Access to HE Diploma Guide

Contents

This qualification guide provides an overview of the QAA Access to HE qualification framework and how this is operated on OCN London Access to HE Diplomas, from learner registration to certification. It provides information about the qualification structure, assessment and quality assurance processes.

The QAA Access to HE Diploma Specification and Grading Scheme were revised in 2024. This OCN London guide is applicable to the version of the qualification that is open to learner registrations from 1 August 2024.

The guide should be used by all of those involved in the delivery and assessment of these qualifications and can be adapted for learners to help them understand the structure of their Diploma.

The OCN London website contains a wide range of resources and guidance on specific topics to help OCN London centres deliver the Access to HE Diploma, these are referred to within this guide.

Qualification overview

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

There are over 1,000 different courses leading to the Access to HE Diploma and courses are available in most further education colleges in England and Wales.

Access to HE Diplomas are available for a range of different progression routes, such as Access to HE Diploma (Nursing), Access to HE Diploma (Art and Design), Access to HE Diploma (Business Studies) – OCN London offers over 40 such titles.

Qualification level

The Access to HE Diploma is a Level 3 qualification. It has a qualification credit value of 60 credits. A credit is equivalent to a 'notional' 10 hours of learning, which includes time spent in class and private study. Learners are registered on units comprising three, six or nine credits.

To be awarded the Access to HE Diploma, learners must achieve:
- 45 credits graded at Level 3 in academic subject specific units and
- 15 credits ungraded at Level 2 or Level 3 – on OCN London Access to HE Diplomas, the ungraded credits are normally study skills units

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.

Assessment mechanism

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

Who the qualification is for

The Access to HE Diploma is a qualification which prepares learners for study at university. It is designed for adults who would like to study in UK Higher Education but who do not have the necessary entry qualifications, such as A Levels.

It offers a general introduction to study skills and key areas of knowledge within the subject(s) taken, helping adults to become independent, self-directed learners and prepare them for the demands of undergraduate studies. It offers a positive and supportive learning experience where adults can build their skills and confidence.

The qualification is well established, widely accepted by universities and included in the UCAS tariff system. A large majority of those who enrol on Access to HE Diplomas with OCN London make successful applications to university degree courses. Learners who study the Access to HE Diploma find they are well prepared for study at university.

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. It is expected that the centre will ask the learner to complete an appropriate diagnostic assessment as part of the application process.

The [specification for a Diploma title](#) may provide further guidance about any additional qualifications that the learners will need to hold to gain entry to the main progression route for that Diploma. For example, the entry requirements for Nursing degrees normally require learners to hold GCSEs at grade 9-5/4 or A*-C in English and Maths.

QAA provides [principles for admission to Access to HE Diplomas](#).

Qualification structure

Units and rules of combination

Access to HE units are three, six or nine credits. They consist of learning outcomes (LO), which are statements of what a learner may reasonably be expected to know, understand or do as the result of undertaking a process of learning, and assessment criteria (AC), which are descriptions of the requirements a learner is expected to meet in order to demonstrate that a learning outcome has been achieved. All assessment criteria must be assessed as met for a learner to achieve a unit.

The unit specifications can be accessed via the OCN London website using the unit search function or via the unit codes on a specific Diploma title's specification. This specification sets out the Rules of Combination for that Diploma – the units must be completed in order for the qualification to be awarded. Some units are mandatory, which means that all learners on that OCN London Diploma title must complete the units. Other units are optional and can be chosen from a list of units approved for use on that Diploma. There may be rules about how many credits can be achieved in a subject area, for example, in the Access to HE Diploma (Humanities and Social Science), learners must complete at least 12 credits from the Humanities strand of units and at least 12 credits from the Social Science strand.

Units are designated at validation as graded or ungraded. Graded units are concerned with academic subject content and can be awarded at Pass, Merit and Distinction. The learner must complete 45 graded credits to achieve the Diploma. The remaining 15 credits are ungraded and are awarded as 'Achieved'.

At validation, OCN London convenes a panel of subject specialists from HE and FE. A set of units will be validated for each Diploma and only units which form part of the Rules of Combination document may be selected and delivered by an approved centre as part of their Access to HE Diploma course. The set of units and Rules of Combination approved for any named Diploma are designed in such a way as to constitute the foundation for a clearly structured and coherent programme of study for learners, with a range and balance of content that ensures learners are prepared for successful study in Higher Education. Diplomas are revalidated every 5 years.

During the course recognition process, centres will identify the units that they intend to deliver. If the selection complies with the rules of combination for the Diploma then this pathway of units will be added to the centre's course. Changes can be made to the unit selection after course recognition by completing a unit selection amendment form.

Further guidance about course recognition and Diploma validation is sent to centres when a Diploma they have run is being revalidated or interest has been expressed in running a new course. If you would like to request this guidance then please email the Access to HE team.

Grades and Grading Standards

The graded units in an Access to HE Diploma are graded using a scheme developed by QAA. This is set out fully in the QAA Grading Scheme Handbook. The scheme has been revised with first registration using the new scheme from 1 August 2024.

The core principles of the grading scheme are that there is a common grading system across all graded Access to HE units to ensure that the process and grades awarded to learners are:

- fair and equitable
- clear and transparent
- reliable and valid
- consistent

All graded units on the Access to HE Diploma are awarded at Pass, Merit or Distinction. Grading takes place once the learner has met all the assessment criteria and therefore achieved the learning outcomes for the unit.

In order to determine which grade should be awarded for the unit, the learner receives grades that judges their performance in relation to three Grading Standards:

1. Knowledge and understanding

2. Subject specific skills

3. Transferable skills

The overall unit grade is then determined by the median of the three Grading Standards. The QAA Grading Scheme Handbook Section C, p.17 has a table that sets out the overall grade from every combination of unit grade profiles.

Each of the three grading standards has a more detailed set of component items that describes types of performance associated with the standard at Merit and Distinction level. Learners whose assessment response meets the assessment criteria but does not demonstrate the described standards are awarded a Pass.

The Grading Standards are designed to work across a range of subject areas and for units of different credit values. Consequently, each component has sub-components that must be selected to ensure that the Grading Standard is relevant to the assignment. The details of which Grading Standard components and sub-components that have been selected to grade the learner on that unit are set out on the assignment brief.

The OCN London assignment brief template has a section for the tutor to write 'what this means in the context of this assignment'. This allows the tutor to write specific guidance that links the Grading Standards with the demands of the task(s) set.

The learner's final transcript will give their overall grade for each unit. Their achievement on the Diploma is communicated by the number of credits at Pass, Merit and Distinction (e.g. 15 credits at Pass, 24 credits at Merit and 6 credits at Distinction). There is no overall grade for the Diploma.

Staffing

Access Coordinator

It is an OCN London requirement that a staff member is designated as the centre's Access Coordinator. The Access Coordinator is the main contact for OCN London regarding the centre's Access to HE provision. For example, they will be responsible for disseminating information to relevant staff at the centre and for organising and sending in documentation to ensure that the courses remain compliant with QAA and OCN London requirements regarding quality assurance and Diploma revalidation.

At centres running Diplomas in different departments or subject areas, it is important that the person appointed to the Access Coordinator role has sufficient seniority over staff teaching and course leading on the Access to HE Diploma to ensure that the tasks that need to take place in order to ensure that the course remains compliant with QAA and OCN London requirements take place in a robust and timely manner. Consequently, the Coordinator role is often taken by a Head of Department/School or Quality Manager. At centres where Diplomas are run in the same department or subject area then the Access Coordinator may have a less senior role at the provider as they will not be required to work across departments.

OCN London runs training for new Access Coordinators in the autumn term and the most recent recording of the training is available in the [Centre Resource Area.](#)

Where another member of staff or learner from the centre contacts OCN London regarding Access to HE queries, then OCN London staff members will normally copy the Coordinator into their response or redirect the query to the Coordinator to be resolved internally.

Tutors and internal moderators

Tutors on the Access to HE Diploma must have the professional competence and skills to teach and assess necessary for the mode(s) of delivery to be used, and the level of subject expertise necessary to teach and assess the units available on the Diploma(s). 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.

Each assignment brief must be approved through the internal moderation process before it is set and the results for each unit must be approved through internal moderation, normally on the basis of moderating a sample, before results are claimed at final moderation.

OCN London does not set any formal requirements for the qualifications and experience of internal moderators. The normal arrangement is that each unit has one internal moderator who is able to provide full consideration to all aspects of the internal moderation process, including confirming that the brief or work is at the appropriate level and grading is sound, and that assessment processes are compliant with the Access to HE Diploma regulations. Internal moderation may involve multiple staff on the same unit if a single person does not have the

sufficient subject and Access to HE experience to be able to make a well-informed judgement about the validity, reliability and fairness of the assessment. The Access Coordinator or a lead internal moderator may take an overview of internal moderation at the centre to ensure that decision-making is consistent and conducted in line with QAA and OCN London requirements.

Tutors and internal moderators must be allowed to participate in AVA events and activities that are essential for maintaining the quality and academic standards of the Access to HE Diploma, such as training and standardisation.

Standardisation is a key exercise to ensure that all tutors are working to common standard. Internal standardisation must take place at the centre to ensure consistency in the application of level, credit and grades within and across Diploma course teams. It is expected that this will be organised by the Access Coordinator, quality assurance staff or by course leaders. The Record of Standardisation Activities should be completed to record the outcome of standardisation. Further resources for conducting standardisation can be found on the OCN London website.

Other staff members

The provider approval process means that the following other staff members will also be involved with Access to HE delivery:
- A named quality assurance contact
- A named senior management contact
- Learning support staff, including for those with special learning needs
- Exams office staff or those responsible for systems for maintaining secure records of individual students' registration and achievement
- Information, advice and guidance staff or those with expertise to provide information, advice and guidance on HE applications and progression opportunities
- Staff involved in the processes for handling appeals and complaints
- Staff involved in providing the public information about Access to HE (e.g. marketing)
- Finance staff

The size of the centre may determine how many staff are involved in each area and whether there is crossover of roles. It is expected that the Access Coordinator will know who holds each of these roles at the centre and will be able to ensure that they have access to the relevant information that allows them to undertake their role effectively. Where contact details for particular staff members are held by OCN London then these will be updated each year through the Annual Review process and changes in-year will be communicated when necessary.

Registering learners

Learners must be registered on the course with OCN London within 6 weeks of the course start date using the QuartzWeb system.

Within 12 weeks of the course start date, or before learners submit their UCAS application (whichever is earlier), learners on a one-year course must be registered against units amounting to 60 credits from the Diploma's specified Rules of Combination and the centre's course unit list.

The charges for learner registration and late registration are on the OCN London website.

Once registered on a set of units, changes cannot be made unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Access Coordinator must contact OCN London to request that the change is made and will be sent documentation to complete. Requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Any such requests cannot be made for more than a total of 9 credits and cannot be considered after more than 26 weeks from the start date of the course.

Learners on a two-year course can be registered for 30 credits in their first year and for the remaining 30 credits at the start of the second year of their course. In this case, credits registered in the first year cannot be changed unless evidence for exceptional circumstances is provided and accepted by OCN London. Alternatively, learners may be registered for all 60 credits at the start of the first year.

Tracking sheets

Once learners have been registered on units comprising 60 credits, an OCN London tracking sheet will be generated and sent to the Access Coordinator. For learners starting September, the tracking sheets are normally generated in November or December. Learner achievement should be tracked using this tracking sheet throughout the year. Final moderation cannot take place until the final version of the tracking sheet is submitted through Quartzweb.

The tracking sheet generated after learner registration should be shared with course teams to check the accuracy of learner registrations (e.g. name, unit registrations). Any errors should be resolved following the instructions in the guidance sent with the tracking sheet. Any errors identified more than two weeks after receipt of the tracking sheet will be subject to administrative charges if OCN London has to make a database change (e.g. changing a unit registration).

Assessment and internal moderation

Learners are assessed through activities that are internally set by teaching staff and which enable the assessment criteria for a unit to be met. The tasks, assessment criteria and, for graded units, Grading Standards are set out in an assignment brief, using a standard OCN London template.

Tutors mark the work to check it is:

- authentic – the result of the learner's own performance or activity;
- sufficient – enabling assessors to make a consistent and reliable judgement;
- adequate – appropriate to the level.

The achievement decision for each assessment criterion (met or not) is recorded using a standard OCN London template.

On graded units, the tutor provides a justification for the grade awarded against each Grading Standard.

Achievement is not formally confirmed until the work has been through the internal moderation and external moderation processes and the recommended result has been confirmed by the OCN London Final Awards Board.

The Final Awards Board deliberates on the recommendations made and approves the award of credits, grades and Access to HE Diplomas. The Final Awards Board also makes decisions about referrals and special cases. OCN London issues Access to HE Diplomas and transcripts of achievement to the Centre for distribution to learners following confirmation at the Final Awards Board.

The assessment strategy

The aim of all Access to HE Diplomas is to prepare learners for higher education study. Further or more precise aims for a Diploma title may be defined based on aims identified during Diploma validation and set out in the Diploma specification. The aims of a specific course can also be influenced by local needs, links with specific higher education providers, the strengths and interests of the teaching staff and the experiences of the target learners.

The written assessment strategy defines how assessment on the course will contribute to the course achieving its aims. An effective assessment strategy will cover:

- **The role of formative and summative assessment**

Formative assessment activities should be considered as part of the assessment strategy, with an explicit link between formative assessment activities and summative assessment so that they are related and not counterposed. Formative activities should be devised that require work from learners outside of class time, but which are explicitly linked to in-class activity. Investigatory tasks, including reading challenges, should be set for learners to tackle outside of

class time, but which are carefully guided by tutors, the outcomes of which are monitored by tutors and which form part of assessments both formative and summative.

The use of controlled and uncontrolled assessment methods in summative assessment should be carefully considered. On each unit, the assessment strategy should ensure that there is the opportunity to check the authenticity of learner work, through the summative assessment method chosen (e.g. proctored exam, viva, presentation, group discussion, practical demonstration, performance) or through formative assessment (e.g. submission of draft work, classroom discussion during teaching of a topic, discussion of work submitted for summative assessment, or completion of a formative task under supervision).

- **How the programme of learning will be cohesive**

The selection of units and assessment methods should be cohesive. Learners may be taking units in a variety of subject areas that are taught by different tutors, but an effective assessment strategy will ensure that the units they take and skills they are assessed upon build on each other and prepare the learners for the intended higher education progression routes for the Diploma. A cohesive approach should be agreed for the presentation of assignment briefs, task instructions and feedback. Standardisation between tutors will support the development and implementation of a cohesive approach.

There should be coherent sequencing of formative assessment within and across units so that tasks and assignments show an explicit developmental curve in academic skills required and depth of subject knowledge expected.

Summative assessments across the Diploma should be constructed in a sequence of incremental difficulty. In particular, academic writing skills should be developed in the first term through using a range of tasks designed to prepare learners gradually to manage more substantial pieces of writing in the second and third terms.

There should be a strong focus on teaching and learning activities that help learners develop the ability to investigate, interrogate, question, compare and contrast source materials. Summative assessments should challenge learners with problem-solving tasks and not simply require learners to recycle source materials.

- **The role of diagnostic testing and individual learning goals**

It is expected that learners will undergo diagnostic testing during recruitment to ensure that they possess the skills required to succeed on a full Level 3 Access Diploma. The specific tests undertaken will depend on the selection criteria set out in the Diploma specification and the specific aims of the centre. Further testing may take place at the start of teaching a subject area to allow precise individual learning goals to be adopted to form the basis of regular review in academic tutorials. These goals should refer to an individual's specific academic skills development needs related to the requirements of the Learning Outcomes in the Diploma units.

There should be regular tutorial reviews of learner progress against the 60 credit target and individual goals determined in the initial ILP discussions.

- **Teaching and assessment of study skills**

Teaching, learning and assessment activities in study skills should be explicitly linked to the subject specific content of the Diploma. The assessment strategy will define how learners will develop skills that they need to succeed on the course and in HE through completion of ungraded study skills units or, if the skill is not explicitly covered in the content of the assessment criteria for the units selected, through the assessment methods selected for graded units or through formative assessment activities.

- **Grading requirements**

All summative assessments for graded units should be designed in order that the learner's work for the unit can be judged in relation to the three Grading Standards:

1. Knowledge and understanding
2. Subject specific skills
3. Transferable skills

It is expected that the Grading Standards will be considered during the development of the overall assessment strategy. For Grading Standard 3: Transferable Skills, all three of the components (a, b and c) must be used at least once across the Diploma. Therefore, it is advised that where the components will be used is indicated on the assessment plan to make sure the assessment is compliant with this requirement. Strategic use of the sub-components may be part of the assessment strategy to allow learners to develop particular skills and receive timely, formal feedback on their performance on that skill.

- **Digital literacy**

There is an expectation that digital literacy is embedded within the assessment strategy. This should include the digital skills needed to succeed on the Access to HE course and at Higher Education, for example, word processing, basic use of spreadsheets, presentations, conducting online research and appropriate use of generative AI in an academic context.

The **assessment plan** sets out how assessment will take place on the course for a particular learner or group of learners. It will include:
- the selection and order of units
- assessment methods for each unit (including whether the assignment brief will be newly devised by the tutor, developed from a previous brief used at the centre or from an OCN London brief)
- selection of Grading Standards components and sub-components
- deadlines
- teacher/assessor(s) and internal moderator(s) for each unit
- assessment and internal moderation timeframes

The level of detail included on the plan may vary depending on a centre's internal requirements. A template that meets the requirements listed is available for use.

The **Assessment Strategy Review Grid** is a resource that allows course teams to compare their current assessment plan against the intended strategy for the course, as part of the quality assurance processes. When quality assuring the assessment strategy, consideration should be paid to how assessors will ensure the authenticity of learner responses (e.g. use of controlled conditions, use of classroom time in the development of assessment responses, plagiarism checking tools) and whether the course will sufficiently prepare learners for higher education study in the intended progression route(s).

Plans for further quality assurance of the course throughout delivery, including internal moderation of assignment briefs and assessed work, and standardisation should be made and recorded on the assessment plan.

Further information about how to prepare and review an assessment strategy can be found in the OCN London tutor guidance on Assignment Briefs.

Assessments and assignment briefs

The assignment brief, or assessment apparatus, are the materials that are used to set out the parameters of the assessment. On all units, this will consist of:

- The assessment criteria
- The description of the task(s)
- Whether a draft submission is permitted (and if so, the arrangements for submitting a draft)
- Submission deadline(s)

It may also include other materials that are used to assess the learner, such as:
- Exam paper
- Tutor observation record
- Additional task guidance (for example, instructions for an experiment)

On graded units, the assignment brief will also include:
- Grading Standards
- Grading guidance (what the Grading Standards mean in the context of the assignment)

The OCN London Assignment Brief and Feedback Template for graded or ungraded units must be used. For some units, there are OCN London unit assessment packs available, including assignment briefs, tutor guidance and reading lists.

All assignment briefs must be internally moderated before they are approved for use, using the OCN London internal moderation forms for Access to HE.

The first time that an assignment brief is internally moderated, or if it is internally moderated after substantial revision to the brief, it must be moderated using Internal Moderation of Assignment Briefs Form A. This form takes the internal moderator through a full consideration

of the assignment brief to ensure that it meets the requirements of an Access to HE assignment brief and is fit for a particular purpose.

Once a brief has been approved through the Form A process, the next time that the same brief is used to assess a different cohort of learners, it must be internally moderated using Form B. This takes the internal moderator through the stages to check that the brief is ready for use with another cohort.

Further guidance about internal moderation is provided in the OCN London tutor guidance on Internal Moderation.

Submitting assignments

The submission regulations are set out by QAA in the Grading Scheme Handbook Section C to ensure that a fair and consistent approach to submissions is taken on all Access to HE Diploma. Learners must be given advance information about how to submit their work (e.g. in the course handbook or assignment brief) and a standard approach must be taken when learners do not comply with submission requirements.

Further guidance about how to apply these regulations in different circumstances is provided in the OCN London tutor guidance on Submission, Assessment and Feedback.

- **Draft submissions**

Draft submissions are permitted on the Access to HE Diploma, as long as they comply with the following QAA requirements:
- The tutor has specified in advance that the assignment or task can be submitted as a draft.
- The opportunity for draft submission is specified to all learners in writing before they start work on the assignment. The OCN London assignment brief template has a section that the tutor must fill in to indicate what can be submitted as a draft and the deadline for submitting a draft. If a draft submission is not permitted then this section can be deleted or replaced with 'No draft submission is permitted for this assignment'.
- Once work has been submitted as a formal submission, it cannot subsequently be declared to be a draft.
- Tutors can provide written feedback on the draft but they cannot make detailed corrections to the draft or provide information about possible grading judgements.
- Draft submission opportunities should not be the norm. The OCN London Centre Moderators expect drafts to be used on the first two graded units to support the learner's development on the course and their understanding of how to respond to an assignment brief. After the first two units, a draft may be used the first time an assessment method that has particular conventions is used (e.g. essay or report). Drafts are unlikely to be used after the first term.

- **Submission deadlines, late submissions and extensions**

It is a QAA requirement that deadlines are set for all work to be submitted for formal assessment and learners are notified in writing before the assignment is undertaken. The deadline section of the assignment brief must be completed before the assessment is given out to learners.

OCN London also expects learners to comply with the centre's processes to declare that they have submitted their own work. This can be done through signing the learner declaration on the assignment brief or (particularly if work is being submitted digitally) signing a universal learner declaration at the start of the course and then complying with the submission requirements for each unit. Learners are expected to cite their sources following standard referencing conventions where this has informed their work.

In the course handbook, providers must state their formal procedures for application for an extension to a deadline and the grounds for approval of an extension. The provider's standard written procedures for approval of extensions must be applied on all occasions when a learner requests an extension. Where an extension has been approved, the new deadline must be recorded on that learner's assignment brief.

If work is submitted after the formal deadline has passed, and no extension has been granted, then it must be marked as late.

When assessing and grading late assignments:

- If the learner has achieved all of the assessment criteria for the unit, then all grades relating to the assignment are capped at a Pass (grades awarded against the Grading Standard and the overall grade)
- If the learner has not achieved an assessment criterion, then any further opportunity for submission must be conducted through the referral process rather than the normal resubmission process. This must be approved by the external Centre Moderator.

Where a learner is granted a resubmission or referral opportunity, the same regulations for deadlines apply: the learner must be given the deadline in writing in advance, any requests for extension must go through the centre's formal procedures and any late submissions are capped at a Pass.

Assessment and feedback

In all units, learners must demonstrate the achievement of the required standard identified in the learning outcomes and assessment criteria in the formal assessment activities set out on the assignment brief.

Work should not be accepted for assessment if the learner has not followed the centre's processes for declaring that it is their own work or complied with the submission requirements set out on the assignment brief.

For each assessment criterion, the assessor will decide if the learner's evidence demonstrates what is required. Their judgement that each assessment criterion has been met will be recorded on the standard OCN London feedback template. The assessor may also annotate this decision on the learner's work.

Once all assessment criteria on the unit have been judged as met (either on original submission or resubmission), then the learner's work is graded against the three Grading Standards, using the components, sub-components and guidance set out in the assignment brief. The assessor writes a justification for the grade, which relates aspects of the submission to what is set out in the Grading Standards section of the brief for the grade awarded. One grade for each Grading Standard is given and the overall grade is determined from the median of the three Grading Standards grades. The overall grade is recorded on the assignment brief front sheet and on the tracking sheet.

The assessor should provide feedback that engages with the learner's work. It is recommended that this is provided through annotations on the work and through use of the areas of development section on the feedback template. Further guidance about how to provide feedback in the Access to HE assessment framework is provided in the OCN London tutor guidance on Submission, Assessment and Feedback.

A sample of assessed work must be internally moderated on each unit and the outcomes of internal moderation recorded on the OCN London form. OCN London expects that internal moderation for each unit should be planned in advance so that this can take place before the assessed work and results are returned to learners. It is expected that learners will receive the outcomes of assessment within two weeks of submission. However, if there are unforeseen changes to the internal moderation schedule then the return of work should not be unduly delayed. Further guidance about conducting internal moderation is provided in the OCN London tutor guidance on Internal Moderation.

- **Resubmissions**

An assessor can set a resubmission where the original submission was on time and did not meet one or more assessment criteria.

Learners are not permitted to resubmit to improve their grades. Grading only takes place once all assessment criteria for the unit are met.

Resubmissions must be managed in accordance with the QAA regulations for resubmissions, as set out in the QAA Grading Scheme Handbook Section C. In particular:

- the original submission must be returned to the student, with written feedback which explains which assessment criteria have not been achieved. In the OCN London feedback template, this is indicated by leaving the achievement of the AC column blank and by providing a summary comment to confirm which AC were not met and why. Further written feedback to support this judgement may be annotated on the learner's work.
- no feedback about the standard of the work (that is, grades) may be given at this stage. On the OCN London feedback template, no comments should be provided in the

Feedback on grading or areas for development section. It is permissible for the work to be annotated with comments, as long as these do not reference grading decisions.

- the specific requirements of a resubmission opportunity must be made clear to the learner. On the OCN London feedback template, the resubmission section must be completed with the new task(s) that the learner must complete to achieve the assessment criterion/criteria not met in the original submission and the deadline for completion. The task should be commensurate with the degree of non-achievement. Learners should not be asked to resubmit work for AC that were met on the original submission.

- successful resubmissions (i.e. where all AC are met) must be graded following the same process as used for successful submissions and unit grades are given accordingly. On the OCN London feedback template, the outcome of the resubmission (i.e. if AC are met) are recorded in the resubmission section. The assessor then proceeds to grade the whole submission (original and resubmission) and record their decisions in the feedback on grading session. If the resubmission was submitted late then all grades for the unit will be capped at a Pass.

- only one resubmission opportunity may be provided for any individual assignment (unless mitigating circumstances have been accepted). If the learner has not met the AC on resubmission then the referral process must be followed. If mitigating circumstances are accepted then one or both of the submissions will be declared invalid – any AC achieved on that submission will not be awarded and will need to be covered in a new task. All evidence must be internally moderated. Further guidance about how to handle mitigating circumstances is provided in the OCN London tutor guidance on Extenuating Circumstances.

It is OCN London's position that new tasks should be set for resubmissions, in order to ensure that a resubmitting learner does not gain an unfair advantage over other learners through the resubmission process (for example, by not making a credible attempt at the assignment in order to gain additional time to complete the work or by using another learner's feedback to improve their submission). The tasks should be considered as part of the internal moderation of the assignment brief. Where the assessor judges that it would unfairly disadvantage the resubmitting learner to set a new task, then approval to allow the learner to rework their original work must be granted by the internal moderator. This is likely to only be appropriate where an assessment criterion could not be assessed in isolation from the rest of the work, for example, it represents a stage in the production of a large project.

The original submission and resubmission should be presented for internal and external moderation.

- **Referrals**

An assessor is not permitted to set a resubmission where the original submission was late and did not meet the assessment criteria or where assessment criteria are still not met after resubmission. The only means by which a further opportunity for resubmission can be provided within the same registration period is through a referral, which must be approved by the external Centre Moderator. The maximum number of credits that can be achieved through the referral process is 15.

Assessors should be careful about use of the term 'referral' as it has a different meaning on the Access to HE Diploma than on other qualifications (where it is used interchangeably with resubmission).

The QAA regulations for referrals are set out in the [QAA Grading Scheme Handbook Section C](#).

The OCN London referral form must be completed and sent to the Centre Moderator by the Access Coordinator to agree a referral. This requires the centre to confirm that the assessor and internal moderator have agreed that:

- The learner has exhausted the submission processes that can be agreed internally (original submission was late or resubmission after an on time original submission) and has assessment criteria on the unit that have not been met.
- tutors have discussed with the learner the best way for the learner to progress
- the learner has been informed that referral does not automatically result in approval for a further submission opportunity
- the learner has been informed that the decision to allow a further opportunity to submit one or more assignments at this stage of the course is made by the external Centre Moderator on the basis of evidence presented.

The referral form asks centres to provide the following evidence to support the case for referral:

- Any special circumstances affecting the individual learner
- The particular assignment in which it is recommended to the Centre Moderator that the learner is referred and the details of the achievement in the original submissions and resubmission. This is summarised on the form. The completed assignment brief and feedback sheet and the assessed learner work (both original submission and resubmission, if referral required after resubmission) must be sent with the form. If the learner had been permitted a draft submission on the unit then the evidence of this should also be provided.
- The learner's total achievement profile up to this point on the Access to HE course that the referral is requested. The tracking sheet should be sent with the referral form. The form will also ask the centre to confirm how many other credits have previously been approved through the referral process.
- The intended referral task(s) and deadline(s).

The decision from the Centre Moderator will communicate to the Access Coordinator:

- Whether the referral opportunity is granted and can be offered to the learner.
- Whether the intended referral task(s) and deadline(s) are approved and if not, what needs to be done in order to gain approval.

Once submitted, the work is assessed following the normal processes. If the learner has met all of the assessment criteria after referral then their unit can be graded, taking into account achievement across all of the submissions. When grading the work:

- If all submissions were made on time then the work can be graded at Pass, Merit and Distinction following the usual process using the Grading Standards (under the previous

specification, referrals could only be graded at Pass but this has been changed for learners registered after 1 August 2024)

- If any of the submissions (original, resubmission or referral) was late then the grade is capped at a Pass. Therefore, it is important that learners receive a clear deadline for their referral task(s).

The referral evidence must be kept with the learner's submission and will be reviewed at final moderation.

If the assessor judges that one or more assessment criterion remain unmet after referral then this means that the learner will not achieve the unit and cannot achieve the Access to HE Diploma. In order to determine if this is an appropriate outcome of assessment the following process must be followed:

- The assessor records their judgement about why the AC are not met on the referral form and then considers whether the evidence sufficiently demonstrates what is required by the learning outcome for the unit.
- The assessor provides the assessment evidence and their judgements on the referral form to the internal moderator. The internal moderator reviews the evidence and agrees whether the assessment standard for a Pass is demonstrated (i.e. whether the learning outcomes are achieved). Their judgement is recorded on the referral form.
- The assessment evidence and referral form are sent to the external Centre Moderator for review. Achievement of the unit through demonstration of the learning outcomes and assessment criteria can only be granted by the Centre Moderator. The Centre Moderator completes the referral form to communicate their decision about the achievement of the unit.
- Where a learner cannot achieve the Diploma after a failed referral, an appeal can be made about the decision on the basis of an administrative or procedural error or extenuating circumstances not known at the time of assessment. Learners should make an appeal to their centre within two weeks of being informed of the referral outcome. If the centre's internal processes support the learner's appeal, then the centre should appeal to OCN London within four weeks of making the decision to support the appeal, if not supported, then the learner must make the appeal to OCN London themselves within four weeks of receiving the appeal outcome from their centre. See the OCN London guidance for more information about how to make an appeal.
- The Centre Moderator will report to the awards board the outcome of any referrals considered throughout the year. The awards board chair may request the referral forms for inspection before the affected learner's results are approved.

Where a referral is required late in the course and the processes cannot be completed before final moderation, then they will be considered fully at the awards board. Referrals at this time will require opportunities for learners to undertake assessments after the end of the course and have implications for staffing, resources and results that need to be fully considered and carefully managed.

- **Academic misconduct**

Work submitted for assessment must be demonstrably the learner's own and the learner must have complied with all conditions for assessment as set out on the assignment brief (e.g. declarations made in the learner declaration, compliance with exam conditions).

Academic misconduct is any action or attempted action that undermines academic integrity and may result in an unfair academic advantage or disadvantage for any member of the academic community or wider society.

Academic misconduct on the Access to HE Diploma can include:

- Plagiarism
- Collusion
- Contract Cheating
- Unacceptable use of generative AI – if any sections of their work are reproduced directly from AI generated responses, those elements must be identified by the learner

All instances of academic misconduct investigated by a centre on the Access to HE Diploma must be recorded in an Academic Misconduct Log. The specifics of each investigation should be recorded – either on an Access to HE Academic Misconduct Form or the centre's own documentation for investigating and recording misconduct or malpractice. Where there are concerns about the authenticity of learner work, the investigation may involve methods such as: the use of detection tools, comparison of learner work produced under different assessment models or requiring the learner to engage in a discussion about the work that they produced. Where an allegation of misconduct has been made, learners are advised to engage constructively with the provider's procedures, as failure to engage may be interpreted as acceptance of the allegation of an admission of guilt. The provider's procedure should include an opportunity for learners who face an allegation of misconduct to explain what has happened, and seek recourse where they consider that consideration of their case has been unfair or procedurally flawed. The OCN London Appeals Policy allows learners to appeal to OCN London once they have exhausted any appeals process at their provider.

The Academic Misconduct Log must be available for review on request by the Centre Moderator and must be submitted with the final results. It is the responsibility of the Access to HE Awards Board to consider and agree the final outcome of any academic misconduct case, including the award of any credit to learners who have been removed from the course due to misconduct.

Where academic misconduct is committed deliberately to gain an unfair advantage then this is malpractice and it is expected that the centre will apply disciplinary procedures to the learner including, but not limited to, suspension from the course, non-achievement of the unit(s) affected or a requirement to resubmit the sections of the assignment where malpractice was committed. The Academic Misconduct Form provides guidance on when such malpractice needs to be immediately reported to OCN London rather than reported in the Academic Misconduct Log to the Awards Board. The action taken by OCN London will follow the procedures set out in the OCN London Malpractice and Maladministration policy.

It is appreciated that learners on the Access to HE Diploma may be returning to education and are embarking on the qualification to improve their academic skillset. Where academic misconduct has been committed due to a lack of understanding of academic protocol or a lack of clarity in the instructions given in the assignment brief, then this must still be logged in the Academic Misconduct Log. Where a learner has been provided with guidance to develop their academic practice, lack of awareness may not be used as a defence or in mitigation of an allegation. The implications of a second or subsequent offence may be more severe than a first offence or offences that have occurred simultaneously (i.e. two or more pieces of work submitted in the same time period).

If a learner is permitted to remain on the course then the learner must be set a resubmission for any assessment criteria that have not been achieved with their own work. The resubmission should be a new task and it is advised that it is set under controlled conditions (e.g. exam or viva). If the resubmission is submitted on time and meets the assessment criteria then the work can be graded at Pass, Merit or Distinction. If the academic misconduct was committed on a resubmission then the referral process should be followed with a Referral Form sent to the external Centre Moderator.

Where academic misconduct has been committed, the Access to HE Grading Scheme does not permit the unit to be awarded with the grade capped at Pass. A resubmission must be set.

Reasonable adjustments and special considerations

A reasonable adjustment is any action that helps to reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty that places the learner at a substantial disadvantage in the assessment situation.

A Special Consideration is an access arrangement taken where a learner's performance in completing an assessment is or would be affected by unforeseen circumstances which are out of their control. This includes where a learner may be suffering from a temporary illness or condition. A Special Consideration can be requested, approved and applied both before and after an assessment has taken place.

This section explains how OCN London's [Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy](#) will be applied on the Access to HE Diploma.

As the Access to HE Diploma is an internally assessed qualification, it is expected that the reasonable adjustments and special considerations will be made in line with the centre's own relevant policies and procedures (e.g. fair assessment policy, equality and diversity policy, disability statement). These policies will have been considered during the centre approval process. If significant changes are made to the policies then updated versions should be sent to OCN London (normally during annual review when the centre is asked to confirm it remains compliant with the centre approval criteria).

The centre should keep a record of the process followed to decide to make a reasonable adjustment.

Reasonable adjustments are approved or set in place before the assessment activity takes place; they constitute an arrangement to give the learner access to the units and qualification. The work produced by the learner will be marked in the same way as the work of other assessed learners.

Awarding organisations and centres are only required by law to do what is 'reasonable' in terms of giving access. What is reasonable will depend on the individual circumstances, the impact of the disability on the individual, cost implications and the practicality and effectiveness of the adjustment. Other factors, such as the need to maintain competence should be taken into consideration.

On the Access to HE Diploma, it is expected that the centre will have asked the learner to identify any access needs when they are inducted onto the course and, in line with the centre's policy on supporting learners, the reasonable adjustments that the learner is eligible for should be agreed. Tutors on the course should be made aware where a reasonable adjustment may impact on how they intend to assess a learner.

Learners should made aware of how to apply for reasonable adjustments during the academic year. For example, the course handbook will include the process for applying for an extension due to mitigating circumstances, as an extension is a type of reasonable adjustment.

In some cases, it may be necessary to devise a different task for the learner to ensure the validity of assessment (for example, if a learner is permitted to sit an unseen test on a different

day, the validity of the assessment may be reduced if other learners have already sat the test). The task must be internally moderated before it is set.

Permission does not need to be sought from OCN London for in-year reasonable adjustments to assessment methods on the Access to HE Diploma unless it would result in the learner not completing the course by the final moderation date (guidance for tutors on how to apply for extensions beyond final moderation and other options for learners who are not on track to complete the course on time is available in the tutor resource area).

A record of the process taken to agree the reasonable adjustment in-year must be kept and available for consultation, upon request, by the Centre Moderator if there are concerns about the validity of assessment. It should be clear from the assignment brief, learner work or feedback when a reasonable adjustment has been applied. Where the reasonable adjustment takes the form of an extension, then the reason for the extension and the new deadline date must be clearly recorded on the assignment brief. The reason will normally be recorded on the brief using a broad term (e.g. 'health issues').

OCN London's Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy provides examples of the type of adjustments that can be made. Disability Rights UK provides further examples of the types of adjustments that can be made for learners with specific impairments.

A learner who is fully prepared and present for an assessment may be eligible for special consideration if:

- performance in an assessment is affected by circumstances beyond the control of the learner such as personal illness or bereavement
- the alternative assessment arrangements that were agreed in advance of the assessment prove inappropriate or inadequate
- part of the assessment has been missed or handed in late due to circumstances beyond the control of the learner.

Like reasonable adjustments, special considerations do not require permission in advance from OCN London to applied by the centre but should be clearly documented as final approval of the award of results takes place at the awards board.

Where the assessment is completed in unsupervised conditions (e.g. take-home tasks such as an essay, report or workbook), it is expected that the learner will request special considerations prior to the assignment deadline and their submission will not be formally accepted for assessment until the special consideration has been granted or not.

Where the assessment was completed in supervised conditions (e.g. exam, performance, presentation) then, if the special consideration relates to the time when the assessment was being completed and could not have been anticipated in advance, then it is expected that the learner will request special considerations within a week of the assessment taking place.

If a request is made after the deadline, then it is expected that the learner will be required to provide evidence that they could not have made the request any earlier, in addition to the evidence to support the request for special consideration.

When applying special considerations after an assessment has been completed, it is permissible to:

- Grade the work on the standard produced rather than capping grades at Pass due to late submission
- Amend the grading standard sub-component selection to incorporate a reasonable adjustment (e.g. remove the requirement to 'collaborate with others' from GS3b if the learner was absent for the group work session due to their extenuating circumstance). The grading standards used must still be compliant with the QAA Grading Scheme Handbook – this means that it may be necessary to add in a different sub-component to grade the learner's work if one is removed.
- Declare the original assessment as invalid and allow the learner to complete an alternative assessment with reasonable adjustments applied. The original assessment would not count towards the final achievement or grading of the unit but must be kept as part of the documentation demonstrating the process followed.

When applying special considerations, the centre must ensure that the learner cannot gain an unfair advantage over other learners on the course. This means that it is not permissible to:

- Apply the grading standards at a lower standard, for example, 'very good' performance cannot be graded Distinction.
- Set an alternative assessment that would invalidate the assessment method – for example, allowing the learner to have a second attempt at an 'unseen' exam paper that they have already completed.
- Allow the unit to be achieved through assessment of the learning outcomes rather than the assessment criteria (this is permissible at the end of the course through the award through extenuation process but this requires approval from OCN London before the assessment outcome is confirmed to the learner).

The outcome of the special consideration process should be subject to internal moderation. If an alternative assessment is set then this must be approved by an internal moderator before it is given to the learner. Where assessments are declared invalid through the special considerations process, the Centre Moderator must be informed at mid-year or final moderation and the evidence brought to their attention for sampling. The Centre Moderator will make the final decision on whether the unit has been assessed and graded in line with the requirements in the Grading Scheme Handbook and can be awarded. This decision will be presented and endorsed at the awards board.

External moderation

The OCN London external moderation model is designed to facilitate centres to make valid assessment decisions. An external **Centre Moderator** is appointed by OCN London to work with the centre throughout the year. They will be involved in planned engagements with the centre, designed to monitor the quality of delivery and assessment at regular intervals. The Centre Moderator, along with OCN London staff, acts as a point of contact for the Access Coordinator for any queries throughout the year relating to delivery, assessment and quality assurance.

The Centre Moderator is allocated time that can be used for training and support for the centre outside of the planned series of engagements listed below. The time allocated will depend on the number of Diplomas that are running and will be confirmed at the start of the year. Additional support from the Centre Moderator outside of the planned engagements and support time allocation can be agreed with OCN London at an additional fee.

Subject specialist moderators are appointed where the centre runs Diplomas that are outside of the Centre Moderator's specialism. The subject specialists will sample assessed work and inspect quality assurance documentation at mid-year and final moderation. They will write reports on their findings and will make a recommendation to the Centre Moderator about whether results can be approved at the awards board.

The planned engagements in the external moderation cycle are:

Annual Review

The Annual Review takes place in the autumn term. It involves an Annual Review meeting attended by the Access Coordinator, Centre Moderator and OCN London staff and the submission of documentation for review by the Centre Moderator or OCN London staff.

The documentation that must be submitted as part of the annual review process are: assessment plan for each Diploma, centre action plan and staffing information for each Diploma. Templates for these documents will be provided. The Centre Moderator will also review the centre's marketing materials for the Access to HE Diploma (e.g. website) to check that publicly facing information about the centre's Access to HE provision is accurate.

At the annual review meeting, the participants will review the previous academic year, the Centre Moderator will discuss the outcomes from their review of the documentation, and arrangements for the coming academic year will be set, including confirming the dates for moderation engagements.

A report will be sent by OCN London in the autumn term confirming the outcome from the annual review meeting and whether there are any follow-up actions that need to be completed before the end of the autumn term. Where actions remain outstanding at the end of term, additional moderation interventions or monitoring may be arranged as necessary.

Mid-year moderation

Mid-year moderation takes place once 15-21 credits on a course have been assessed and internally moderated. The mid-year moderation date will be agreed as part of the annual review process, based on the assessment plan. The date can be changed by contacting OCN London – there is a cancellation charge if less than 3 working days' notice is given.

The purpose of mid-year moderation is to provide the centre with early evaluations by external moderators about the accuracy of assessment and grading decisions and the quality of delivery, assessment and internal moderation. These evaluations are made to facilitate the centre to take action where decisions and processes are judged not to be robust and will need addressing prior to final moderation, and to support internal reviews about the quality of provision.

The evaluations are made by:

- Sampling sufficient assessment and internal moderation documentation. This is undertaken by the Centre Moderator and subject specialist moderators. The tracking sheet must be sent to the Centre Moderator three weeks prior to moderation so that an appropriate sample can be selected. In most cases, half a day will be allocated to sampling on each Diploma.
- Meeting learners. This is undertaken by the Centre Moderator in a 30 minute meeting with 2-3 learners per Diploma, discussing their experience on the course, their understanding of assessment practices and their progression plans.
- Discussing progress and moderation outcomes with the Access Coordinator. This is led by the Centre Moderator. Subject specialist moderators may be invited to contribute where the Centre Moderator judges that their input would be valuable. Similarly, the Access Coordinator can invite course staff.

It is recommended that all assignment briefs are prepared and internally moderated before mid-year moderation so that they can be considered by external moderators during sampling and early decisions can be given on briefs yet to be delivered. External moderators will not prioritise the review of briefs for units without assessed work if the internal moderation process has not been completed.

The moderation outcomes are reported verbally on the day of moderation and in written moderation reports. Where actions are set on a moderation report, then the centre will be required to produce a quality improvement plan demonstrating how the actions will be addressed before the next moderation.

The centre will be given the opportunity to participate in a summer term support meeting with the Centre Moderator and a member of the OCN London team. In some cases, this meeting will be mandatory as the Centre Moderator may require that actions on the quality improvement plan are completed by or discussed at the summer term support meeting.

Final moderation

The purpose of final moderation is to agree the award of credits and grades. Final moderation takes place when all units on the Diploma have been assessed and internally moderated. The final moderation date will be agreed as part of the annual review process, based on the assessment plan. Final moderation can be rescheduled on the centre's request if final learner results will not be ready to submit by the given deadline or there are outstanding actions on the quality improvement plan that were set to be completed by final moderation. There is a charge if final moderation is cancelled with less than 3 working days' notice or cannot be completed if actions set at mid-year moderation have not been addressed.

The learner results are submitted by uploading the final version of the results tracking sheet into Quartzweb. Where the centre would like a learner to have the opportunity to complete after the final moderation date, an extension form should be completed and uploaded.

Where a result is claimed as achieved on the uploaded results tracking sheet then the assessed work evidence must be made available for moderation, either through the sample-based or full moderation method.

Where the centre has demonstrated rigorous internal moderation practices at mid-year moderation and in the previous academic year then the centre or particular courses can have a **sample-based moderation**. This will be confirmed after mid-year moderation and the arrangements discussed in the summer term. The internal moderation documentation must be submitted with the results and a sample of assessed work will be chosen from the tracking sheet by OCN London. This sample must be provided to the moderator and they will decide, based on this sample, if results can be approved to go to the awards board. As it is possible that the moderator will ask for additional samples, then a follow-up moderation day will be arranged in advance to ensure that results can be approved before the scheduled awards board date.

Where internal moderation practices have been judged to not be sufficiently rigorous at mid-year moderation or in the previous academic year then the centre or particular courses will have a **full moderation.** Full moderation will also be conducted on new courses and courses where there are significant changes to units or staffing from the previous academic year. In full moderation, all assessed work where the result has been claimed and all internal moderation documentation is presented for moderation. Asking for all evidence ensures that, if issues are identified during the moderation, the moderator can determine the scale of response required and reduces any delays that could be caused by requesting additional samples. In full moderation, results will not be agreed for a learner if evidence is missing.

A similar sized sample will be reviewed by the moderator in sample-based and full moderation, the main difference is whether this sample is requested in advance or selected by the moderator during the moderation. Moderators are normally allocated one day for sampling. Sample-based moderation is usually conducted online, with the possibility of a follow-up visit where extra samples need to be moderated. Full moderation is usually conducted as a visit with follow-up taking place online.

All quality assurance documentation must be provided for sampling. As well as the internal moderation of assignment brief and assessed work documentation for each unit, this includes

documentation relating to the course as a whole, such as the quality improvement plan, assessment plan, assessment strategy review documentation and records of standardisation.

Where there are significant issues with assessment or quality assurance processes or data entry detected during mid-year moderation or the results submission, an **enhanced moderation** will be conducted. All assessed work and internal moderation documentation will need to be presented, in line with the requirements for a full moderation. An enhanced moderation may involve a longer moderation period (e.g. two days rather than one day) or the involvement of more than one moderator in reviewing the results and assessed work. Centres will be charged for enhanced moderation where it has resulted from a failure to respond to actions set at mid-year moderation or in the previous academic year.

The outcome from the moderation will be communicated to the centre by the Centre Moderator in a feedback meeting at the end of the moderation day. The Centre Moderator will confirm if the awards board can go ahead as planned or if further action is required. Once the Centre Moderator has approved the awards board to go ahead then written reports will be produced, which will be sent to the centre a few weeks after moderation (by the end of August for centres following the normal academic year).

Where further action is required, this may take the form of additional assessment, re-grading or internal moderation or the provision of missing evidence. The Centre Moderator and Access Coordinator may agree on a course of action that will allow learners' results to be agreed quickly, so that results can go to awards board before university deadlines. The centre can make a post-awards board appeal within 6 weeks of the awards board if they judged that a learner was unfairly affected by the change and, having addressed the action in the way originally proposed by the Centre Moderator, they judge that the result should be different from what was awarded.

Request for extension forms must be submitted on Quartzweb with the results. This form is used where a learner will not achieve 60 credits by the results submission date, but the centre would like the opportunity to support the learner to complete the full Diploma after their original end date but before the beginning of the next academic year (defined as the second Friday in September). As the results will be submitted several days prior to moderation, forms should be completed for any learner where the centre expects to be able to present 60 credits on the moderation day but there are units where the results are still yet to be confirmed at the time of results submission, as well as learners who will not complete for several weeks.

Requests for award through extenuation should also be submitted with the results and the supporting evidence (e.g. learner work) presented at final moderation.

At final moderation, the Centre Moderator will consider the requests, any supporting evidence (which, if it is extensive or sensitive, can be presented at the moderation rather than uploaded with the form) and confirm whether they will present the request at the awards board with their support. The awards board are allowed to grant extensions on the basis of extenuating circumstances, referral, administrative error or procedural error. If the Centre Moderator judges that the request has not been made on this basis then they will advise the centre about the next steps. Further guidance about making an extension request can be found in the OCN London tutor guidance on Extenuating Circumstances.

Final awards board

Credits and grades awarded to any learner will not be confirmed until the AVA Final Awards Board has met. The Final Awards Board is scheduled for around one week after the final moderation. The date may be moved depending on the outcome of final moderation.

The Board does the following:

- confirms the award (or not) of all credits and grades for all learners on all courses within a Centre;
- receives and considers requests for extensions to learner's registrations or changes to learners' final results due to Extenuating Circumstances, Award through Extenuation, Referral and Appeal (more information can be found in the QAA Grading Scheme Handbook Section E: Student results and awards boards and in the OCN London tutor guidance on Extenuating Circumstances and on Appeals);
- approves requests for aegrotat and posthumous awards;
- receives the academic misconduct log, confirms the number of academic misconduct cases dealt with during the academic year and approves the final outcome of the cases. The log will be presented by the Centre Moderator, any cases identified after final moderation must be presented as an appeal by the centre.

The Final Awards Board consists of a Centre Representative, the Centre Moderator and OCN London officers as the Chair and Secretary.

A short meeting to make arrangements for summer and following academic year normally follows the conclusion of the board. The secretary will confirm that intended learner destinations have been submitted.

After the Final Awards Board has confirmed the grades, OCN London produces an Access to HE Diploma certificate for each learner who has achieved the qualification. Learners with partial achievement have a unit transcript produced. Certificates are normally sent to the exams department at the centre within a week of the awards board and can be distributed immediately to learners – there is no requirement to wait for a specific results day. Learner results are sent to UCAS on the fourth Monday in July, who make them available to universities in the following week. Further batches of results are released to UCAS over the summer if they are not available in the original batch.

Printed certificates are sent to the centre and e-certificates will be available for download by centre staff from Quartzweb.

Where an awards board took place in June or July, OCN London will accept post-awards board appeals against the decisions made at the board up to the second Friday in September. If a learner has a university place, then it is advised that the appeal is made before the first Friday in August. If the awards board took place at a different time of year then appeals will be accepted up to 6 weeks after the board.

Learners should not make appeals directly to OCN London unless they have exhausted their centre's appeals process. Where a learner makes an appeal then they will be directed back to the Access Coordinator to follow the internal centre appeals process. Once the learner has

exhausted the internal centre appeals process, appeals must be made to OCN London within 4 weeks of receiving the outcome of the centre's appeal process. OCN London will not accept appeals from learners more than 8 weeks after the awards board unless the centre can confirm that there were delays in communicating their final results or the outcome of their internal appeal. Further guidance about making an appeal can be found on the OCN London website.

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