



Policy statement

This policy explains how we conduct the award of Access to HE diplomas.

Policy detail

We aim to operate a standard procedure for the award of Access to HE diplomas that is consistent with QAA requirements. We will provide Access to HE centres and external moderators with full guidance on the function, process and membership of the awards board.

AVA licensing criteria covered by this document:	LC47, LC48, LC51, LC112
QAA recognition scheme for Access to Higher education covered by this document:	Grading scheme handbook. Section E: Student results and awards boards, September 2013

How to implement the policy

The awards board is a formal meeting held with a centre shortly after final moderation. All business is confidential and formally recorded on the minutes and run. The formal authority for the award of the Access to HE diploma within AIM Access Validating Agency (AVA) is conferred for operational purposes by the Board of Trustees (BoT) (the AVA's governing body) to the awards board.

The membership

The membership of the awards board should include as a minimum:

Role	Responsibility
Chair (AVA representative) May be: An AVA officer The AVA lead moderator An independent centre lead moderator (ie from another centre in the AVA)	To ensure that due process is followed. Checks that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> membership is appropriate minutes are taken legitimate business is conducted by due process inappropriate business is not discussed agenda is followed The awards board lead moderator authorises the award of credit and, where appropriate, grades for all units achieved and an Access to HE diploma if the specified units have been achieved.
Awards board lead moderator Usually the centre lead moderator (CLM). A diploma moderator at the centre may take this role if the CLM is not available.	To confirm assessment judgments. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> verifies the award of credit at the end of the awards board ensures any additional papers are given to the Chair for return to AVA post-awards board arrangements are carried out (extenuating circumstances)
Provider representative May be: Access programme manager Centre's lead quality manager	To ensure all business and documents are ready for panel and presented to Chair. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> has discussed all legitimate business with the CLM (and other appropriate moderator) beforehand ensured all actions from the operations checklist have been completed prior to the awards board brings and presents completed RAC(s) to awards board makes recommendations as per preparations presents documented information on referrals, appeals, extenuating circumstances, special cases etc as previously discussed with CLM



Additional reps. (optional) May be: Pathway coordinator Subject tutor	To observe and support. To provide information relating to awards board business where they have been directly involved / hold first-hand information.
Minuting officer Provided by AVA	To minute the business, recording all decisions on AVA minutes. Sends to awards board Chair for approval within 10 working days of awards board.

Prior to the awards board (by final moderation)

1. If you are using our Gradetraka™ system

You must check and verify the profile page for each student you wish to make a claim for, ensuring:

- pass, merit or distinction grades have been entered for all graded units the student has achieved
- 'achieved' has been entered for all ungraded and level two units the student has achieved
- the grades have been checked for accuracy of entry
- there is absolute compliance with the rules of combination for the discrete diploma

2. If you wish to use the Recommendation for the Award of Credit (RAC) spreadsheet

You must check the RAC summary sheet, ensuring:

- destination codes have been entered for each student
- "Y" for 'yes' to indicate whether the QAA diploma has been achieved is entered for each student
- the spelling of each student name is correct: if not please email enquiries@aim-group.org.uk with clear details of the correction to be made
- no additions have been made to the number of students

and

You must check the RAC sheet for each student, ensuring:

- pass, merit or distinction grades have been entered for all graded units the student has achieved
- 'achieved' has been entered for all ungraded and level two units the student has achieved
- the grades have been checked for accuracy of entry
- there is absolute compliance with the rules of combination for the discrete diploma
- no changes have been made to the level of the units
- no units have been added to the modules / subject areas

At the conclusion of final moderation and prior to the awards board

1. If you are using our Gradetraka™ system

- once final moderation has been completed and achievement has been agreed, the CLM will notify the AVA customer support team to lock Gradetraka™ in preparation for the awards board
- no amendments to grades can be made once Gradetraka™ has been locked without agreement from the CLM.
- Gradetraka™ will only be unlocked if authorised by the CLM or access quality manager

2. If you wish to use the RAC spreadsheet

- once final moderation has been completed and achievement has been agreed, the CLM will witness the RAC(s) being electronically uploaded to the AIM portal by your nominated Centre Administrator
- the RAC(s) is/are verified on the AIM portal by your Internal Verifier
- no amendments to grades can be made once the RAC has been uploaded without agreement from the CLM.
- the RAC will only be removed from the portal to allow for amendment if authorised by the CLM or access quality manager



During the awards board

Decisions may involve:

- making an award
- failure of the award
- Chair's action
- convening a second awards board later

The awards board does not receive information about:

- offers for progression to higher education, made to any student (such information will play no part in any discussion during the awards board)
- new appeals about academic judgments

The awards board will make decisions about:

Extenuating circumstances

Prior to the awards board

- your policy and procedure for defining and addressing extenuating circumstances should be followed
- requests for extensions etc will be handled at course level and documented
- moderators will check and confirm appropriate procedures

A case will only be brought to the awards board if:

- performance is affected in more than one area / falls outside normal processes
- no prior action has been taken
- it is fully documented
- it is accompanied by a recommendation from you to the awards board on whether the claim should be supported and to what degree

Awards will be made by chairs action by the agreed date following the production of:

- clear evidence of achievement including assessment records to support the completion of the agreed extension
- written authorisation from CLM
- submission of the RAC or updated Gradetraka™ page



Aegrotat and posthumous awards

- a student was unable to complete the award because of exceptional extenuating circumstances
- a medical certificate supports the claim
- the student has achieved at least 30 credits
- the diploma is awarded with full credits, but the unit/grade profile is incomplete
- the diploma states “Aegrotat Award”

Posthumous - this award is made at discretion of the awards board.

Academic misconduct

Prior to the awards board, academic misconduct is to be dealt with via the provider’s usual procedure, endorsed by the AVA. The provider’s report on investigation of the case and provider’s judgment will be considered as evidence.

In **serious** cases the awards board will only consider the award of credit for units not affected by the misconduct. Penalties may include:

- disqualification for all or part of the award
- suspension/exclusion of student

In **less serious** cases penalties may include:

- resubmission
- referral

Penalties may **not** include alteration to grades.

Appeals

(See AIM Complaints and Appeals Policy for on-course issues.) Grounds for appeal to the awards board are restricted to:

- evidence of administrative error in the assessment process
- extenuating circumstances that for good reason, could not be notified prior to awards board

Appeals may not be made against academic judgments. These must be agreed by or at final moderation.

Following the awards board

- the award of credits, grades and Access to HE Diplomas must be verified by the CLM either by:
 - verifying the RAC on the AIM Portal or
 - authorising the awards via Gradetraka™
- the AVA minute taker will send the completed minutes to the awards board Chair for approval within two working days of awards board.
- the awards board Chair will confirm and approve the minutes within two working days of receipt.
- once approved, the minutes will be sent to the CLM and the centre’s AHE programme manager by the minute taker.
- the centre must submit clear evidence of achievement of any agreed extensions including assessment records and either update the student/s profile on Gradetraka™ or submit the updated RAC to the CLM by the agreed deadline.
- the CLM will forward their approval of the extension achievements to the awards board chair for approval following which the awards board chair will authorise the award of credit.



Amendments to award of credit after awards board

Amendments to the award of credit after the awards board will be made in exceptional circumstances only and only on receipt of evidence.

Requests for changes after the awards board must be submitted using the **Access to HE – correction of award form** (one form per student), completed by a senior manager/named quality contact for AIM's consideration. Completed forms must be emailed to your allocated CEA **along with supporting evidence for the change being requested** (for example assessed student work, assessment and internal verification records).

We will consider your application and give you a decision within 14 days. We will inform you if we are unable to reach a decision within this timescale.

The CLM must approve any changes to the awarded grades. If changes are not agreed, the original Award of Credit will remain.

There will be a charge per student for amendments following the awards board.

Certification

The AVA will issue an Access to HE diploma certificate to all students who have been awarded the Access to HE diploma including a transcript of unit achievement. Where partial achievement has been claimed, students will receive a transcript of unit achievement showing all units completed. For full details on the issue of certificates including timescales, please refer to the certification policy available for download on the AIM website.

Amendments to award of credit after certification

The centre must check all certificates on receipt, any amendments to the award of credit requiring a certificate reissue will be made in exceptional circumstances only and will incur a charge.

Requests for changes after the certification must be submitted using the **Access to HE – correction of award form** (one form per student), completed by a senior manager/named quality contact for AIM consideration. Requests will not be considered from tutors/assessors, internal verifiers. Completed forms must be emailed to your allocated CEA **along with supporting evidence for the change being requested** (eg assessed student work, assessment and internal verification records).

The original certificate(s) must be returned to AIM before a replacement can be issued. You must also provide details of:

- any internal investigations that have taken place to establish why the situation occurred
- measures that have been put in place as a result to ensure that similar instances do not occur in the future

We will consider your application and give you a decision within 14 days. We will inform you if we will be unable to reach a decision in this timescale.

The centre lead moderator must approve any changes to the awarded grades. The amended certificate(s) will be reissued **within two working weeks** of CLM authorisation. If changes are not agreed the original Award of Credit will remain.

There will be a charge per student for a replacement certificate.