

Title: Update to higher education providers

Audience: Higher education providers- Heads of Institutions, Admissions officers and Quality Contacts

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Admissions information regarding the QAA Access to HE Diploma, for students who plan to complete by 31 July 2021

Firstly, if you are a QAA member institution, let me thank you for your financial support, without which we would not be able to promote and manage the QAA Access to Higher Education Diploma, which changes the lives of tens of thousands of students every year.

Every year, the Access to Higher Education Diploma provides a vital resource of students to higher education providers across the UK, with over 20,000 students progressing to university courses annually. Access to HE students often come from diverse backgrounds and are proven to be driven and committed: 90% of graduates with an Access to HE Diploma are employed or in further study six months after graduation.

We know that higher education providers across the UK highly value the Access to HE Diploma and play a key role in its quality assurance, thereby helping students achieve success. In addition to the role that you play quality assuring Access to HE Diplomas by participating in moderation processes and overseeing outcomes through their service on AVA committees, higher education staff are involved in Access to HE in many other ways. This includes Access to HE course development by advising on content and taking part in validation processes, recruitment and widening participation activities for Access to HE students.

To help with your institution's planning for next year's admission cycle, we are pleased to be able to give an early summary of how Access to HE Diplomas will be awarded in 2021. We hope this will help all staff dealing with admissions to have the information they need to understand the arrangements for the award and assessment of QAA-recognised Access to HE Diplomas in July 2021.

QAA implemented the [Extraordinary Regulatory Framework \(ERF\)](#) in response to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2019-20. The ERF enabled over 22,000 students to receive their Access to HE Diplomas this summer and provided an opportunity for progression to higher education, training or employment.

An Extraordinary Regulatory Framework (ERF) will be implemented into 2020-21 to ensure contingencies are in place to address any local and national issues arising from the pandemic.

The award and assessment of the Access to HE Diploma this academic year will use the [QAA grading scheme](#); there will be no provision for the issue of calculated results (estimated assessment grades).

QAA will continue to work closely with Access Validating Agencies (AVAs) and providers to ensure that quality, standards and student outcomes can be maintained. AVAs and providers will have regulations and contingencies to cover the eventuality of local and national issues arising from the pandemic.

Robust quality assurance mechanisms will continue to be implemented by AVAs and providers to ensure consistency is applied across all Access to HE Diplomas awarded.

Higher education professionals working with our AVAs as external moderators will continue to be involved in these quality assurance mechanisms.

QAA will maintain overall oversight of the framework and also undertake additional monitoring activities, where necessary, to assure ourselves and stakeholders that students' results continue to be accurate, fair and robust.

We very much value your continued support for Access to HE students and hope you found this information useful.

More information

We will continue to provide updates on the [QAA website](#).

You can also read our [FAQs](#).

If you need help or further support, please speak contact QAA officers at AHE@qaa.ac.uk

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