

Access to HE Diploma Specification

**Access to HE Diploma
(Construction and Built
Environment)**

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 (Construction and Built Environment)
Learning aim code:	40012633
Validation start date:	1 August 2021
Validation end date:	31 July 2027
SSA sector code:	
Tier 1:	5 – Construction, Planning and Built Environment
Tier 2:	5.2 – Building and Construction

Diploma aims

The Access to HE Diploma (Construction and Built Environment) 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 Construction and/ or Built Environment.

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 in within Construction and /or Built Environment.

Progression

Potential HE progression routes

Following successful completion of this Access to HE Diploma, learners may progress onto the following areas of degree study: Architecture, Architectural Engineering, Building Surveying, Built Environment, Civil and Structural Engineering, Construction Management, Project Management, Sustainability 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 Architecture, Civil Engineering, Building Surveying, Structural Engineering, Construction Management, Project Management and other careers in this 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 usually the expectation that the learner will have literacy, communication skills and numeracy at Level 2 or above. In addition to this, it is likely that learners will need to hold GCSEs at grade 9-5/4 (A*-C) in English, Maths and Science, as these qualifications usually form part of the entry requirements for the degree courses that learners progress to.

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 BFO) 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.

- Artefacts
- 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 (Construction and Built Environment) 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	6 @ L3	9 @ L2 or L3	15
Subject Specific Units	Graded	9 @ L3	36 @ 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 **15 credits** from the module below.

Unit ID	Unit Name	Level	Credits
CBB803	Sourcing and Reading Information (Ungraded)	L3	3
CBB804	Report Writing (Ungraded)	L3	3
CBB594	Algebra (Graded)	L3	3
CBA786	Extended Project (Graded)	L3	6

Study skills (ungraded)

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

Unit ID	Unit Name	Level	Credits
CBA847	Essay Writing	L3	3
CBA785	Examination Skills: Preparing for and Succeeding in an Examination	L3	3
CBA851	Note-taking and Note-making	L3	3
CBB392	Preparation for Higher Education	L3	3
CBB805	Speaking and Listening Skills	L3	3
CBA787	Word Processing	L3	3
CBA856	Writing Standard English	L3	3

Subject specific (graded)

Learners must complete **36 credits** from the subject specific modules below.

Construction and the Built Environment			
Unit ID	Unit Name	Level	Credits
CBB415	Building and Construction Technology	L3	6
CBB418	Building Survey	L3	3
CBB639	Engineering Materials	L3	3
CBB416	Health, Safety and Welfare in the Construction Industry	L3	3
CBB417	Introduction to the Construction Industry	L3	3
CBB037	Manual and Machine Tools	L3	3
CBB421	Project Management in Construction	L3	3
CBB419	Site and Brief Analysis	L3	3
CBB420	Sustainability and the Built Environment	L3	3

Computing			
Unit ID	Unit Name	Level	Credits
CBA867	Introduction to Computer Aided Design	L3	3
CBB479	Spreadsheets	L3	3

Mathematics			
Unit ID	Unit Name	Level	Credits
CBB630	Applied Mathematics for Engineering	L3	3
CBB599	Calculus*	L3	6
CBB597	Differentiation and Integration*	L3	3
CBB595	Functions and Graphs	L3	3
CBB846	Further Algebra	L3	3
CBB847	Handling Scientific Data	L3	3
CBB603	Numerical Methods	L3	3
CBB605	Trigonometry	L3	3
CBB606	Vectors and Matrices	L3	3

Physics			
Unit ID	Unit Name	Level	Credits
CBB567	Electricity	L3	3
CBB569	Motion, Energy and Forces	L3	3
CBB571	Thermal Properties of Matter	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:
Calculus	Differentiation and Integration

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
- Report Writing
- Sourcing and Reading Information
- Speaking and Listening Skills
- Writing Standard English

Subject specific units

- Algebra
- Electricity
- Extended Project
- Motion, Energy and Forces
- Numerical Methods
- Thermal Properties of Matter

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).