

Access to HE Diploma Specification

**Access to HE Diploma
(Humanities)**

OCN London aims to support learning and widening opportunities by recognising achievement through credit-based courses and qualifications, promoting high standards of excellence and inclusiveness. We are proud of our long-term role and unique history in providing innovative learning solutions for a wide range of learners and particularly those who have not previously benefitted from education.

At the heart of what OCN London offers is:

- a commitment to inclusive credit-based learning;
- the creative use of credit with responsive, demand-led qualification development;
- high quality service and support;
- respect for and encouragement of diversity – in learners and learning approaches, partners and settings;
- the development of people, capacity and resources that will ensure effective business partnerships.

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General information

This Diploma specification provides an overview of the qualification structure for the named Access to HE Diploma. It sets out the rules of combination and the minimum requirements for delivery specific to the Diploma title. The specification should be used by staff when applying for course recognition to deliver a Diploma and also by those involved in the delivery and assessment of the Diploma title.

The Diploma specification should be used in conjunction with OCN London's [Access to HE Guide](#) which contains a comprehensive guide QAA Access to HE qualification framework and how this is operated on OCN London Access to HE Diplomas, from learner registration to certification.

The OCN London website also contains a wide range of resources and guidance on specific topics to help OCN London centres deliver the Access to HE Diploma.

If you are not yet an OCN London Approved Centre but wish to deliver this Access to HE Diploma, please contact us on enquiries@ocnlondon.org.uk for details of the Centre Approval application process.

If you currently offer Access to HE Diplomas with OCN London, please contact the Access to HE Team for information on how to apply for course recognition.

Diploma overview

The Level 3 Access to HE Diploma is a nationally recognised qualification which is designed to provide preparation for study in higher education (HE) in the UK for adults returning to education.

Individual Diploma titles are validated and awarded by Access Validating Agencies (AVAs), according to [Access to HE Diploma Specification and Grading Scheme](#) set by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA).

In order to gain the Access to HE Diploma, learners must achieve a total of 60 credits. Of these 60 credits, 45 credits must be achieved at Level 3 from graded subject specific units. Graded units can be awarded at Pass, Merit or Distinction. The remaining 15 credits must be achieved at Level 2 or Level 3 from study skills units which are ungraded.

Within the 60 credits, learners must achieve a minimum of one unit of either 6 or 9 credits. A maximum of 30 credits can be made up of 6 or 9 credit units.

Diploma details

Diploma title:	Access to HE Diploma (Humanities)
Learning aim code:	40014150
Validation start date:	1 August 2023
Validation end date:	31 July 2028
SSA sector code:	
Tier 1:	10 – History, Philosophy and Theology
Tier 2:	10.1 – History

Diploma aims

The Access to HE Diploma (Humanities) provides adult learners with a structured, supportive, and integrated programme of study. Learners will gain the knowledge, skills, confidence, and awareness necessary to succeed in undergraduate study within the intended progression routes of this Diploma. The Diploma offers a balance of essential academic skills and subject-specific knowledge, ensuring that learners are well-prepared for the intellectual and practical demands of undergraduate study in Humanities.

Its primary aims are to:

- to provide HE progression opportunities for adults who, because of social, educational or individual circumstances, do not have the necessary qualifications
- introduce learners to fundamental concepts, methods, and key areas of knowledge within core disciplines, offering a structured and stimulating framework for intellectual growth and interdisciplinary connections

- support learners in developing essential academic skills and independent learning habits needed for success in undergraduate study
- establish a positive and supportive learning environment within which learners can build their confidence through successful learning and shared experiences
- offer personal and educational support to help learners pursue their goals within the framework of the Diploma.

Target learners

- Adults who, because of social, educational or individual circumstances, were unable to participate in or benefit from initial education.
- Adults from groups that are under-represented in higher education.
- Adults seeking a career change due to unemployment or limited opportunities in their previous field, with a demonstrable interest in entering a profession within Humanities.

Progression

Potential HE progression routes

Following successful completion of this Access to HE Diploma, learners may progress onto the following areas of degree study: Archaeology, Art History, History, Literature, Creative Writing, English, Film Studies, Global Politics, International Relations, Journalism, Law, Liberal Arts, Media Studies, Philosophy, and a range of combined and related degrees.

The Access to HE Diploma does not guarantee entry to UK Higher Education Institutions.

Potential career opportunities

Potential career paths following Higher Education study in this subject area may include Teaching, Law, Journalism, Writing, and a range of other career paths within this subject area.

Progression agreements

OCN London works with local universities to develop progression agreements that benefit all its centres and learners. The following agreements are in place:

- Goldsmiths, University of London (Progression agreement)
- St Mary's University, Twickenham (Progression agreement)
- University of East London (Partnership agreement)

Further information about each agreement can be found [here](#) on the OCN London website

Entry guidance

There are no centrally specified formal requirements for qualifications on entry; however there is an expectation that the learner will have literacy, communication skills and numeracy at Level 2 or above.

Centres are expected to consult with HE institutions to identify any additional requirements for progression to HE. Learners should also be strongly advised to contact their preferred HE institutions to confirm specific entry requirements onto degree courses.

Learners must have a UK, including the Channel Islands and Isle of Man, address (including BF0) to be registered on an Access to HE Diploma.

Learner recruitment

It is important that learners receive clear information, advice, and guidance on entry to the course to ensure transparent expectations and alignment to their needs. As part of the application process, learners are expected to complete a diagnostic assessment to determine their potential to achieve the qualification. If the outcome of the assessment identifies support needs, appropriate assistance should be made available where possible.

Centres should make professional judgements to ensure learners are not set up to fail. Consideration should be given to learner's diverse backgrounds and criteria set should recognise that learners can demonstrate their potential to succeed in a variety of ways.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

It is expected that centres comply to the intention of OCN London's Equality and Diversity policy. In particular, in that there should be no discrimination on the grounds of gender, marital status, colour, race, disability, age, ethnic or national origin, religion, sexual orientation or political opinion. OCN London expects that centres will also ensure that no discrimination occurs in relation to all of the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010.

Guided learning hours

The Access to HE Diploma represents 600 notional Guided Learning Hours (GLH) with courses generally delivered in 450 GLH. This may vary between centres and may depend on whether the course is being delivered through blended learning. It is expected a centre delivering the course will clearly outline the intended delivery in terms of total hours and how this is broken down weekly over the period of study.

Diploma resources

The minimum required resources for this Diploma include:

- Access to IT facilities with specialist software as appropriate.
- Access to learning resources and online facilities.
- Access to VLE or other system, such as Microsoft Teams, Google Classroom.
- Access to resources for specialist learner support and reasonable adjustments.

- The same level of facilities and resources should be available at each site where the Diploma is delivered.

Staffing requirements

- Staff delivering, assessing or internally moderating on the Access to HE course must have the professional competence and level of subject expertise necessary to deliver and assess the units available on the Diploma. It is expected that the tutor will be qualified to the level above (i.e. Level 4) in the subject area of the unit they are teaching e.g. a tutor with a Social Science degree may be able to teach both Psychology and Sociology.
- Staff should have or be working towards a teaching qualification.
- Staff should have knowledge and understanding of the Access to HE Diploma, including QAA regulations, AVA assessment regulations, the QAA Grading Scheme and the Rules of Combination.
- New staff should be inducted to ensure that they have sufficient information to deliver, assess or internally moderate on the Diploma competently.
- It is desirable that teachers have personal practice experience.

Assessment

Grading Standards

The graded units in an Access to HE Diploma are graded using a scheme which has been designed to accommodate the flexibility of the qualification (it can be applied to all Access to HE Diploma graded units, whatever their subject or structure). A grade of Pass, Merit or Distinction is awarded for every graded Level 3 unit that a learner completes successfully as part of an Access to HE Diploma. Grades can only be awarded for graded units which are part of the Diploma (and conform to the Rules of Combination). There is no overall grade for the Diploma.

There are 3 grading standards which are applied to **all** graded units:

GS1: Knowledge and Understanding

GS2: Subject Specific Skills

GS3: Transferable Skills

Each grading standard comprises of a set of components and sub-components which describe types of performance associated with the standard. For each component, there are parallel statements at merit and distinction, which describe increasingly demanding standards of achievement. The most appropriate sub-components of the standards are selected when grading the unit.

For Grading Standard 3: Transferable Skills, all three of the components (a, b and c) must be used at least once across the Diploma.

For further information can be found [here](#) on the OCN London website.

Assessment mechanisms

The Access to HE Diploma assessment mechanism incorporates:

- Assessment tasks which are designed and set by the Centre
- Internal assessment of learner work
- Internal and external moderation of assessment.

There are no additional external assessments for this Diploma.

Recommended methods of assessment

The recommended assessment methods for this Diploma should include a variety of methods which take into consideration the target learners for this Diploma and the appropriateness for the units being assessed. Assessment methods should be valid, reliable, and inclusive and assure equity.

The following assessment methods could be used to assess the units within this Diploma.

- Blogs
- Case studies
- Essay
- Exam / Test with seen or unseen paper
- Oral presentation
- Practical tasks/demonstrations
- Question and answer (written and oral)
- Report
- Tutor observation
- Worksheets
- Written assignments
- Viva

Please note, it is expected that at least part of one unit is assessed by a time constrained assessment.

This is not an exhaustive list, and other methods could be selected with agreement from either OCN London or the Centre Moderator.

Rules of Combination

To be awarded the Access to Higher Education Diploma (Humanities) learners must achieve a total of 60 credits comprising of:

Credits required from graded academic subject content units at Level 3	45
Credits required from ungraded units at Level 3 or Level 2	15
Total credits required	60

Learners must also meet the following Rules of Combination:

Rule: Units in	Status	Mandatory Credits (see below)	From Optional Credits	Total Credits
Study Skills	Ungraded	3 @ L3	12 @ L2 or L3	15
Subject Specific Units	Graded	6 @ L3	39 @ L3	45

In addition:

A learner must achieve a **minimum** of one 6 or 9 credit unit to achieve the Diploma.

A learner's programme of study can only include a **maximum of 30 credits** made up from 6 or 9 credit units.

Approved unit list

Mandatory units

Learners must complete **9 credits** from the module below.

Unit ID	Unit Name	Level	Credits
CBA782	Reading and Comprehension of Texts (ungraded)	L3	3
CBA786	Extended Project (graded)	L3	6

Study skills (ungraded)

Learners must complete **12 credits** from the module below.

Unit ID	Unit Name	Level	Credits
CBA845	Discursive Writing	L3	3
CBA847	Essay Writing	L3	3
CBA785	Examination Skills: Preparing for and Succeeding in an Examination	L3	3
CBA850	Narrative Writing	L3	3
CBA851	Note-taking and Note-making	L3	3
CBB392	Preparation for Higher Education	L3	3
CBB804	Report Writing	L3	3
CBB803	Sourcing and Reading Information	L3	3
CBB805	Speaking and Listening Skills	L3	3
CBA788	Using Information Technology	L3	3
CBA855	Writing and Delivering Seminar Papers	L3	3
CBA856	Writing Standard English	L3	3

Subject specific (graded)

Learners must complete **39 credits** from the subject specific modules below.

English Language			
Unit ID	Unit Name	Level	Credits
CBB783	Autobiographical Writing	L3	3
CBB114	Historical Development of the English Language	L3	3
CBB800	The English Language in Use	L3	3
CBB122	Writing Drama	L3	3
CBB784	Writing Fiction	L3	3

History			
Unit ID	Unit Name	Level	Credits
CBB776	African Independence from British Rule	L3	3
CBB739	America's Vietnam War	L3	6
CBB777	Apartheid in South Africa	L3	3
CBB781	Communist Regimes in Eastern Europe	L3	3
CBB780	Consequences of the Industrial Revolution	L3	3
CBB740	Historical Interpretation	L3	3
CBB778	History of Immigration and Race Relations in Britain	L3	3
CBB779	India's Independence	L3	3
CBB741	Introduction to Primary and Secondary Sources	L3	3
CBB153	Irish Nationalism, 1801-1922	L3	3
CBB742	Israel and Palestine	L3	3
CBB743	Lenin, Bolsheviks and the Russian Revolution*	L3	3
CBB796	Origins of the Industrial Revolution	L3	3
CBB745	Revolutionary France 1789-1794	L3	3
CBB744	The Black Death	L3	3
CBB746	The Civil Rights Movement in the USA	L3	3
CBB747	The Enlightenment	L3	3
CBB748	The Movement towards Female Emancipation	L3	3
CBB782	The Rise of the Nazi Party in Germany	L3	3
CBB749	The Russian Revolution*	L3	6
CBB750	The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade	L3	3

Law			
Unit ID	Unit Name	Level	Credits
CBQ635	Aims of Sentencing	L3	3
CBQ639	Central Features of the English Legal System	L3	3
CBB382	Consumer Law	L3	3
CBQ641	Contract Law *	L3	3
BXI036	Criminal Justice System and Young People	L3	3
CBQ570	Equality and Diversity in Employment	L3	3
CBB349	Essential Elements of a Crime	L3	3
CBQ642	Formation of Contract *	L3	3
CBQ764	Freedom of Movement	L3	3
CBQ636	Introduction to Criminal Law	L3	6
CBB377	Introduction to the Law	L3	3
CBB378	Law and Order in Civil Society	L3	3
CBQ643	The Employment Contract	L3	6
CBQ640	The Protection of Human Rights	L3	3
BRY286	The Tort of Negligence	L3	3

CBQ637	The Trial and Appeals Process	L3	3
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Literature			
Unit ID	Unit Name	Level	Credits
CBB111	A Shakespeare Play	L3	3
CBB112	Comparing Two Texts	L3	3
CBB785	Interpreting Poetry	L3	3
CBB786	Response to Literature	L3	3
CBB118	Short Fiction	L3	3
CBB787	Studying a Novel	L3	3
CBB119	Studying a Play	L3	3

Media Studies			
Unit ID	Unit Name	Level	Credits
CBB510	Cinema and Film Studies	L3	3
CAL891	Comment Features	L3	3
CBB513	Film Genre	L3	3
BRT980	Introduction to Cultural Studies	L3	3
CBB517	Introduction to Journalism	L3	3
CBB518	Introduction to Media Studies	L3	3
CBA679	Introduction to Social Media	L3	6
CBB437	Media and Popular Culture	L3	3
CBB519	Media Influence and Audiences	L3	3
CBB520	Media Institutions	L3	3
BZB432	News Writing	L3	3
CBB521	Representation and Ideology	L3	3
CAL895	Review Writing	L3	3
CBB522	Semiotics	L3	3

Philosophy			
Unit ID	Unit Name	Level	Credits
CBB709	Elementary Logic and Reasoning	L3	3
CBB710	Epistemology	L3	3
CBB711	Ethics	L3	3
CBB712	Greek Philosophy	L3	3
CBB713	Philosophy of Mind	L3	3
CBB714	Philosophy of Religion	L3	3
CBB715	Political Philosophy	L3	3

Additional information

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Overall, the total proportion of credits awarded or exempted through either credit transfer and/or recognition of prior learning must not exceed 30 credits (that is 50 per cent of the credits required for the achievement of the Diploma).

Barred combinations of units

If the content between units overlaps by more than 25% of the learning outcomes, this would result in a barred combination of units.

* The following units constitute barred combinations within this Diploma title and must not be delivered together on the same course.

Unit	Barred with:
Contract Law	Formation of Contract
Lenin, Bolsheviks and the Russian Revolution	The Russian Revolution

Guidance and support materials

OCN London devised assignment briefs are available for the following units:

Study skills

- Essay Writing
- Examination Skills: Preparing for and Succeeding in an Examination
- Note-taking and Note-making
- Preparation for Higher Education
- Reading and Comprehension of Texts
- Report Writing
- Sourcing and Reading Information
- Speaking and Listening Skills
- Writing and Delivering Seminar Papers
- Writing Standard English

Subject specific units

- Extended Project
- Interpreting Poetry
- Introduction to Primary and Secondary Sources
- Studying a Play

Online learning materials

The following online support materials are available:

- Essay Writing
- Extended Project
- Note-taking and Note-making
- Preparation for Higher Education
- Reading and Comprehension of Texts
- Sourcing and Reading Information
- Writing Standard English
- Referencing and Plagiarism (short course)

These online learning materials can be used as part of your teaching or an induction to the course. It is expected that the learners will still receive teaching on these topics and assignments must be set for them by their tutor and assessed by the centre. The courses can be accessed via the OCN London website or incorporated into your own VLE or online delivery systems. If you have any queries, please contact Sarah Francis, Access to HE Standards Coordinator at sarah@ocnlondon.org.uk.

All OCN London devised assignment briefs can be found in the [Access Centre Area](#) on the OCN London website (login required).

Further resources and guidance including the Access to HE Diploma guide, tutor guidance documents, marketing materials, forms, templates and checklists can be found in the above area of the website (login may be required).