OCN London

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Access to HE Diploma Specification

Access to HE Diploma (Engineering)

Access to Higher Education

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.

OCN London Access to HE Diplomas are AVA devised. Centres who would like to deliver a Diploma title must apply for course recognition to be able to deliver a named Diploma. Centres confirm they meet the minimum requirements for delivery as set at Diploma validation through this process.

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 the 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 (Engineering)
Learning aim code:	40013121
Validation start date:	1 August 2022
Validation end date:	31 July 2027
SSA sector code:	
Tier 1:	4 – Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies
Tier 2:	4.1 – Engineering

Diploma aims

The Access to HE Diploma (Engineering) 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 students are well-prepared for the intellectual and practical demands of undergraduate study in Engineering.

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 an Engineering profession.

Credit values and notional learning hours

Units within the Access to HE Diploma are either 3, 6, or 9 credits. The credit value of a unit reflects the number of credits a learner may be awarded upon successful achievement of all the unit's learning outcomes. Credit values are determined through the professional judgement of AVAs as part of their validation processes. These judgements are based on notional learning hours, with one credit representing learning that can typically be achieved in 10 notional learning hours. The Access to HE Diploma represents 600 notional learning hours. Notional learning hours considers all learning which may be relevant to the achievement of the learning outcomes, including directed and private study, practical and project work, assignments and assessment time.

Credit accumulation

Learners accumulate credits towards the award of the Diploma. They do this by achieving units (valued at 3, 6 or 9 credits) through the process of assessment on an Access to HE course. Learners may also do this through the process of credit transfer and through recognition of prior learning (see page 18 for more details).

Guided learning hours

The number of direct teaching hours can vary on courses, but it is generally expected to be around 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.

Progression

Potential HE progression routes

Following successful completion of this Access to HE Diploma, learners may progress onto the following areas of degree study: Aerospace Engineering, Biomedical Engineering, Civil Engineering, Electrical and Electronic Engineering, Engineering Project Design, Mathematics, Mechanical Engineering, Motorsport Engineering, Petroleum Engineering, and a range of combined and related degrees.

Please note: 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 Aerospace Engineering, Civil Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Project Management, Quality Control and Planning, Science 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)
- William College (Progression agreement)

Further information about each agreement can be found on the OCN London website.

Marketing Access to HE courses

The promotion of an Access to HE course is a key for centres to attract potential learners to their courses. Under QAA's licensing conditions it is a condition that AVA's require centres to market recognised Access to HE courses in a clear and transparent way - including, but not limited to, providing information on appropriate entry requirements and funding status and in accordance with relevant consumer protection law and guidance.

It is a centre's responsibility to ensure all information used to promote an Access to HE course is accurate and up to date. Centres should have procedures in place for the regular review and update of course materials / webpages to ensure learners receive accurate information and have clear expectations, allowing them to make informed decisions about the course.

Information should include clear entry requirements to the Access to HE course. Learners should know what qualifications they will need on entry to the Access to HE course. Consideration should be given to the requirements set at HE where, for example learners may

need English and Maths GCSEs in order to progress onto a degree course in the subject area. Where this is the case, centres may wish to ask learners to have these on entry to the Access to HE course.

Funding an Access to HE course is an important consideration for learners when deciding whether to enter into education. Centres should provide clear information on funding available to allow learners to make informed decisions on their options. This should include potential funding options that may be available, including the Adult Skills Fund, local funding streams e.g. Mayoral Authorities (where applicable) and the Advanced Learner Loan and waiver.

Where the QAA logo and subject descriptor compliance marks are used on materials, the centre must ensure that the requirements for use as set out by QAA are met and adhered to. Further information is available in the Access to HE trademarks guidance on QAA's website.

OCN London will monitor course information on centre's websites / promotional materials regularly and will contact the centre Access to HE Coordinator should amendments be required.

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 postcode, including the Channel Islands and Isle of Man, address (including BFO) to be registered on an Access to HE Diploma. Centres must have procedures in place to assess a learners residency eligibility before they are enrolled on an Access to HE course.

Centres should provide clear information on entry requirements needed to join the Access to HE course. Consideration should be given to the requirements set at HE where, for example learners may need English and Maths GCSEs in order to progress onto a degree course in the subject area. Where this is the case, centres may wish to ask learners to have these on entry to the Access to HE course.

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. Centres should have a clear, fair and explicit admissions process, which is consistently applied and appropriate to the needs and characteristics of any specified target groups.

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. Centres should have a clear admissions criterion which considers each learner's potential ability to meet the demands of the course. 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.

Where a learner is not accepted onto an Access to HE course, options of alternative courses that may suit their needs should be discussed where possible.

Further information can be found in QAA's Principles for admission to Access to HE Diplomas

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 ensure that no discrimination occurs in relation to all of the protected characteristics, in line with the relevant provisions of the Equality Act 2010.

Diploma resources

The minimum required resources for this Diploma include:

- A lab for the delivery of the practical elements of the engineering and science units.
- 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 where the Diploma is delivered over more than one site at the college.

Learner support, advice and guidance

It is expected that learners will access to the following on course:

- Clear information, advice, and guidance on entry to the course to ensure transparent expectations and alignment to their needs.
- Learner handbooks that explain the requirements and assessment regulations including grading for the Access to HE Diploma.
- Tutorial support and/or advice and guidance on making UCAS / HE applications, including preparation for the selection process where applicable.
- Additional learner support for:
  - learners with disabilities and/or learning difficulties and arrangements for making reasonable adjustments
  - learners with English as a second language
- Measures in place to support learners who experience ongoing difficulties whilst on course.
- The opportunity to provide feedback during and at the end of the course.

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 in the Access to HE centre resource area of 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.

- 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 must include a controlled assessment in timed conditions e.g. formal written exam, practical assessment, presentation.

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

The following rules of combination outlines the combination of units that must be achieved to gain the Access to HE qualification.

To be awarded the Access to Higher Education Diploma (Engineering) 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	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 mandatory units 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
CBB848	Practical Scientific Project **(Graded)**	L3	6

Optional units - Study skills (ungraded)

Learners must complete **9 credits** selected from the optional study skills units below.

Unit ID	Unit Name	Level	Credits
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
CBA794	Reading and Comprehension of Scientific Writing	L3	3
CBB805	Speaking and Listening Skills	L3	3
CBR186	Spreadsheets	L3	3
CBB428	Use and Comprehension of Numerical Data	L3	3
CBA788	Using Information Technology	L3	3
CBA855	Writing and Delivering Seminar Papers	L3	3
CBA856	Writing Standard English	L3	3

Optional units - Subject specific (graded)

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

Engineering			
Unit ID	**Unit Name**	**Level**	**Credits**
CBB624	Advanced Digital Electronics*	L3	3
CBB625	Alternating Potential Difference and Currents	L3	3
CBB626	Basic Electronic Skills and Measurements	L3	3
CBB627	Capacitors and Capacitance	L3	3
CBB640	Electrical Circuit Theory	L3	3
CBB639	Engineering Materials	L3	3
CBB628	Introduction to Digital and Microelectronics*	L3	3
CBB037	Manual and Machine Tools	L3	3

CBB629	Power Supplies	L3	3
CBB051	Semiconductors Diodes and Transistors	L3	3

Mathematics			
Unit ID	**Unit Name**	**Level**	**Credits**
CBB842	Analytical Techniques for Scientific Data*	L3	6
CBB672	Applications of Trigonometry*	L3	3
CBB604	Arithmetic and Algebraic Methods	L3	3
CBB599	Calculus*	L3	6
CBB601	Data Analysis & Probability*	L3	3
CBB600	Data Analysis and Descriptive Statistics*	L3	3
CBB597	Differentiation and Integration*	L3	3
CBB630	Applied Mathematics for Engineering	L3	3
CBB595	Functions and Graphs	L3	3
CBB846	Further Algebra	L3	3
CBB847	Handling Scientific Data*	L3	3
CBB603	Numerical Methods	L3	3
CBB673	The Algebra of Trigonometry*	L3	3
CBB605	Trigonometry*	L3	3
CBB606	Vectors and Matrices	L3	3

Computing			
Unit ID	**Unit Name**	**Level**	**Credits**
AAY487	Databases	L3	3
CBR087	Image Manipulation	L3	3
CBA867	Introduction to Computer Aided Design	L3	3
CBB035	Introduction to Computer Aided Manufacture	L3	3
CBR164	Programming Fundamentals	L3	6
CBB501	Programming Methods	L3	3
CBR165	Visual Programming	L3	3

Science			
Unit ID	**Unit Name**	**Level**	**Credits**
CBB616	Astrophysics	L3	3
CBB566	Atomic Physics	L3	3
CBB577	Chemical Bonding*	L3	3
CBB578	Chemical Energetics	L3	3
CBB579	Chemical Kinetics	L3	3
CBB567	Electricity	L3	3
CBB568	Electric and Magnetic Fields*	L3	3
CBB028	Fields in Physics*	L3	3
CBB580	Matter: Particles and Formulae*	L3	3
CBB569	Motion, Energy and Forces	L3	3
CBB583	Organic Chemistry – Aliphatic Compounds	L3	3
CBB585	Organic Chemistry – Reactions and Mechanisms	L3	3

CBB570	Properties of Matter	L3	3
CBB589	Redox Reactions	L3	3
CBB571	Thermal Properties of Matter	L3	3
CBB575	The Mole Concept	L3	3
CBB593	Transition Metals	L3	3
CBB572	Waves	L3	3

Sound Engineering			
Unit ID	**Unit Name**	**Level**	**Credits**
CBB641	Audio and MIDI Sequencing	L3	3
CBB642	Principles of Digital Audio	L3	3
CBR103	Sound for Film and Video Production	L3	3
CBB643	Synthesiser and Sampler Systems	L3	3

Video Production			
Unit ID	**Unit Name**	**Level**	**Credits**
CBR033	Digital Editing for Moving Images	L3	6
CBR099	Digital Sound and Image Capture	L3	6

Additional information

Credit transfer

Where learners have achieved credits from another Access to HE Diploma (either awarded by OCN London or another AVA), the credits already achieved may be transferred if they come from units that are acceptable for the Diploma the learner is transferring to.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Learners who have already achieved learning either through experience or through previously certificated achievement can apply for exemption through recognition of prior learning (RPL). The QAA Access to HE Diploma Specification allow up to 30 credits to be considered through the RPL process.

Accreditation of prior certificated learning is the process by which previously assessed and certificated learning is recognised as meeting the requirements of one or more units of a named Diploma. Because this learning has already been certificated, no additional credit is awarded. Instead, the student is exempted from completing units to a value that the AVA judges to be equivalent.

Accreditation of prior experiential learning is the process by which non-certificated learning gained through a range of experiences is recognised as meeting the requirements of one or more units of a named Diploma. The student provides evidence of their prior experience, which is assessed against the learning outcomes and assessment criteria of the relevant unit(s). If the evidence meets these requirements, the unit is awarded and the student receives the associated credit. Units achieved through APEL are not graded.

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).

Qualifications that are being taken concurrently with the Access to HE Diploma. e.g. GCSEs may not be used to support an application for RPL.

Requests for claiming achievement through credit transfer or RPL should be considered by the centre at the point of initial assessment.

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:
Advanced Digital Electronics	Introduction to Digital and Microelectronics
Analytical Techniques for Scientific Data	Handling Scientific Date
Calculus	Differentiation and Integration
Chemical Bonding	Matter: Particles and Formulae
Data Analysis and Descriptive Statistics	Data Analysis and Probability
Electric and Magnetic Fields	Fields in Physics
Trigonometry	Applications of Trigonometry The Algebra of Trigonometry

Guidance and support materials

OCN London devised support materials, including assignment briefs are available for the following units within this Diploma:

Study skills (ungraded)

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

Subject specific (graded)

- Algebra
- Atomic Physics
- Chemical Kinetics
- Electricity
- Fields in Physics
- Matter: Particles and Formulae
- Motion, Energy and Forces
- Numerical Methods
- Practical Scientific Project
- The Mole Concept
- Thermal Properties of Matter
- Waves

Online learning materials

Online learning content is available for all study skills units, along with a selection of subject specific units across most Diploma titles. These materials can be incorporated into a blended delivery model, offering greater flexibility for both learners and teaching staff. Further information is available on the OCN London website.

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).