



# **Access to HE Provider Handbook**

Introduction to the Access to HE Diploma

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## 1. Introduction

1.1 The Access to HE Provider Handbook provides essential information and guidance to both Provider staff and Access Validating Agency (AVA) Moderators involved in the Quality Assurance (QA) of Access to HE provision, and its delivery in AVA Providers.

1.2 Across a series of mini guides, it addresses the following areas of organisation, administration and delivery of Access Diplomas:

- Admission and registration of students
- Assignment submission, resubmission, and assessment
- Compliance with AVA/Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) regulations and benchmarks
- Rules of Combination (ROC) and Recommendation for Awards of Credit (RAC)
- Final Awards Board (FAB)
- Data returns to AVA
- Progression

1.3 It also addresses the following areas of activity which underpin the achievement of consistency and fairness within the AVA's Access to HE provision:

- Internal Moderation (IM)
- External Moderation/Review
- Standardisation
- Risk assessment

1.4 In addition, it provides information about the legitimate forms of prior achievement that can count towards the award of an Access to HE Diploma, together with a summary of QAA's requirements in relation to the submission and referral of assessed work.

1.5 The purpose of this mini guide is to provide an overview of

- Who the AVA's Access to HE Team is and how they can be contacted
- The support provided by the AVA's Access to HE Team
- Where key information such as templates, specifications, policies and procedures can be accessed
- Key data retention periods
- The structure and awarding of the Access to HE Diploma
- The AVA's Access to HE Diploma Portfolio
- How a Diploma can be amended, developed, reviewed and revalidated

## 2. AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group & AVA Function

2.1 AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group is an Access Validating Agency (AVA) that is licensed by the QAA. The QAA is the national body that regulates all Access to Higher Education provision. QAA grants AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group its AVA status to develop, manage and quality assure the Access to HE provision which is delivered at AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group's Recognised Providers.

2.2 The Board of AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group devolves its AVA responsibilities to a designated body whose membership includes members of the AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group Board, together with other members drawn from those involved in the delivery of Access provision and representatives from Higher Education Institutions. The committee meets four times a year and is responsible for overseeing the quality assurance processes, including approval of Access to HE Diplomas and external moderators.

## 3. Contact details

### 3.1 Access to HE Team

Any enquires can be directed to [acesstohe@aimgroup.org.uk](mailto:acesstohe@aimgroup.org.uk) . Alternatively, please call the office on 0333 034 8833.

### 3.2 QAA

QAA can be contacted by email at [AHE@qaa.ac.uk](mailto:AHE@qaa.ac.uk) or by calling 01452 557000

## 4. Support available to Providers

4.1 AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group's Access to HE Providers will be supported by the Access to HE Team through:

- Provision of guidance documents and templates to support delivery and moderation
- Regular updates and newsletters regarding AVA and QAA requirements
- Weekly drop-in sessions for Providers to ask questions
- Scheduled and Bespoke training sessions on assessment, grading and internal moderation
- Termly Forums for those responsible for the coordination and or management of Access to HE to meet to receive and discuss updates and upcoming activity, as well as sharing good practice
- Annual Standardisation Activities for all staff delivering and accessing Access to HE
- Consultation opportunities regarding AVA and or QAA changes.

4.2. Templates and a Calendar of Events will be accessible from the [Access to HE Centre Support](#) page on the website.

## 5. AVA Policies and Procedures

5.1 [AIM's Qualifications and Assessment Group's Policies and Procedures](#) can be accessed on the organisation's website.

5.2 The Final Award Board Policy, relevant just for Access to HE Providers, can be accessed on the [Access to HE Centre Support](#) page on the website.

## 6. Data Retention

6.1 Centres must keep the following learner records for the period specified and make these available to the AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group on request.

### Registration and award records (7 Years)

1. Name of learner, date of birth and contact address.
2. Title and accreditation number of each qualification and unit studied.
3. Qualification and / or units achieved

### Assessment and internal verification records (5 Years)

1. Name(s) of assessor(s)
2. Assessment records, including assessment decision and reason for decision
3. Name(s) of internal verifier(s)
4. Internal verification reports

## 7. Structure and Award of the Access to HE Diploma - Rules of Combination

7.1 The achievement of the Access to HE Diploma is determined by a combination of national successful completion requirements and the approved Rules of Combination (ROC) that apply to the specific Diploma offered.

7.2 Students who have achieved 60 credits, 45 of which are graded at Level Three and 15 at Level 2 or Level 3 ungraded; may be awarded the Diploma as long as:

- their achieved credits include the specified minimum number and level of mandatory and optional units.
- no more than 50% of their credit total comes from credit exemption, whether Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning (APCL) or credit transfer.
- any other successful completion requirements agreed in the programme/Diploma recognition document (e.g., time limits on the achievement of the Access Diploma and/or specified units) are met.

7.3 In order to protect the integrity of the award of the Access to HE Diploma, Providers must ensure that only those students meeting these requirements are recommended for the award of the Diploma.

7.4 The specifications of the ROC structure cannot be altered, but Providers are free to select their curriculum of units annually.

## 8. Access to HE Portfolio

8.1 The AVA has over 80 Access to HE Diplomas available for Providers to deliver covering a wide range of subject areas including:

- Health Professions and Medicine
- Science and Mathematics
- Engineering
- Land Based Studies
- Travel and Tourism
- Art and Media
- Social Sciences
- Humanities
- Business, Management and Law

8.2 A full list of the Diplomas available and access to each Diploma specification and unit specification can be found on our website [here](#).

8.3 The AVA also supports online delivery with 24 of its Diplomas available through an online platform called Peal. This has been developed in partnership with Pearltech UK Ltd through which Providers can access all learning and assessment materials for their students to study online. Pearl also has platforms to support Providers in monitoring progress and quality assurance processes. If you would like to arrange a demonstration, please contact the Access to HE Team. Further information can also be found on the AVA website [here](#).

## 9. Adding Diplomas to Provision and Requesting Amendments to Existing Diplomas

### Adding Diplomas to Provision

9.1 Providers who wish to extend their provision by adding new Diplomas will be able to complete a Qualification Approval Form (QAF) through the Quartz portal. Information relating to intended target group, assessment method, resources and staffing will be required. Further guidance regarding how to access and complete the form will be available soon.

### Requesting Amendments to Existing Diplomas

9.2 Providers may request amendments to existing Diplomas that include:

- Changes to unit specification learning outcomes and or assessment criteria wording
- Changes to unit credit level and value
- Addition of new or existing units to a Diploma

9.3 A programme amendment request is to be completed and submitted to [accesstohe@aimgroup.org.uk](mailto:accesstohe@aimgroup.org.uk) following which the AVA will consult with other Providers, Moderators and where necessary HEIs.

9.4 If approved, this will be reported to the designated body responsible for Access to HE. Please note that some approved amendments may not be activated until the start of the next academic year.

9.5 An explanation will be provided for requests that are not approved.

## 10. Diploma Development, Review and Revalidation

### Development of new Access to HE Diplomas

10.1 Providers are advised to talk directly to a member of the Access to HE team if they wish to propose for a new Diploma to be developed.

10.2 A proposal will need to be put forward to the AVA's Senior Leadership Team for consideration. To support the proposal, the Provider will be asked by the AVA to provide information regarding the rationale for the development, supporting evidence from HEIs and expected recruitment figures.

10.3 If approved, the AVA will work with the Provider to develop the Diploma, which may include the writing of units, before presenting the Diploma to a validation panel for approval.

### Review and Revalidation of Diplomas

10.4 Access to HE Diplomas are usually validated for a period of 5 years. It is the responsibility of the AVA to review and revalidate the Diplomas' content. Providers and moderators will be asked to contribute to the process by providing feedback or participating in a review group or validation panel.