identifying the **mid-point** of the grade indicators for the unit.

Each unit is given an overall grade in this way: **assignments are not given overall grades**.

Full details about the grading standards and how they are used for grading units can be found in the Grading Scheme Handbook introduced from 1 August 2024:

- Section A: Introduction and Summary
- Section B: The Grading Standards
- Section C: Using the Grading Standards in Assessment
- Section D: Moderation and Standardisation
- Section E: Student Results and Awards Boards
- Section E: Addendum
- Tutors' Quick Guide to Grading
- All Resources can be found on the QAA Access to HE Resources website, and within the Provider SharePoint folder.

The QAA has compiled a Frequently Asked Questions section on its resource page.

Definition of Terms and Processes used when Applying Grades

There are terms within the QAA grading document that have specific meaning and associated processes:

Drafts

QAA expect that where drafts are offered, that there is clear guidance around the use of drafts and that they are usually considered to be a support tool in the early part of the course to build a student's confidence in academic writing.

The assessor may wish to give students the opportunity to submit a draft of their response to an assignment. The following key points must be addressed in this case:

- The opportunity to submit a draft must be indicated in the assignment brief
- There must be a deadline for the presentation of drafts to the assessor well before the actual submission deadline - this delay allows the assessor to

review the draft so that the student can address any action points
- Draft opportunities are not appropriate for time-constrained assessments or normally recommended in the final term/semester of a Diploma course
- Draft work must be retained for scrutiny by external moderators.

Submissions

This word is used to describe the act of presenting the response to an assignment to the assessor; it should be used only for the initial presentation of completed work and not to draft work. Submissions must meet the deadlines set or be presented with an application (and evidence) for mitigating circumstances.

If a student does not meet the submission date without mitigating circumstances, this may result in the student not meeting the learning outcomes for that unit, or a Unit grade being capped at a 'pass'.

It is important that tutors set assessment deadlines as part of your assessment strategy to avoid bottlenecks from occurring at key times in the year. A deadline is set and must be met unless a student presents with a request for an extension with mitigating circumstances. This applies to all graded and ungraded units.

Where a student fails to meet a resubmission deadline, there are two courses of possible action:

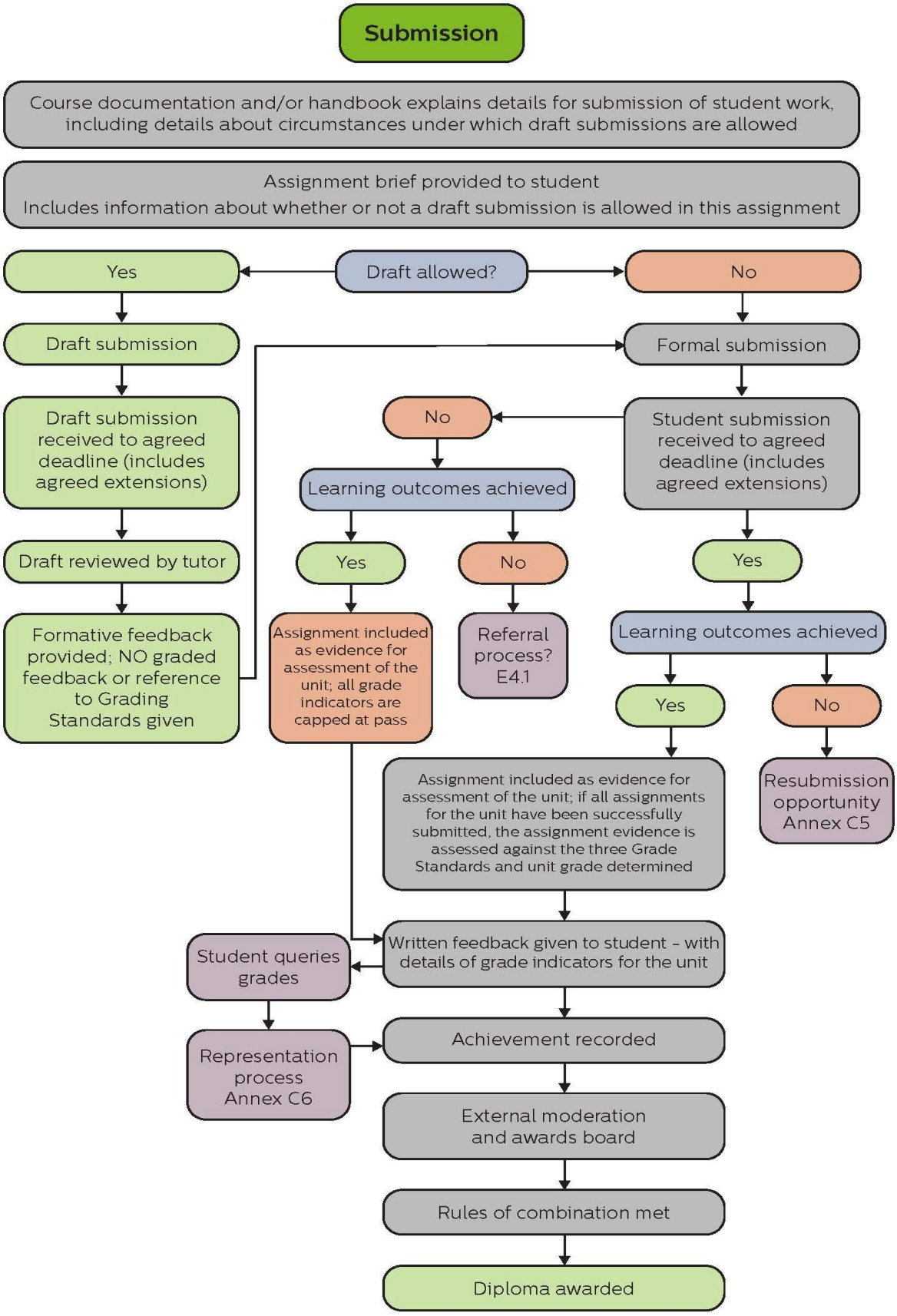
1. The student has not achieved the assessment and cannot achieve the unit
2. The student is guided to a possible request to the AVA for consideration of an on-course referral or end of course referral to the FAB.

This is a QAA regulatory requirement and will help to avoid any tutor 'chasing' students towards the end of the academic year as this not only puts additional burden onto a tutor's busy schedule, but disadvantages students who did meet the original deadlines. Students who do not achieve on a 2nd submission (resubmission) may apply to the AVA for a 3rd attempt (referral). If both the original submission and resubmission were submitted on time and the student achieves on referral, the unit will be eligible for grading.

Assignment Submission by Students (Guidance)

A student must make a robust attempt in any assignment by the deadline supplied. If the assessor considers that the student has not attempted to address all, or most of the assessment criteria in an assignment, then any evidence presented by the student does not represent a submission made in good faith. Where a tutor suspects a student is taking advantage of the assessment submission process, the tutor should have a documented conversation with the student, making it clear that further 'chances' will not be treated as leniently, and assessments grade indicators are likely to be capped at a Pass in the future.

QAA Grading Scheme Handbook 2023 (revised July 2025) – Appendix C3 Flowchart of the submission process *(see page 43)*


Submission
Course documentation and/or handbook explains details for submission of student work, including details about circumstances under which draft submissions are allowed
Assignment brief provided to student
Includes information about whether or not a draft submission is allowed in this assignment
Draft allowed?
Yes
No
Draft submission
Formal submission
Draft submission received to agreed deadline (includes agreed extensions)
Draft reviewed by tutor
Formative feedback provided; NO graded feedback or reference to Grading Standards given
No
Learning outcomes achieved
Yes
No
Assignment included as evidence for assessment of the unit; all grade indicators are capped at pass
Referral process? E4.1
Student submission received to agreed deadline (includes agreed extensions)
Yes
Learning outcomes achieved
Yes
No
Assignment included as evidence for assessment of the unit; if all assignments for the unit have been successfully submitted, the assignment evidence is assessed against the three Grade Standards and unit grade determined
Resubmission opportunity Annex C5
Student queries grades
Written feedback given to student - with details of grade indicators for the unit
Representation process Annex C6
Achievement recorded
External moderation and awards board
Rules of combination met
Diploma awarded

Mapping of Evidence

If a tutor is mapping assessment across two units, the assessment process must allow the assessment task linked to each unit to be assessed individually.

A student may have produced an excellent response to one unit and a good response to the other unit. Each unit should generate separate grade indicators. The Diploma Moderator will expect to see clear evidence that mapping was because of a response to tasks linked to each unit.

Extensions

Extensions are allowed if the following criteria are adhered to[6]:

- The tutor has received a formal request with mitigating circumstances before the deadline
- The decision to grant an extension request should sit outside of the subject tutor responsibility and may rest with the course leader or another tutor
- A clear and documented extension deadline is given
- Marking and feedback must not have been given to other students as to provide unfair advantage for students who are granted any extension request
- Evidence of all extensions agreed and rejected are available for the external moderator for scrutiny
- The tutor team must monitor the occurrences of extension requests, for the emergence of patterns.

A student who misses a deadline without an extension may not meet the assessment criteria and therefore may not achieve the unit. Students and tutors must be clear that a deadline that is set must be adhered to unless mitigating/extenuating circumstances are evidenced.

Resubmissions

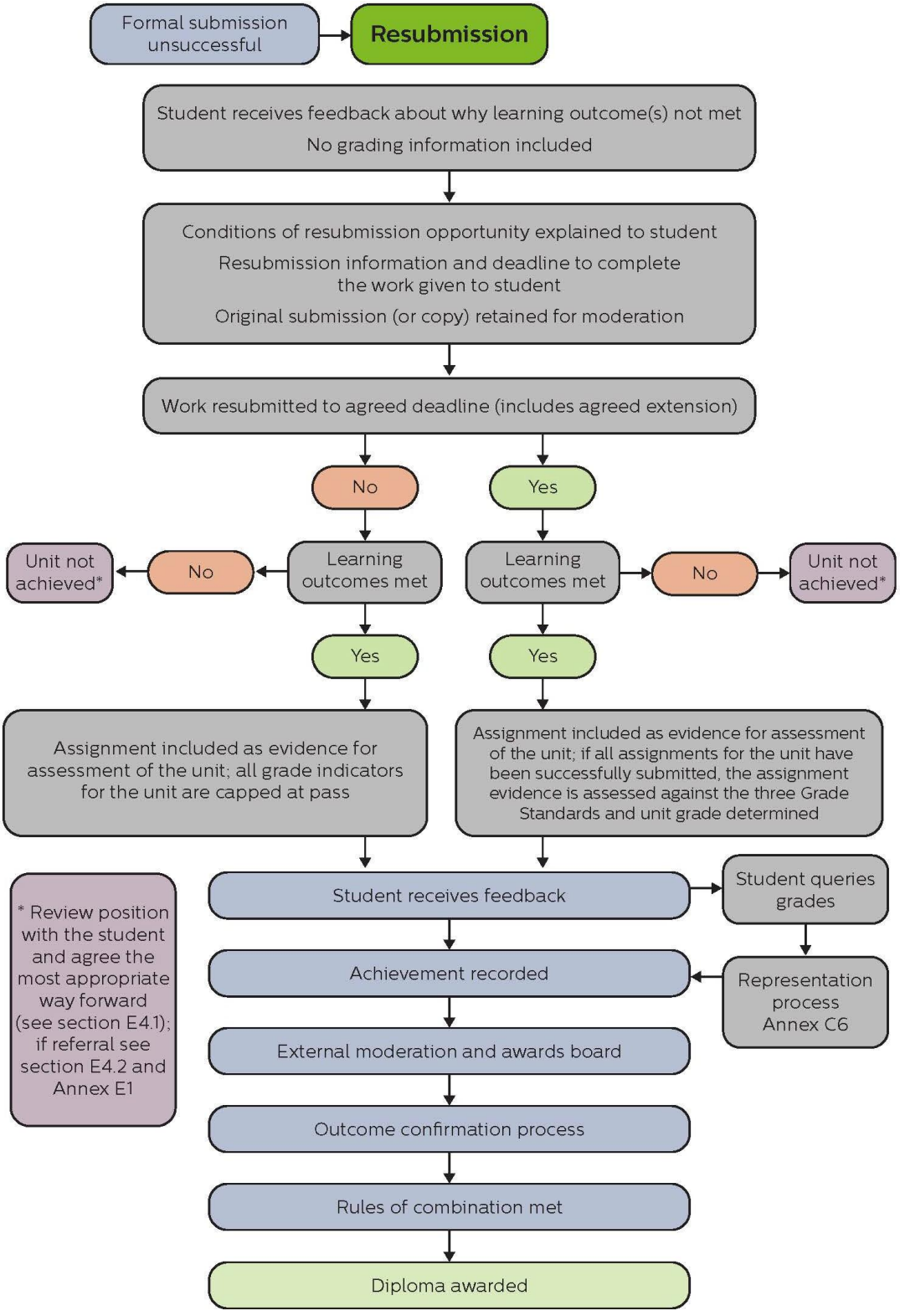
If a student's work does not meet the assessment criteria for the assignment at Level Three, then the student should be given appropriate feedback and an opportunity for resubmission of the work for the relevant assessment criteria with a further deadline.

If all the work for a unit is submitted to the agreed deadline and meets the assessment criteria, i.e. the student has achieved, the grading process is implemented where appropriate to a graded unit, and the student can be awarded the range of grading indicators as appropriate.

[6] See explanation of students submitting to deadlines *(see pg. 40)*

If the resubmitted work does not meet the agreed deadline for submission but meets the assessment criteria, the student may be advised of the process for an application for on-course referral.

QAA Grading Scheme Handbook 2023 (revised July 2025) - Appendix C4 Flowchart of the resubmission process ***(see page 46)***


Formal submission unsuccessful
Resubmission
Student receives feedback about why learning outcome(s) not met
No grading information included
Conditions of resubmission opportunity explained to student
Resubmission information and deadline to complete the work given to student
Original submission (or copy) retained for moderation
Work resubmitted to agreed deadline (includes agreed extension)
No
Yes
Unit not achieved*
No
Learning outcomes met
Learning outcomes met
No
Unit not achieved*
Yes
Yes
Assignment included as evidence for assessment of the unit; all grade indicators for the unit are capped at pass
Assignment included as evidence for assessment of the unit; if all assignments for the unit have been successfully submitted, the assignment evidence is assessed against the three Grade Standards and unit grade determined
* Review position with the student and agree the most appropriate way forward (see section E4.1); if referral see section E4.2 and Annex E1
Student receives feedback
Student queries grades
Achievement recorded
Representation process Annex C6
External moderation and awards board
Outcome confirmation process
Rules of combination met
Diploma awarded

Referrals

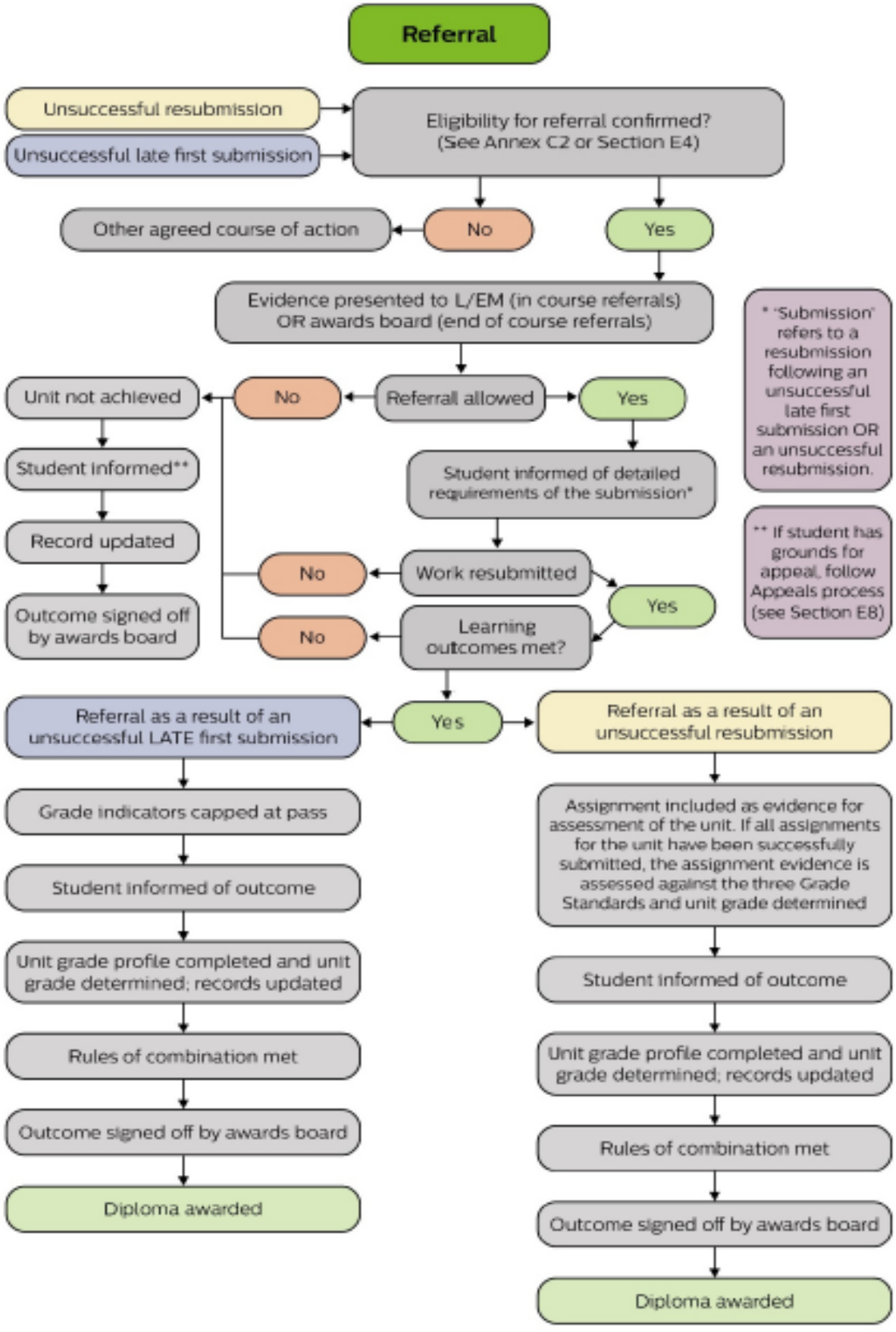
If the **resubmitted** work does not meet the assessment criterion(a), the student must be advised about the opportunity for an application for on-course referral (or second resubmission opportunity) in line with Skills and Education Group Access Policy.

A referral will also apply if a student misses a set deadline and once submitted, fails to achieve the Assessment Criterion(a) of the Unit. As the student failed to submit to the deadline, they forgo the opportunity for a resubmission opportunity.

A student may only make an application for Referral, up to **15 credits**. Any application must be supported by a tutor. Where a tutor believes that a student may be taking advantage of the referral process to gain extra time or opportunity, the AVA expects that the tutor team will counsel the student in ways to avoid this. The outcome of a successful application for on-course referral can be subject to the grading process if the first, second and referral submissions were submitted on time. Work can be awarded grade indicators and not capped at a Pass.

Skills and Education Group Access will monitor the extent to which the use of referrals is recorded by Diploma and Provider. Training and support will be made available to tutor teams where there is evidence of an over-reliance on this facility. It is important that reference is made to the AVA On-Course Referral Policy

QAA Grading Scheme Handbook 2023 (revised July 2025) – Appendix E2 Flowchart of the referrals process *(see page 48)*

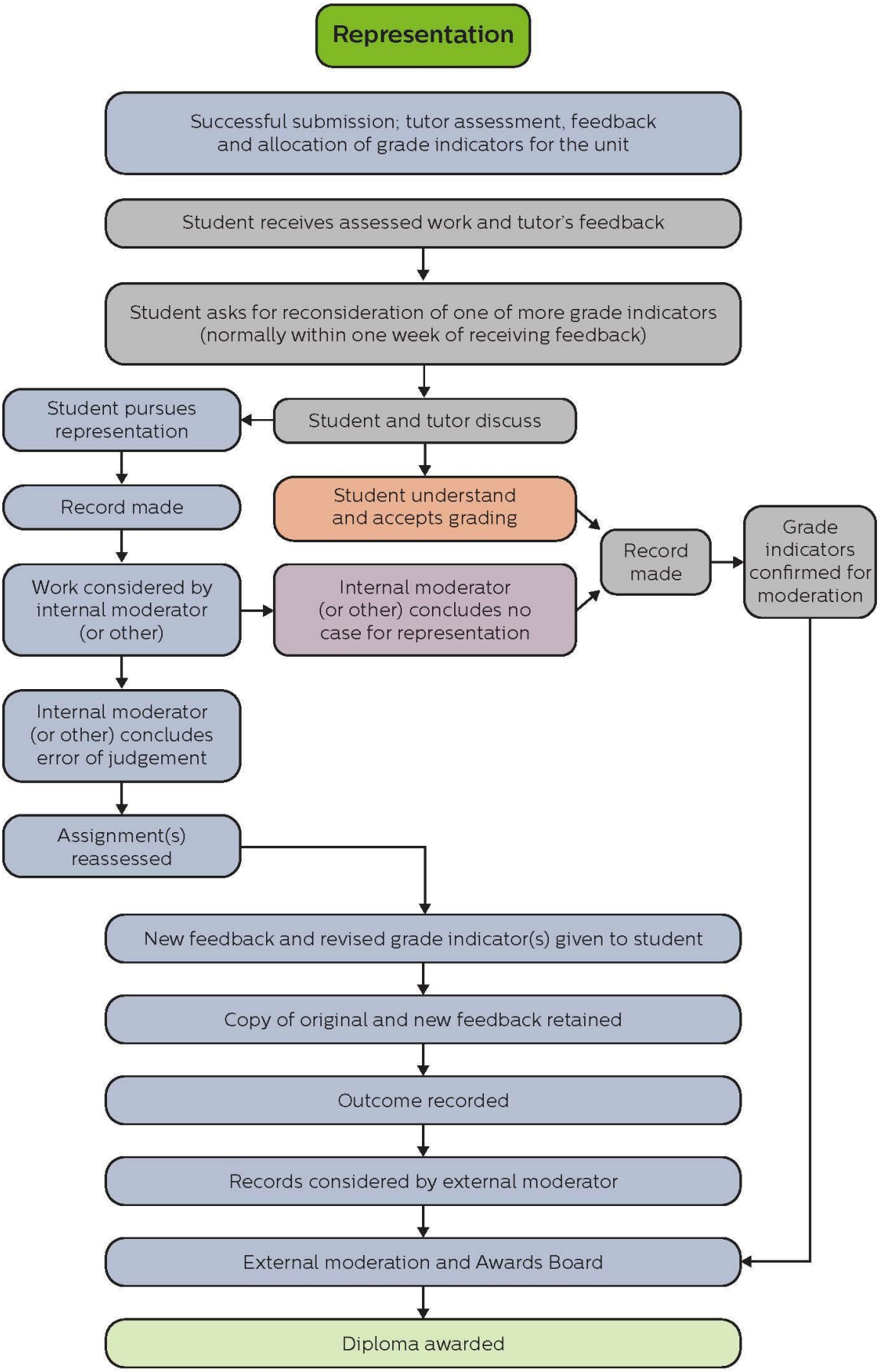

Referral
Unsuccessful resubmission
Unsuccessful late first submission
Eligibility for referral confirmed? (See Annex C2 or Section E4)
Other agreed course of action
No
Yes
Evidence presented to L/EM (in course referrals) OR awards board (end of course referrals)
* 'Submission' refers to a resubmission following an unsuccessful late first submission OR an unsuccessful resubmission.
Unit not achieved
No
Referrall allowed
Yes
Student informed**
Student informed of detailed requirements of the submission*
Record updated
** If student has grounds for appeal, follow Appeals process (see Section E8)
No
Work resubmitted
Yes
Outcome signed off by awards board
No
Learning outcomes met?
Referral as a result of an unsuccessful LATE first submission
Yes
Referral as a result of an unsuccessful resubmission
Grade indicators capped at pass
Assignment included as evidence for assessment of the unit. If all assignments for the unit have been successfully submitted, the assignment evidence is assessed against the three Grade Standards and unit grade determined
Student informed of outcome
Student informed of outcome
Unit grade profile completed and unit grade determined; records updated
Rules of combination met
Unit grade profile completed and unit grade determined; records updated
Outcome signed off by awards board
Rules of combination met
Diploma awarded
Outcome signed off by awards board
Diploma awarded

Representation

Where a student has had a successful submission and following tutor assessment has received feedback and allocation of grade indicators for the unit, they can ask for a reconsideration of one or more grade indicators. This would normally be within one week of receiving feedback.

The tutor then follows Skills and Education Group Access guidelines to deal with the representation. If, after this process the student still feels an error has been made in the grading decision, then an Appeal, with evidence, should be submitted to the Final Awards Board. A Final Awards Board cannot receive new representations about academic judgements.

QAA Grading Scheme Handbook 2023 (revised July 2025) - Appendix C5 Flowchart of the representation process ***(see page 50)***


Representation
Successful submission; tutor assessment, feedback and allocation of grade indicators for the unit
Student receives assessed work and tutor's feedback
Student asks for reconsideration of one of more grade indicators (normally within one week of receiving feedback)
Student pursues representation
Student and tutor discuss
Record made
Student understand and accepts grading
Record made
Grade indicators confirmed for moderation
Work considered by internal moderator (or other)
Internal moderator (or other) concludes no case for representation
Internal moderator (or other) concludes error of judgement
Assignment(s) reassessed
New feedback and revised grade indicator(s) given to student
Copy of original and new feedback retained
Outcome recorded
Records considered by external moderator
External moderation and Awards Board
Diploma awarded

Appeals

If a student believes there to be an admin or procedural error in an assessment judgement received, they may make an appeal to the assessor. The assessor must then ask the internal moderator or an experienced tutor for the Diploma course to check the process for awarding the grade.

A student may also make an appeal on the grounds of extenuating circumstances that for good reason could not be notified prior to the Final Awards Board. Any change to the overall grade must be recorded in Final awards Board minutes for auditing purposes. Skills and Education Group Access has a procedure for dealing with appeals raised by students as a consequence of a Final Awards Board decision. This can be found in SharePoint. The circumstances of this type of appeal are still restricted to those of administrative or procedural error in the assessment process, or extenuating circumstances that could not be notified prior to the Final awards Board.

Student Appeals against Assessment Decisions

Skills and Education Group Access has an enquiries and appeals policy, which can be accessed in SharePoint. Skills and Education Group Access will not consider an appeal until the student has first exhausted the appeals process at their Provider.

Completion of the Diploma

Achievement of the Diploma is manifested by the submission of appropriate evidence to the assessor by the student. Tutors must ensure that students are informed that all evidence for the potential award of their Diploma must be assessed, quality assured and available for the date agreed for final moderation.

Evidence of Teaching: Responsibility of the Tutor

This type of evidence includes unannotated material from the internet, tutor prepared notes, leaflets/material available to the general public that has not been annotated or used for comprehension or critical evaluation. This type of evidence should never be presented as evidence of achievement, unless where there is a request for an award through Extenuation, where the AVA may call upon supporting evidence of a student having achieved the learning of a particular unit).

Evidence of Learning: Overviewed by the Provider

Throughout the learning process the student will amass a wide range of information and create examples of work when trying to use a particular piece of learning and develop ownership of it. This ongoing development is part of the learning process, and is information shared between the tutor and the student. Until evidence of student work is assessed against the assessment criteria, it remains evidence of learning and not evidence of achievement.

Evidence of Achievement: Assessed by tutor, and sampled by both the Internal Moderator and External Moderator

Evidence of achievement is sampled in both the internal and external moderation processes. Assessment methods must ensure that all learning outcomes and assessment criteria are evidenced – if a student does not provide evidence of achievement for a particular learning outcome or assessment criteria because they have not completed an assessment assignment in full, they must be offered one more opportunity to complete within a given deadline.

The tutor will ensure that students are given sufficient opportunity to provide appropriate evidence; care must be taken not to give the student so much support that the work becomes essentially that of the tutor. Also, care must be taken to ensure that the student is not being given an unfair advantage over other students by the additional opportunity.

If a student does not submit work to the new, agreed deadline, any work submitted after that that meets the assessment criteria, only 'Pass' grade indicators can be awarded, resulting in an overall 'Pass' grade for the unit.

If a student submits work to the deadline and it still does not meet the assessment criteria, then the student must be advised of the opportunity to apply for on-course referral.

Achievement Requirements

A mandatory body of evidence to cover 60 credits of learning completed in no less than 6 months. An online portfolio of evidence will be uploaded to SharePoint for sampling activity and should be presented in a way that is as easy to navigate as a paper-based portfolio of evidence (usually for creative subjects). The majority of student evidence will be presented in an online format, and the external moderator requires streamlined navigation of online folders so that they can easily sample across all students in the cohort and units on the course.

The following evidence of achievements will provide ease of navigation during sampling and is most usefully present in the AVA Grading Tracker:

Student proforma or similar document:

- Name
- Diploma Title
- Course Tutor
- List of units including grades and Recommendations for the Award of Credit; any agreed Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) decisions for award of credits or details related to any application for an Aegrotat or Extenuation award must be clearly identified on this sheet for consideration by the Final Awards Board

- Student and tutor signatures confirming checking of assessed units and grades, to be recommended for award of credit at the Final Awards Board.

Evidence of achievement for each unit containing:

- The unit
- The set of briefs for the assignment(s)
- Student evidence for the assignment(s), including academic integrity signature
- Any draft work or extra work required to complete the assignment(s)
- An assessment feedback sheet for each assignment that clearly shows:
  - the mapping to assessment criteria
  - grading and achievement decisions
  - any agreed new deadlines with links to written mitigating circumstances
  - assessor feedback, including that for submitted drafts
  - late submission of work when there was no agreement of mitigating circumstances.

All class notes, student activity, formative responses and handouts should not be presented unless requested by the moderator.

Any evidence that is presented but does not meet these requirements may not be considered for moderation and a reconvened moderation will be arranged.

Recording Achievement

It is essential that students are aware of their progress towards achievement of the Diploma throughout the course. Each tutor must keep accurate records. The course leader should ensure that these records are transferred regularly into the working electronic eRAC (the AVA's form for recording achievement), at least once a month or at each assessment event; the student must keep records of their individual progress and includes the Skills and Education Group Access Grading Tracker, that records Grading Indicators for each unit for all students. There should be evidence of the student signing a true record of units and grades achieved at the end of their course.

Only work that has been fully assessed and been subjected to the Provider's quality processes will be considered by the Final Awards Board, where the decisions for the award of the Diploma is final.

Tutors must ensure that any deadlines agreed with students enable evidence from students to be assessed and quality assured before the agreed date of the final summative moderation activity.

Evidence cannot be submitted at a later stage for the award of the Diploma in that academic year, unless the Final Awards Board has agreed a process through student

appeals, end of course referrals or extensions beyond the Final Awards Board agenda items.

It is the student's and tutor's responsibility to sign a form, listing those units and associated grades, to verify the accuracy of the recommendations for the award of credit for that student.

The course leader should ensure that these recommendations are accurately reflected in the final electronic form of the RAC, which **must** be uploaded to SharePoint **no later than 3 days** prior to the Pre Final Awards Boards checks. A Lead Moderator/AVA Representative may postpone a Final Awards Board if they have not received completed eRACs for all students progressing to a Final Awards Board.

No other format of recording achievement will be acceptable.

All grades are subject to confirmation through external moderation. The Diploma Moderator may re-assign an awarded grade for a student or cohort depending on circumstances.

Any changes to the eRAC after the convening of the Final Awards Board will become a quality intervention, will attract an administration fee, and will impact the Diploma risk rating.

Skills and Education Group Access **strongly recommends** that Providers hold internal pre-Final Awards Boards. This process would allow Providers to be fully prepared for Final Awards Boards in line with HE requirements. Providers will be reminded via AVA communications.

If a student is claiming credit so that they can progress to Higher Education, then they must have achieved all elements of the Rules of Combination for the Diploma as stated within the Diploma Specification; the combined credits for Mandatory and Optional Units at the correct level stipulated; only units that are highlighted within the Rules of Inclusion and/or Exclusion and any additional criteria identified within the rules of combination.

When checking the eRAC before the Final Awards Board, it is essential that only those students who have met these criteria be recommended for the award of the Diploma and/or units within it.

Extenuation, Aegrotat and Posthumous Awards

While unforeseen serious and traumatic events are generally infrequent, they may nonetheless be inevitable. QAA allows the AVA to consider the award of Aegrotat certificates or the making of Posthumous awards - including where achievement was incomplete, when this is supported by a recommendation from the Provider and

the Lead Moderator through discussion with the Diploma Moderator.

The making of these **exceptional** awards is formally notified through appropriate channels to the Access to HE Committee which holds responsibility for the award of Access to HE Diplomas.

Award through Extenuation

The QAA allows the facility for Award through Extenuation.

'In those exceptional cases where a student cannot be assessed, due to no fault of their own, the student may still be awarded unit(s) that make up the Diploma, through an Award through Extenuation. In addition to an Award through Extenuation, other support arrangements are available to students from their course provider if they are finding it difficult to learn or be assessed during their course of study. AVAs must work with their Providers to ensure a suitable awarding arrangement is put in place to fit local needs and meet the individual needs of students.'

Tutor teams will be guided in this potential award and must make an application to the AVA for consideration in extreme mitigating circumstances of a student's situation. Awards are presented to Final Awards Board for approval and recording. You must notify the AVA/Lead Moderator as soon as possible if you are wanting to make an application for an Award through Extenuation.

Aegrotat Awards

Before submitting a request for an Aegrotat award, the student must be confident that they can perform successfully in HE and will have demonstrated that they have contacted their receiving HEI(s) for confirmation that they will accept an Aegrotat award as an appropriate award for progression. The tutor team must be able to support the student request for an Aegrotat.

The external moderator must be notified of any potential Aegrotat prior to the final moderation in order that the associated evidence is scrutinised.

An Application for an Aegrotat Award form, available on SharePoint, must be completed and submitted to the AVA at least two weeks before the FAB, where it will appear as an agenda item.

Conditions under which an Aegrotat may apply

The external moderators may include the name of any candidate in the pass list under the heading 'Aegrotat' if all the following conditions have been fulfilled:

- The candidate was prevented by serious illness or other sufficient cause from completing the assessment of no less than 30 credits
- The candidate's work during the course has been satisfactory
- The candidate has otherwise satisfied all existing requirements of the Diploma
- The Diploma Moderators do not consider that there is sufficient evidence to enable them to confirm the achievement of the Diploma
- The candidate has not applied for their candidature to be postponed
- The candidate has made a written application to Skills and Education Group Access requesting award of an Aegrotat
- The Provider must be able to support the student application for an Aegrotat award.

The Final Awards Board will consider the following criteria before awarding an Aegrotat:

- There are **exceptional,** certified medical or similar traumatic circumstances that have resulted in the student being unable to complete the course requirements. We expect that such circumstances will not exist at the time of enrolment when students can be offered appropriate support for ongoing conditions or situations that affect their ability to access learning.
- The student has achieved at least 30 credits required for the Aegrotat. In practice, the AVA would need to receive robust evidence that the student is fully prepared for study in HE and a testimonial to this effect from tutors is required.

Skills and Education Group Access will submit the FAB's recommendations for the award of Aegrotat Diplomas to Skills and Education Group Access to HE Committee for approval. The Diploma is awarded without full credits; the unit and grade profile will be incomplete. The Diploma awarded will state that it is an Aegrotat award.

Posthumous Award of the Access to HE Diploma

In the case of a posthumous award, as the providing institution, you should make a written application to Skills and Education Group Access on behalf of the student in the case of death. This application, AVA recommendation and decision, will be noted within the minutes of the FAB and presented to the Access to HE Committee. The AVA will formally write to the family of the deceased via the Provider, acknowledging a posthumous Award.

Section 6: Quality Assurance – How to Run a High-Quality Course

Skills and Education Group Access Quality Assurance Strategy

Skills and Education Group Access holds quality assurance policies and procedures that are compliant with QAA licensing requirements. All Providers will have appropriate policies in place and Lead Moderators will check the implementation of such policies on an annual basis. Indications that such policies are not being implemented correctly will be investigated, normally through a quality intervention meeting. Outcomes of such meetings may impact on Diploma or Provider Risk Ratings.

All Access to HE courses will be monitored by internal moderators, Diploma and Lead Moderators and internal and AVA standardisation activity. Each course must be evaluated by students, the delivery team and by the Lead Moderator.

The course must be reviewed by the tutor teams using the information and evidence available within Skills and Education Group Access policies and guidance documents. Details of how a Provider's quality assurance activity is recorded and monitored will be made available to the Lead Moderator on request.

All initial contact between Skills and Education Group Access and yourselves will be through your Quality Manager or designated Access to HE Course Manager. Where a Quality Manager then agrees for another member of staff to be the primary course contact, they are to formally advise us via email of this decision.

Where the Quality Manager continues to be the only conduit, it is essential that they keep regular contact with those implementing the organisation's quality procedures in relation to Diplomas.

Skills and Education Group Access Responsibility for Quality Assurance

Skills and Education Group Access is responsible for giving clear information about:

- The structural organisation of moderation processes
- Moderators' roles and responsibilities
- The basis, extent and limits of moderators' authority
- The purpose and frequency of visits and meetings undertaken by moderators
- Requirements for monitoring and verifying student achievement
- Moderation outcomes relating to student achievement
- Requirements for moderator reports
- How, and to whom, any concerns or problems identified should be

referred
- The submission of reports to Skills and Education Group Access and associated follow-up activity.

The ultimate responsibility within Skills and Education Group Access for the quality of approved Diplomas rests with the Board of Trustees.

The Access to HE Committee, as a Sub-Committee, has devolved responsibility for a range of activities including:

- The approval of Diplomas
- Advising on issues affecting the quality and the validity of the award of the Diploma
- The appointment of all external moderators
- The award of the Diploma to students
- Approval of aegrotat and posthumous awards
- Making recommendations to the Board of Trustees for all QAA submissions
- Approving Skills and Education Group Access policies
- Ensuring that Skills and Education Group Access quality assurance is implemented effectively
- Liaising with relevant HEIs and employers to promote Access to HE
- Ensuring that the process of confirming the award of the Diploma, which is delegated to the Final Awards Board, is robust.

Skills and Education Group Access routinely reviews and updates its guidance to ensure its continuing currency. Moderation guidance updates are generated from Moderator visits and moderation reports, Moderator mandatory training events and Skills and Education Group Access standardisation events.

Provider Responsibility for Quality Assurance

It is expected that all Providers will have a clear internal quality assurance policy with associated procedures for implementation and robust monitoring processes.

Each Provider will organise its own management of the quality assurance roles and responsibilities related to Access to HE. We expect that any new tutor will be inducted into the organisation to ensure that they can:

- Access the relevant Skills and Education Group Access documentation – in SharePoint
- Understand Skills and Education Group Access processes involved in delivering and assessing a Diploma to AVA requirements
- Provide accurate registration of students against units and reconcile student results and data
- Have a copy of the Diploma Specification and units within the Diploma
- Have full understanding of the application of grading, including how to

arrive at the mid-point for each unit grade
- Have access to assignment briefs
- Deal effectively with student referrals using Skills and Education Group Access guidelines
- Receive guidance in the production of new assignment briefs
- Have access to course proforma for providing feedback to students
- Have copies of tracking proforma used by the team for recording student progress
- Understand the purpose of the quality assurance procedures to be applied
- Attend mandatory standardisation events
- Attend recommended and required internal and Skills and Education Group Access CPD as appropriate
- Make arrangements to convene and manage Final Awards Boards for the award of Access to HE Diplomas and credit for students.

Access to Fair Assessment

Skills and Education Group Access and Providers have a duty to ensure that the rights of individual students to access diplomas, units and assessment in a way most appropriate for their individual needs are upheld. A copy of the Access to Fair Assessment (Reasonable Adjustment and Special Considerations) Policy and Procedure can be found on SharePoint.

The Role of the Named Provider Quality Assurance Contact

The quality assurance contact has a key role, which is to ensure that the Provider can carry out all aspects of its relationship with Skills and Education Group Access properly, to a high standard and within the required timescales. When this happens, processes will run smoothly and all stakeholders – including most importantly students – will enjoy a positive experience.

The quality assurance contact is the named person within the Provider responsible for:

- Ensuring that quality systems and policies are compliant with Skills and Education Group Access requirements
- Ensuring that the delivery team can implement all aspects of the approved Diploma Specification
- Agreeing visit dates with the external moderator and ensuring that details are passed to the appropriate curriculum contact
- Ensuring that the Provider can contribute to the redevelopment and revalidation of Diplomas before the five-year expiry date
- Ensuring that the specifications and regulations for the Diplomas are followed including the accurate registrations of students and units
- Developing, managing and monitoring internal quality assurance

structures and systems, including internal moderation and standardisation activity

- Supporting the course managers and ensuring that all Skills and Education Group Access communications are quickly circulated to the relevant internal colleagues
- Monitoring the administrative process to ensure that all forms are completed and sent to Skills and Education Group Access within the required timescale
- Working with the course manager to ensure that all required information is available for the Provider and External Moderators
- Providing real-time support to carry out internal moderation effectively
- Ensuring that all tutors/assessors are able to participate in internal and external moderation as appropriate
- Facilitating the Provider's participation in Skills and Education Group Access standardisation events where appropriate
- Co-ordinating and supporting initial and ongoing training and development for staff involved in the delivery of a Diploma and maintaining the Provider's commitment to CPD
- Ensuring that internal and external moderation can take place in conditions appropriate to a rigorous process
- Meeting the Lead Moderator at the start of the academic year and appointed Diploma Moderators at the Annual Planning meeting and thereafter as appropriate
- Ensuring that student requests for extensions to agreed deadlines are considered outside of the immediate tutor team to provide support and protection to the subject tutor
- Ensuring that all quality assurance documentation and records are available to the Lead/Diploma moderators as required
- Reading and disseminating external moderation reports, including recording and monitoring actions from within them
- Promoting action points from external moderator's reports and subsequent auditing of response from the organisation
- Supporting tutor teams to enable moderation activities and Final Awards Board events to run smoothly
- Attending Summative moderation meeting with the Lead Moderator to discuss all issues arising from the moderation process and any Required Extensions, Appeals, Extenuations, Suspension of Studies, Aegrotat or Posthumous applications, prior to the Final Awards Board
- Attendance at the Pre-Final Awards Boards (where possible) and Final Awards Boards
- Ensuring the facility for retention of assessment records for all students
- Supporting Exams and MIS teams to address any issues arising from the award of the Access to HE Diploma or credits so that student's progression to HE is confirmed in a timely way.

The quality assurance contact must advise Skills and Education Group Access about any potential changes of administration or quality assurance contact details promptly and in writing.

The Skills and Education Group Access team welcomes any requests from quality assurance contacts for clarification, guidance or support at any time. The AVA expects that the Quality contact will have an overview of, or make arrangements for:

Pre-Issue Verification

The responsibility for this process may rest with the whole team of tutors and/or with individuals in the team. It is expected that any new or substantially amended assessment brief will go through a process of internal verification for which a report will be generated. Exemplar Pre-delivery Verification of Units - Graded and Ungraded) forms are available in the Provider SharePoint folder.

Pre-issue verification reports must ensure:

- The wording is appropriate for the target group
- Assignments are appropriate for the level
- Tasks do not unintentionally discriminate against students with protected characteristics
- Assignments meet any prescribed method of assessment for the unit
- Students are given opportunities to achieve against the assessment criteria of units
- Correct grading standards are appropriately applied in the brief
- Appropriate grading components have been chosen for the brief
- Deadlines for submission are shown on the briefing sheet
- Information regarding drafting, resubmission dates for non-achievement, late submissions - date of submission, is available or can be entered
- Word count is appropriate for the assignment and unit as a whole
- **The QAA Grading Standards 2024 have been fully implemented within assessment and grading processes and documentation.**

If the assessment brief is to be used again without an amendment, within an accepted timeframe, there should be an audit trail, e.g. minutes of a meeting, to indicate that the assessment brief has been reviewed and found to be acceptable. It is, however, accepted that some Provider quality processes insist on a pre-issue verification report to be generated for every run of the course.

All pre-issue verification reports and any other documents showing evidence of review of the briefs must be available to the Diploma Moderator. To avoid any confusion all verified briefs must be subjected to a robust process of version control.

Internal Moderator Visits to Tutors and Students

This activity is usually the responsibility of your named quality contact. The Lead Moderator will expect to see auditable evidence that such a visit has taken place well before the end of course delivery, and in the case of new tutors, at a time to provide early support, i.e. in the first term.

Any Internal Moderator is acting on behalf of Skills and Education Group Access quality assurance processes and should be able to demonstrate impartiality as well as being a 'critical friend' to the tutor team.

Such a visit should offer support to a tutor on the basis of professional trust and should enable:

- The students to meet with someone who is not their tutor and to comment on their course and resources
- Opportunities for the visitor to experience the setting, the range of students and their learning
- Students to experience quality assurance in practice
- A check on progress on assessment processes and completion of required documentation
- Discussion of possible CPD needs of the tutor.

The visiting internal moderator should remind the tutor of internal moderation dates and the process for sampling.

Recording and Tracking Achievement

Accurate record keeping is essential, and all staff involved in the assessment of students should log and maintain records of student achievement. 'Assessment, Grading and Achievement Guidance' is available in each Provider's SharePoint folder.

The eRAC must be downloaded once the students and units have been registered and uploaded to the eRAC folder on SharePoint into the relevant Diploma folder. The Course Leader/Course teams must ensure accuracy of student names registered units and start/end dates immediately. The eRAC must be updated on an ongoing basis to monitor and record student achievement.

Each e-RAC is a working document over the academic year, includes student information, and should be maintained securely on SharePoint.

Internal Moderation Requirements

The process of internal moderation through sampling of assessed student work is the main internal quality assurance activity on which the Provider's standard of the award of their Diploma relies.

Internal moderation may be carried out at times within the Provider's cross-organisational quality assurance calendar of activities.

If not, dates must be agreed by the team before the start of delivery. The process must ensure that:

- Student achievement is mapped to the assessment criteria
- Assessment decisions are appropriate, consistent, fair and transparent across the sample Grade indicator decisions are appropriate, consistent and fair across the sample
- Grading processes are correctly applied to give a grade for the unit, and that any grade information is clearly shown at all stages of the process
- Feedback to students is appropriate and will assure further development of skills and/or knowledge
- The student's work is presented appropriately
- The eRAC is being updated on a regular basis with achievement and grading decisions and can be used by internal and external moderators to choose samples of evidence
- There is provision of appropriate developmental advice and support to tutors to ensure continuous improvement in standards of assessment processes and feedback.

Any model of internal moderation should rest on peer support and allow all tutors to be involved in discussions about levels, grading and credit. Internal moderators may also be tutors on the Diploma.

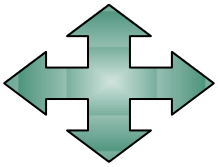
In some situations, all tutors will be internal moderators.

Tutors who are also internal moderators are *not* permitted to countersign their own assessment decisions i.e. *cannot act as the internal moderator for samples of evidence from units that they have delivered.*

Internal Moderation Models

Centralised

One or more tutors are appointed by the course coordinator to moderate several other tutors.



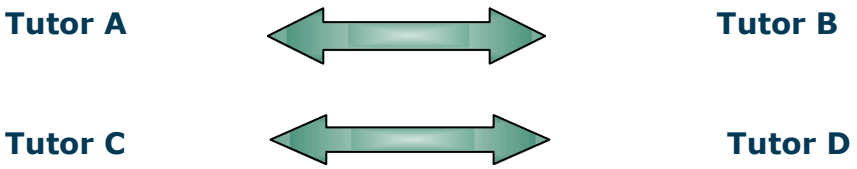
Round Robin

Each tutor visits and moderates one other tutor, who then visits and moderates another - and so on.



Peer Partners

Tutors are paired and offer each other moderation as mutual feedback; this model must still have a coordinator to ensure that everything is completed.



For each of these models, it is essential that a meeting reviews the issues and findings after the process is completed. It is important that tutors be involved in this meeting and that collectively, the team develops an action plan to resolve issues or concerns that have arisen.

It is also important that examples of good practice be shared and discussed within the team and, where possible, be part of the action plan for wider implementation across the team.

Sampling for Internal Moderation of Assessment

- The internal moderator (IM), not the tutor, specifies the sample of assessed work that they will see, or will be brought to the internal

moderation meeting

- Sufficient evidence must be sampled for the internal moderator to feel confident about consistent and valid award of credit and in the grading decisions; more samples may be requested if necessary
- All new Tutors must be **100%** sampled in the first unit; may be reduced in subsequent units as the IM becomes satisfied by the Tutor's performance
- All new units must be **100%** sampled in the first run
- The general principal in sample size for all Diplomas is that all tutors, and all units are sampled. Alongside that, evidence of resubmissions, lates, capped at a Pass, graded and ungraded, on-course Referral and any other element involved in the Diploma course that enables the IM to be satisfied that the award of credit is secure, should be sampled where possible
- An Internal Moderator should seek guidance from the Provider Quality Contact and the AVA for further guidance or training. The AVA provides training throughout the year.

This practice allows for greater AVA confidence in the validity, consistency and fairness of the entire cohort achievement and about the consistency of grading decisions.

Sampling of Assessments from New Assessors by Internal Moderators

Where possible the internal moderator should sample work before returning it to students. The schedule of resubmission for some students will delay the return of work to students. The requirement for 100% sample of assessed work must be followed for the first unit delivered, with feedback from internal moderation that clearly identifies good practice and areas for development, as well as any action points that must be addressed before returning the assessed work to students. Your moderator may agree that **less than 100%** is acceptable: please contact your Lead Moderator for guidance.

If the assessment practice of the new assessor is deemed to meet Provider standards for the first unit, then for subsequent units the level of sampling can be reduced by degrees, e.g. 50%, 25% 10%.

However, the support mechanisms that sampling by the internal moderator provides, must be recognised and sampling level **should no**t reduce automatically after sampling of the first unit.

Sampling of Assessments for New Units by Internal Moderators

The AVA requirement is that a 100% internal moderation sample should be made for all newly approved units. This level is clearly unsustainable in a year when ALL the units are new. It is suggested in this case that the sample choice should be more strategic.

Providers often create a sampling matrix through a random strategy, but which covers all assessors and eventually all students. For graded units on each Diploma, internal moderators should choose a sample of two assessments leading to each of the three grades (Pass, Merit and Distinction), i.e. six sets of work from each unit from each group of students. This practice is a good way of ensuring that all elements of a Diploma are covered during internal moderation during the year.

A matrix, student v unit, with some identification of assessor, of these choices should be kept so that some work from every student and every assessor of a unit goes through moderation. If it is not possible for two lots of evidence at every grade, then the internal moderator should make appropriate choices to balance the matrix.

For ungraded units, choices should be informed by the matrix described above, six samples taken for every unit for each group of students, with no work from the same student sampled twice for ungraded units unless there are academic reasons for doing so.

Reminder: Internal Moderation is not second marking. It is a quality assurance activity that is checking the validity of the tutor marking and developing tutor practice.

Reminder: Each unit, student and tutor must be included in sampling in the year. Remember to include Pass, Merit, Distinction awards within samples, as well as resubmissions, lates, borderline, referral etc to ensure that all areas have been covered.

Reminder: New tutors must be 100% sampled in first unit, reducing over following units; this principle also applies to new units.

Reminder: as an internal moderator, you must be satisfied that student results are reliable based on previous years' results for the same unit. Grade data analysis must be a consistent throughout the course.

Recording of Internal Moderation

There will be:

- A grid to show the sample taken across the whole cohort of students that includes all tutors teaching on the course and all units delivered
- A report from each internal moderator of their findings, showing their sample, see exemplar Internal Moderation of Achievement (IM2) form available within the SharePoint folder
- Agreement decisions with assessor's achievement and grading decisions
- Identified areas of good practice and areas for improvement with an action plan if appropriate
- A tutor meeting to consider general issues and good practice from the internal moderation activity and to contribute to the action plan for quality improvement.

Internal Standardisation

Internal standardisation involves ensuring that if there is more than one tutor/ assessor delivering Access to HE provision, or more than one site, internally set tasks and the outcomes of internal assessment are consistent across the range of courses.

Both assessments, including the standardisation of assessment tasks, and the operation of internal moderation, should be standardised. It is the Provider's responsibility to run an internal standardisation event for Diplomas each year.

Internal standardisation meetings must ensure that all tutors and internal moderators concerned are involved, and that action plans are produced and followed up. Providers will be required to present evidence of internal standardisation activity and how the Provider identifies and disseminates good practice.

Arrangements for internal standardisation that are regarded as good practice by the AVA are:

- A cross-organisational activity that involves other sectors e.g., 'A' level work, facilitated by a member of the quality assurance team
- An event for all Access to HE provision delivered across the organisation, facilitated by a member the quality assurance team
- At least one internal standardisation event during the year to effect:
    - Tutor team ownership of all assessment processes
    - Good practice in assessment, feedback and reporting
    - Consistency in assessment decisions across the curriculum
    - Consistency in any grading decisions across the curriculum
    - A standard approach to recording and mapping of assessment
    - A standard approach to the implementation of any grading processes
    - Genuine rigor in assessment leading to improvement and increased quality.
    - Documented recommendations for assessor practice following internal

standardisation activities.

Running an Internal Standardisation Event

Choosing the Samples

A sample for a planned standardisation event may focus on a particular area that the Quality team, or the AVA has highlighted as an area of interest or concern. Topics can vary from event to event, and respond to outcomes of Self-Assessment, and Moderator feedback. Topics may include but are not limited to:

- Assignment briefs for units delivered across Diplomas
- Study Skills Units mapped to subject units to ensure parity across assessment of both units
- Pre-verification of assessment planning documents
- Pre-verification of assignment briefs
- Integrated assessments
- Borderline awards, or units capped at 'Pass'
- Feedback to students
- Feedback to tutors from Internal Moderators
- Draft submissions.

The sample must ensure that all Diplomas and all student groups taking the Diploma are included over time. This would be outlined within your planning documents and engage with as many tutors teaching and assessing on Access to HE at the provider.

The sample should represent evidence from across the range of achievement and grades. The Quality Manager or the member of staff responsible for coordinating the standardisation event will decide the type/number of samples.

The sample **will not** include more than one unit from a particular student, unless there are specific issues.

Each unit chosen as part of the sample must have:

- Assessment planning documentation
- Unit details including grading descriptors to be applied
- Assignment briefs
- Evidence of assessed learning
- Tutor's feedback sheet with mapping to the assessment criteria
- Achievement and grading decisions shown

- Drafts or non-achieved work with final submitted work.

Recording of the Internal Standardisation Process and Action Plans

Participants will have identified areas of good practice and areas for improvement. A record of the actual sample used at the event will be made e.g. student and assignment/unit. A formal record of the event will be made with clear action points for development created.

An action plan for quality improvement will be:

- Developed with agreed responsibilities and dates for completion
- Circulated to all teaching and quality assurance staff
- Monitored through team meetings or through any organisation audit process
- Completed within an agreed time span
- Recommendations for assessor practice.

The record of the standardisation event and the completed action plan will be made available to the Diploma Moderator.

External Standardisation

Each year, the AVA holds a series of **mandatory** standardisation events, which are key processes in our quality assurance policy. Dates of these will be agreed at the start of the academic year and included in AVA communications.

Skills and Education Group Access must demonstrate to QAA that Providers take part in its standardisation activity.

The focus for standardisation events will vary according to guidance from the Access to HE Committee, or Provider's quality needs. The information related to the event is sent out to all Provider's at the start of the current academic year.

It is the Provider's responsibility to ensure that each Diploma that they run is represented at external standardisation as stipulated by Skills and Education Group Access. Providers must complete the activity and attend the feedback session linked to their curriculum area. Places for the feedback sessions should be pre-booked via the Events link on the home screen of SharePoint.

Providers who do not complete the activity by the required date and send a representative to the appropriate event will be invoiced in accordance with the Skills and Education Group Access Fees and Charges, which is available in SharePoint. This will also affect the Diploma and Provider risk rating.

Section 7: External Moderation

Rigorous external moderation is vital to our quality assurance strategy; all Diplomas are subject to external moderation. We operate standard procedures, using clear and transparent criteria, for the selection and appointment of moderators, which ensure that moderators have relevant experience in adult, further or higher education and have relevant and current subject knowledge for their area(s) of moderating responsibility.

Provider Quality Managers will be informed of Lead and Diploma moderator allocation and arrangements at the start of each academic year.

Our Moderation Cycle for 2026-27

- **Early September** – Lead Moderators arrange the Annual Review meeting
- **Mid-end September** - Lead Moderator Annual Review meeting with the provider Quality Contact and planning for year ahead (Moderator sampling/Final Awards Board etc)
- **Mid-October to late December** - Initial sampling takes place, including moderation of assessment planning documents and early student work (risk-based approach) for traditional Providers, and all outstanding work available for Distance Learning Providers who offer roll-on-roll-off provision
- **Late April to late May** - Second and substantive sample of student work takes place, sample from every unit available where possible
- **May to June** - additional summative sampling takes place, as required
- **Mid-June to early July** - Final Awards Boards

For roll-on roll-off provision:

- **Additional sampling points and Final Awards Boards** - these take place in response to student scheduled course end dates and HE course start dates e.g. December, March and July Final Awards Boards. There will be a rolling programme of sampling to ensure that all cohorts claiming achievement have been sampled twice.

The Lead Moderator Role

Each Provider is allocated a Lead Moderator who is responsible for monitoring compliance with QAA requirements, academic standards and on-going quality improvement within and across the Access Courses for which they are responsible. This role operates in line with QAA regulatory requirements.

Lead Moderator Job Purpose

- Monitor compliance with QAA requirements, academic standards and on-going quality improvement within and across Access to HE Providers for which they are responsible
- Key contact for Providers and moderators
- Coordinate and supervise all Provider, moderation activities.

The Diploma Moderator Role

All Skills and Education Group Access appointed Diploma Moderators are curriculum specialists and are appointed to appropriate Diplomas for sampling activity. Diploma moderators are normally allocated to a Diploma for no more than four years.

Diploma Moderator Job Purpose

Ensure the quality of the Access to HE Diplomas by checking:

- whether all learning outcomes and assessment criteria have been met at the correct level
- whether assessment practice is fair and equitable across units of the Diploma
- whether QAA requirements for the Access to HE Diploma are being met, including the implementation of the QAA Grading Scheme 2024, the quality of the Access to HE Diploma for which they are responsible by checking:
- whether all learning outcomes and assessment criteria have been met at the correct level
- whether assessment practice is fair and equitable across units of the Diploma.

Moderators may also be asked to undertake project work or other duties that represent the external moderator team.

External Moderation Activities in Respect of the Diploma Provision

An allocated Lead Moderator will arrange a review and planning meeting with Quality (usually September) to discuss the outcomes of the previous year's compliance activity via moderator reports and AVA findings and make plans for compliance and sampling activity for the current year.

A report will be compiled and shared with Diploma Moderators allocated to sample Diplomas. Moderators will then make arrangements based on Lead Moderator recommendations, to sample student work and associated documents, through Initial Sampling and report back to the Lead Moderator.

Initial Sampling Visit

Initial sampling activity will take place between Mid – October and Late December. The purpose of initial sampling is to moderate assessment planning documents and early student work. This will take place using a risk-based approach.

New Providers or existing Providers running a new Diploma will likely receive an earlier visit to ensure tutor teams are working to QAA and AVA regulation, and to receive the support they need at the start of a new course delivery.

Diploma Moderators will review samples available and complete a report that the Lead Moderator will collate alongside other Diploma reports (where appropriate) and present feedback to the Provider Quality contact, including required actions (Conditions) and areas for good practice development (Recommendations).

The Final or Substantive Sampling Visit

The final moderation visit will normally take place between late April and late May to complete the main sampling of the majority of units, and for the Diploma Moderator to be able to make recommendations to the Lead Moderator who will represent the moderator team at the Provider's Final Awards Board. These timescales will also enable the AVA to process results and deal with any post final moderation and Final Awards Board issues prior to the UCAS upload towards the end of July.

Final moderation of all Diplomas will be in accordance with Skills and Education Group Access Quality Model and policies. Providers must ensure that all relevant staff are familiar with related documents prior to the events.

The purpose of sampling activity is to:

- Sample from formally assessed work to confirm that the student has achieved against specific learning outcomes and assessment criteria and to assist the AVA to mitigate against malpractice
- To assure that assessment decisions are appropriate, consistent, fair and transparent across the sample
- To assure the correct implementation of grading requirements
- To assure that grade indicator and grade decisions are appropriate, consistent and fair across the sample
- To assure that grading processes are correctly applied to result in a

grade for the unit, and that any grade information is clearly shown at all stages of the process
- To check the quality file to ensure that all activities planned in the calendar for quality assurance have been completed
- To ensure that the internal quality assurance system has been effectively applied to the provision throughout the year.

Lead Moderators will:
- Send a visit plan to the quality contact or nominated contact as appropriate
- Liaise with the nominated contact to agree the arrangements and timescales
- Coordinate the diploma moderation activity and production of reports
- Produce a Lead Moderator Report overview of the sampling process and set any actions required.

Diplomas Moderators will:
- Sample the student work, assessment and internal quality processes
- Provide a feedback report to the Lead Moderator
- Attend a feedback meeting with the Provider.

Supplementary or Additional Visits

We will offer additional visits where:
- A Provider offers a variation on the normal once-a-year intake of students, external moderators may be asked to make a different number or pattern of visits
- A Provider has undergone substantial management or curriculum team change, or is in fragile circumstances
- Has received a risk rating that causes concern to the AVA
- A Provider makes a particular request to the AVA for additional support. A fee may apply in this case.

A moderation visit may need to be postponed for a number of reasons and both the Provider, and the AVA will give at least 48 hours' notice to reschedule a visit.

Where a Provider cancels or postpones a planned meeting without evidenced circumstances, this is likely to impact on a diploma or Provider risk rate. A fee may be charged for re-scheduling the event.

Evaluation of External Moderation

As part of the Access to HE Committee's processes (and to fulfil a requirement from QAA), Skills and Education Group Access welcomes feedback on the conduct and standard of the external moderation process.

Our Access to HE Committee receives reports on these responses and defines any

necessary action that may be required. Lead moderators also evaluate the external moderation process as part of the annual reporting cycle.

Appeals against the Results of External Moderation

QAA requires all AVAs to ensure that students and/or Providers can appeal against assessment decisions and/or outcomes.

The Skills and Education Group Access Appeals Policy includes information about Appeals against the Outcome of the AVA's External Moderation Process.

Providers may appeal against:

- The contents of external moderator reports
- Decisions made by Skills and Education Group Access arising from quality assurance visits or Provider monitoring, including the application of sanctions and/or the amendment of assessment decisions following external moderation.

If you wish to appeal against the results of external moderation, in the first instance concerns should be raised directly with the Lead Moderator, who will be guided by the AVA in their course of action.

The Final Awards Board

QAA requires a formal process to agree the award of credit, in line with similar Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) requirements. The Final Awards Boards are instruments of the Provider's quality assurance processes and as such both the scribe and chair of the FAB are to be appointed by the Provider.

An extract from the QAA document, 'Grading Scheme Handbook 2023' *(revised July 2025* Section E *(pg. 1)* .'

> *"For Operational purposes the AVA delegates this authority to an Awards Board (or Awards Boards, where this function is undertaken at Provider level.) The Lead Moderator, or other person appointed by the AVA, acts as the AVA's representative at this Board. "*

And Section 2:

> *"The constitution of the Awards Boards is specified by the AVA".*

All Access to HE Final Awards Boards will be conducted in accordance with and the AVA's Final Awards Board Policy which is available in SharePoint. Providers must ensure that all relevant personnel are familiar with this document prior to the event.

Providers are responsible for completing the Final Awards Board documentation in advance of the Final Awards Boards. These can be found in SharePoint.

It is expected that those appointed to these roles will have appropriate experience and training. Final Awards Boards that are not quorate will be re-convened at the Provider's expense.

The Final Awards Board will usually take place between mid-June and early July.

Providers will have agreed a date for the Final Awards Boards at the Lead Moderator Annual Review Meeting in September. We encourage Providers to hold no more than two Final Awards Board events for all Diplomas. A fee for additional Final Awards Boards will be charged in line with our Fees and Charges policy.

The Lead Moderator will attend the Final Awards Board and verify the Recommendation of the Award of Credit (RAC).

It is the responsibility of the Provider's quality contact to arrange the Final Awards Board. Final Awards Boards are Chaired by a member of senior management from the Provider. The timings of Final Awards Boards is to ensure that:

(i) results can be processed and uploaded in advance of the UCAS deadline
(ii) certificates can be printed and forwarded to Providers for onward transmission to students
(iii) The AVA can respond to QAA data requirement activity

There are some exceptions to these dates (for example: courses which commence in-year or are known as 'roll-on roll-off courses).

Certification for students can only be progressed when all documentation is accurately completed and submitted to Skills and Education Group Access.
This includes:

- Accurate Final Awards Board documentation which is fully completed and signed by the Chair and Lead Moderator
- Fully completed eRACs which are submitted electronically following a final Awards Board
- Appropriate signatures of key Final Awards Board members to confirm award and processes.

It should be emphasised that the Final Awards Board is a Provider activity in terms of organisation and responsibility – with a Skills and Education Group Access Senior Officer in attendance acting as AVA representative.

Re-convened Final Awards Board

A change in a Final Awards Board date may arise within the immediately preceding 28 days through situations beyond the control of any of the stakeholders, e.g. floods, fire, health or safety considerations. In such cases the Provider and the AVA will work together to agree the optimum way of addressing QAA requirements for the Final Awards Board.

The AVA may also request to postpone the Final Awards Board if it decides that the award of credit at the time of the Final Awards Board is insecure. Such a situation may arise if the Diploma or Lead Moderator finds several cases of erroneous achievement data or assessment documents missing and contacts the AVA to request a reconvened Final Awards Board.

Should the Provider postpone the Final Awards Board for any reason other than those of an unavoidable nature, then financial sanctions will be imposed, and Risk Rating impacted.

For any situation that results in a re-convened Final Awards Board, the needs of the students will be considered as a priority. The postponement should not delay the official award of the Diploma and credits, where there may be consequences in the process of students accepting university offers.

Certification and the Sharing of Results

Once student results have been verified at the Final Awards Board and uploaded to Quartzweb for verification, the AVA team will make preparations for processing results and the release of results via its Digital Certification Website (DC Web) and paper certification. Providers will submit completed and verified results in addition to checked and signed Final Awards Board documentation.

Where results and/or Final Awards Boards documents have not been submitted by the deadlines, this will be noted as a quality issue to be discussed with your Quality Manager. Risk Ratings will be impacted.

E-Results

Once results are uploaded to Quartz Web, and matched to Final Awards Board documentation, they will be transferred into an electronic platform, DC Web. DC Web guidance will be made available to Providers to enable them to issue guidance to students, so that they can create an individual login and access their Access to HE Diploma results securely.

Paper Certificates

Once certificates are printed and checked, they will be packaged and sent securely to Providers for onward transmission to students. Certificates are usually sent within 3-4 working days of verification, although this may take longer when there are issues with documentation or results, or up to 15 working days at busy times of the academic year.

Some Providers may wish to only receive electronic certificates for students. You should inform the AVA if you do not wish to receive paper certificates and confirm that students agree to this course of action. Where electronic certificates are preferred, students can request a paper certificate at a later date – fees apply.

Students should be informed that their results will be shared with UCAS but that this does not replace the need for students to contact the university personally to confirm their results.

UCAS Upload

AVAs are required to upload completed student data in mid-July, with a further uploads in September, so that HE institutions are able to confirm a student's undergraduate place. Any inaccuracies in student results are likely to delay this upload and may create an issue with a student being able to accept their place.

Section 8: Risk-based Provider Monitoring

Also see Provider Risk Monitoring and Sanctions Policy (SharePoint)

Skills and Education Group Access is responsible for ensuring that the curriculum delivered, the course organisation, the terms of approval of Providers who adopt a Diploma, the student experience, assessment practices including conduct of assessment, and details of assignment requirements are monitored and reviewed.

QAA requires that AVAs demonstrate their response to a risk-based approach to quality assurance.

The rationale for each Provider risk band is based on information provided in the current external moderator visit and annual reports, and the Provider's overall record of compliance, quality assurance and/or the completion of actions; evidenced through the Final Awards Board minutes and Access to HE quality interventions log. A Lead Moderator or the AVA may review and change a Provider risk rating based on additional reported information.

Quality managers receive full information of each Diploma's risk rating.

There are four levels of risk:

Green (Low Risk)	Based on the available evidence there is little or no risk to the integrity of the Access to HE Diploma, Provider approval criteria, regulatory conditions and/or the reputation of Skills and Education Group Access and Provider performance is good.
Yellow (Marginal Risk)	Based on the available evidence any risk to the integrity of the Access to HE Diploma, Provider approval criteria, regulatory conditions and/or the reputation of Skills and Education Group Access is marginal and Provider performance is satisfactory.
Amber (Moderate Risk)	Based on the available evidence there are concerns about a specific risk indicator or indicators and customised or specific action is required to ensure the integrity of the Access to HE Diploma, Provider approval criteria, regulatory conditions and/or the reputation of Skills and Education Group Access. Sanctions may be imposed.
Red (High Risk)	Based on the available evidence there are major concerns about one or more risk indicators which threaten the integrity of the Access to HE Diploma, Provider approval criteria, regulatory conditions and/or the reputation of Skills and Education Group Access. Urgent action is required. Sanctions may be imposed.

Sanctions Tariff

The AVA will impose sanctions to a Provider where the integrity of the award of the Access to HE Diploma has been breached. Please see Skills and Education Group Access Provider Monitoring and Sanctions Policy, which can be found in SharePoint. Quality interventions will be applied, and sanctions will remain in place until such times as the Provider has demonstrated that practice is compliant and the action plan has been fully addressed.

Quality Interventions

The AVA is required to hold a set of policies and procedures to protect the integrity of the Diploma which will be applied to any Provider which jeopardises the validity of the HE Diploma, including award of credit and grades.

There will be a charge applied for any quality intervention including, but not limited

to:

- Amendments to the eRAC after the registration deadline
- Changes to the eRAC post-Final Awards Board
- Late submission of RPL/Transfer of Credit requests
- Late submission of requests to change a student's list of registered units
- Changes to start/end-dates

Quality Interventions are considered to pose potential risk to the integrity of the Access to HE Diploma, and as such will incur an administration fee, and may impact on a Provider's risk rating. Lead Moderators will be alerted to any quality interventions so that they may discuss support measures or offer advice on reducing risk in the future.

Retention of Student work by a Provider

Providers have an obligation under the Data Protection Act and General Data Protection Regulation to ensure that student data should not be retained for longer than is necessary – we suggest that a period of least 12 months after the award of certificates would be necessary to cover the Appeals process and any risk of after-the-fact malpractice. Beyond that, Providers should be making the decision, according to their own General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) Policy.

Retaking the Access to HE Diploma

Once a student has achieved a full Diploma, they cannot be registered on individual units of the course with a view to gaining a different grade.

If a student wishes to retake units, they must be registered on the whole Diploma again. If a student makes the decision to retake the Diploma, the Provider must take into account funding, and assessment and quality issues before offering the student a place.

If the student is offered a place, the Provider must ensure that new assessments are used for units being taken again, and that none of the set assessments replicate those previously undertaken by the student.

The Lead Moderator must be made aware and given the opportunity to scrutinise the relevant work to ensure that this is the case. An application for Transfer of Credit may be appropriate to ensure that previously achieved Access units and grades count towards the achievement of the new diploma. See the RPL/Transfer of Credit Policy and Guidance available in SharePoint.

Conclusion

This Access to HE Handbook is accurate at the time of upload to the Skills and

Education Group Access SharePoint folders. The AVA reserves the right to amend, and up-date as required in line with QAA Licensing Criteria, Access to HE Diploma Specification and Skills and Education Group Access policies and procedures. An updated version with highlighted changes will replace the existing version. Please ensure that all relevant staff are working to the most current version.

If you would like to contribute to the improved clarity of this document please contact the Access to HE Team at accesstohe@skillsedugroup.co.uk

Checklist and Timeline for Access to HE Diploma Courses

This is an indicative, quick reference document for planning, delivering and quality assuring the Access to HE Diploma to the QAA Specification. Further, more detailed, guidance will be issued to Providers prior to key quality assurance activity throughout the year. This form is available SharePoint folder.

This timetable is only to be used as a guide and may be amended by the Provider but considering the deadlines required by the AVA.

IMPORTANT REMINDER: All students must be registered within 42 days and to their units within 84 days of the commencement of their course.

Pre-Course	
If new to Skills and Education Group Access or new to running a Diploma, liaise with your quality contact to ensure that arrangements have been made for an early Lead Moderator visit and induction into Access to HE practices and processes	
Check that all previous versions of documents have been replaced with all current documents (found in SharePoint), including all Diploma and unit specifications. are available including the external moderator annual report which will have been sent to the named quality contact the previous year	
Check that your tutor team has access to the Lead Moderator and Diploma Moderator reports to ensure that all reported good practice is shard with the tutor team, and actions can be managed within timescales set	
Check that all new tutors have been inducted into Access to HE regulations and your organisation's policies and practices	
Ensure that all your tutors are fully aware of the regulations relating to the current Access to HE Diploma Specification	
Ensure that all your tutors have access to and understand, *The QAA Grading Scheme Handbook* that defines the regulations for grading the	

Pre-Course	
Diploma	
Ensure that all your tutors have access to, and understand our Policy for Dealing with On-Course Referrals on behalf of Diploma Students	
Ensure that all your tutors have access to, and understand the AVA Policy and making changes to a student's list of registered units	
Ensure that all your tutors have access to, and understand the rules around Credit Accumulation, Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Transfer of Credit both in this handbook and the Diploma specification	
Ensure that all your tutors are familiar with the Skills and Education Group Access SharePoint site which has all relevant documents and request forms for the above. Tutors are advised to archive all previous documents at the end of each academic year, and access the updated versions from SharePoint to support up to date information sharing and practice	
Select the units you will be delivering, ensuring that they meet the Rules of Combination (RoC) and that they are the most current versions (units are subject to an annual review process and may be modified.) - current versions will be available in your Skills and Education Group Access SharePoint – Note that Diplomas and units have been subject to revalidation for 2026-27	
Agree your Diploma and Unit assessment strategies (AP1 and AP2 forms in SharePoint)	
Agree your internal moderation and standardisation strategy	
Ensure that pre-issue verification process of all assignment briefs has been completed and recorded, with all actions recommended by your lead internal moderator implemented. For Providers using Pearl for online provision, tutors must still be clear about their internal assessment planning and assignment briefs. Please contact Pearl directly if you have any issues with these	
Create a calendar of events and team meetings and ensure that all colleagues are aware of their obligations to attend	
Check that you have agreed the date for the Final Awards Board(s) – see Lead Moderator Annual Review and Planning Report. If a date needs to be changed contact your Lead Moderator. Changes will be considered dependent on the rationale for the change	
Check and book relevant staff on to the mandatory and optional AVA training events and/or contact the Access to HE Team to book bespoke training – fees apply for bespoke training	
Set up course files (see Section 7 'First Moderation Visit' of this handbook for what should be included in your course file)	
Check with your quality contact for details of any cross-Provider quality assurance events that include Access to HE	
Ensure that a comprehensive Student Handbook is available for students (Skills and Education Group Access has made available a	

Pre-Course	
handbook insert to assist, in SharePoint). Please note that those Providers using Pearl for online learning, must make their own bespoke student handbook available and not one provided by Pearl	
Agree a process of recording/tracking of student achievement by individual tutors to present to moderators at the initial sampling activity. The AVA recommends the adoption of the AVA Grade Tracker available on SharePoint	

September	
Check with students any Applications for RPL or Transfer of Credit- take copies for student/course file and forward request to Skills and Education Group Access (deadline at the point of student registration with the AVA)	
Ensure that students have enrolled with the name which will appear on their Diploma certificate. Delay in processing student results and/or certificates can be avoided by confirmation of the accuracy of the students' names	
Ensure all AP1 forms are completed and available to the Lead Moderator	
Check and book relevant staff on to the AVA mandatory and optional AVA training events and/or contact the Access to HE Team to book bespoke training	
Update Skills and Education Group Access regarding any changes to course tutor contact details	
Continue with team meetings and internal moderation to include addressing conditions and recommendations from previous moderator's reports	
Respond to the Lead Moderator with regard to arrangements for the Lead Moderator Annual Review and Planning Meeting	

October	
Ensure that you have been informed of your Diploma Moderators. – Quality will have this information	
Plan for the initial sampling activity, in response to the Lead Moderator Visit Plan	
For September start dates, begin to register students via the Quartz web **(deadline is 42 days) from enrolment to the course**	
Begin the process of assessment, grading and internal moderation	
Send Skills and Education Group Access details of your student representative(s) – one per Diploma	

October	
Check and book relevant staff on to our mandatory and optional training events and/or contact the Access to HE Team to book bespoke training	
Continue with team meetings and internal moderation to include addressing conditions and recommendations from your previous moderator reports	
Forward any Application for the Award of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) or Transfer of Credit forms to Skills and Education Group Access	

November	
Check and book relevant staff on to mandatory and optional training events and mandatory Standardisation events. Contact the Access to HE Team to book bespoke training where required	
Continue with team meetings and internal moderation to include addressing conditions and recommendations from previous external moderation reports	
Continue to register students and unit via the Quartzweb **(deadline is 42 days) from the start of the course with unit registration deadline 84 days**	

December	
Continue with team meetings and internal moderation to include addressing conditions and recommendations from previous moderator reports	

January	
Check progress of assessment and internal moderation activity	
Continue to update assessment records within the AVA grading tracker, and ensure that there is a corresponding eRAC for each student uploaded to the eRAC folder on SharePoint	
Check and book relevant staff on to mandatory and optional training events and Standardisation events and/or contact the Access to HE Team to book bespoke training	
Complete AVA mandatory standardisation activity and book a place on the relevant feedback session. Events are bookable via the homepage of SharePoint. (A fee will be charged for non-attendance or failure to bring/supply the required documentation)	

February	
Check progress of assessment and internal moderation activity	
Liaise with tutors for assessment records and continue to upload and complete student eRACs with grading decisions	
Continue to forward student requests for referral to the AVA	
Check and book relevant staff on to Skills and Education Group Access mandatory and optional training events and/or contact the Access to HE Team to book bespoke training	
Organise your next internal standardisation event	
Continue with team meetings and internal moderation to include addressing conditions and recommendations from previous moderator reports	
Attend Skills and Education Group Access mandatory standardisation events (a fee will be charged for non- attendance or failure to bring the required documentation). Disseminate outcomes to team. These events may be held at various points throughout the year. Check AVA calendar of events for details	

March	
Check progress of internal moderation activity	
Liaise with tutors for assessment records and complete eRACs with grading decisions and to check accuracy of any new student and unit registrations	
Continue with team meetings and internal moderation to include addressing conditions and recommendations from previous moderator reports	
Liaise with marketing department to support the promotion of provision for the following academic year	
Plan for the sampling moderation process, in response to the Lead Moderator Visit Plan	
Attend AVA Standardisation event (*each Diploma must have a representative attend the relevant feedback session)*	
Representatives who attended an AVA standardisation feedback session to disseminate outcomes to Diploma teams	

April	
Continue with preparation for the next external moderation sampling process	
Liaise with tutors for assessment records and ensure accuracy in completion of eRACs with grading decisions	
Check progress of internal moderation activity	
Continue with your team meetings and internal moderation to include addressing conditions and recommendations from previous external moderator's reports	

May	
Respond to Diploma and Lead Moderator Reports from the sampling process, including any requests for additional sampling	
Examine Final Moderation and Final Awards Board Policy and agree internal attendees for the Final Awards Board with your quality contact	
Liaise with your quality contact to agree arrangements for final moderation	
Compile any mitigating circumstances in preparation for final moderation and Final Awards Boards	
Liaise with your quality contact to agree arrangements for the Final Awards Board to ensure with all appropriate colleagues including Head of Department, tutors, quality contact, and scribe are in attendance	
Circulate the relevant Final Awards Board Documentation e.g., Minutes exemplar, Minutes template, Guidance for the Final Awards Board and Agenda and Summary sheets to the appropriate members of staff – available to download from SharePoint	
Nominate and confirm to the Lead Moderator the Final Awards Board scribe and Chair	
Ensure all requests for RPL and/or credit transfer have been responded to by Skills and Education Group Access	
Liaise with tutors for assessment records and fully complete eRACs, including Learner Summary Page using the drop down menus with unit and grading decisions	
Compile any mitigating circumstances in preparation for summative moderation and Final Awards Boards	
Further check with your marketing department for promotion of Diplomas for next academic year, for any additional Diplomas, please complete an Access to HE Diploma Addendum form available on SharePoint	

June/July	
Respond to Diploma and Lead Moderator Reports from the sampling process, including any requests for additional sampling	
Liaise with individual students to check and confirm information on eRAC (a quality intervention fee will be charged together with an additional fee for re-issue of a certificate if amendments are required at a later date – risk rating may be affected; Sanctions may be applied)	
Ensure that each student has checked and signed agreement of the units and grades that you are presenting to the Final Awards Board on their behalf	
Ensure that all students are completing within the academic year of their end date noted on the eRAC. If any changes are required, please inform the AVA as soon as possible – charges will apply	

June/July	
Ensure that where students have previously been awarded credit and were not noted as a continuing student *(e.g., they were withdrawn in a previous academic year and subsequently re-registered)*, that a Credit transfer form has been submitted to the AVA	
Prepare required documentation for final student requests for referrals to be presented to Final Awards Board for consideration and inform your Lead Moderator as soon as possible	
Update the electronic form of eRAC(s) with final grading decisions (it is recommended that this should be a two-person activity to ensure accuracy)	
Ensure that a completed e-RAC(s) is uploaded to SharePoint in the Final Awards Board folder for the Lead Moderator and AVA representative to complete a final accuracy audit in line with the stated timescales	
Ensure all Learner summary sheets on the eRACs are fully completed including destinations using the drop down function. (these will be returned by Skills and Education Group Access if incomplete and a quality intervention fee charged). Please do not type manually into eRACs, as they will be automatically rejected when uploaded to QuartzWeb	
Prepare for the Final Awards Board. Have the Teams invitations been sent to everyone, have they accepted the event?	
Liaise with your quality contact to ensure signed FAB documents are uploaded to SharePoint in accordance with timescales following the Final Awards Board to avoid delay in the verification of results by the Lead Moderator, the processing of results and the onward transmission of student certificates	
Provide students with DC Web login details once awards have been verified by the CM so that they can set up an account and access their results for sharing with HEIs. Your Exams department will have these details	
Receive students' certificates from Skills and Education Group Access, store securely and review and log before onward transmission to students. Return any certificates that have been 'returned to sender' or have not been collected, to Skills and Education Group Access. **Note: certificates issued to students in error is a QAA notifiable event.**	