



Access to HE Provider Handbook 2024-2025

Planning delivery of the Access to HE Diploma

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Key principles of planning delivery of the Access to HE Diploma

1. Unit selection

1.1 Once approved to deliver the Access to HE Diploma, providers must select an appropriate range of units from the Rules of Combination. This is referred to as a Diploma Specification and will detail all the units providers can choose from. Selection of units should be carefully considered and should take into account:

- The title and purpose of the Diploma
- The potential Higher Education destinations of the students and the HEI entry requirements
- The academic developmental needs of students

1.2 Units are composed of learning outcomes and associated assessment criteria. Students must evidence achievement of all of these before grading can be judged or, in the case of ungraded units, achievement can be awarded. To achieve the Access to HE Diploma, students must evidence achievement of the selected units within the Rules of Combinations which are as follows:

- 60 credits in total
- 45 credits at Level 3 from graded units which are concerned with the academic subject of the Diploma
- 15 credits at Level 2 and/or Level 3 of ungraded units
- At least one selected unit (ungraded or graded) should be a 6 or 9-credit unit
- The total number of credits made up by 6 or 9-credit units, should not exceed 30 credits in total

1.3 The choice of units should also adhere to the principles of good course design. In the case of Access to HE, providers must ensure that they offer a planned and coherent programme of study which includes the required academic subject skills, knowledge, and underpinning study skills. HEI requirements must also be considered. It is good practice for the provider's Access to HE Coordinators to maintain good and frequent contact with admissions tutors at HEIs where most of the provider's students progress to. This can help with the design and structure of the offered programme and will help build trust between the HEI and provider. Providers should also consider how unit selections will allow students to develop their skills and knowledge of subject areas by selecting units which build on previous units studied. Where possible, providers can integrate units to allow students opportunities to combine subject knowledge and different assessment opportunities.

The Access to HE team at AIM have a wealth of experience in the delivery of Access to HE and can offer support with unit selection and Diploma design. Please contact acesstohe@aimgroup.org.uk for further support and guidance.

2. Modes of delivery

2.1 The Access to HE Diploma is a highly flexible qualification, designed to be locally developed but with a national reach and recognition. The Diploma can be delivered in a myriad of ways including:

- traditional in-classroom teaching and learning
- blended learning strategies involving a mix of in-class and online learning. Lessons delivered online must be live and not recorded
- A combination of all the above.

2.2 The qualification is still traditionally delivered via the academic year, September through to June/July in many cases, but over the years this has changed dramatically. It is now also delivered with start-times throughout the year and as a 'roll on roll off' approach. Providers will need to tell the AVA what their delivery intentions are and will also need to inform the AVA where the Diploma is being delivered eg main campus or satellite building, online platforms and so on.

2.3 When it comes to timetable planning, providers should consider class start times, the number of days students are expected to attend in person and which days these are to be, and whether an extent to which the VLE will play a part in course delivery. These factors are likely to impact student attendance and progression for those with work and/or family commitments.

2.4 In addition to its normal quality assurance requirements, the AVA will monitor providers not subject to external inspection, ie not inspected by Ofsted. Access to schemes of work, lesson plans and course content will be reviewed by the AVA, and this will apply to all modes of delivery.

3. Resources required

3.1 The actual and specific resources needed to deliver the Access to HE Diploma will of course depend on the subject matter of the Diploma. For example, if a provider is delivering an Engineering Diploma or a Games Design Diploma, these will have specific resource requirements such as hardware and software requirements. Providers will need to check that such resources are readily available to deliver the units in full without disadvantaging the students and will be checked as part of the qualification approval process.

3.2 Providers will need to ensure that students are supported throughout their learning journey by providing resources which will meet the needs of the students and the requirements of each unit. This includes (as a minimum):

- appropriately and adequately qualified/experienced staff to deliver and assess each unit
- appropriate and adequate rooms for delivery
- adequate access to IT facilities

- adequate access to a well-stocked library/learning resources centre or access to online learning materials such as journals and subject related books
- staff who are able and supported to undertake Access to HE and subject related CPD
- learning support resources and facilities for Access to HE students, including those with special learning needs
- effective student recruitment and enrolment processes
- appropriate access to information, advice, and guidance resources (pre-course, HE application and progression)
- effective student support including IT, English and maths (not just ESOL related support)
- pastoral support, either providing this or signposting to support services.

4. Important considerations

Minimum number of learning hours

4.1 Whilst the Access to HE Diploma offers enormous flexibility in the way in which it is both delivered and assessed, the AVA requires that students undertake at least **600 notional hours** of learning. This is to enable them to fully develop their knowledge and skills as required and to allow them to demonstrate these via their assessments. Students who have followed fewer hours of learning often underperform and could adversely affect their progression choices and opportunities.

Preparing students for UCAS applications

4.2 Providers are expected to fully support all students with preparing for the UCAS application cycle which includes students' personal statements, tutor references and student interview preparation.