

Access to Higher Education Diploma

Course Handbook

This course handbook will become a useful source of information for you throughout the duration of your Access course.

It contains information about your qualification, how your assignments are marked and graded, who to contact, and the rules and regulations which govern our Access to HE Diplomas.

The handbook also includes information about our online platform as well as what we expect from you during your studies.

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Welcome

Welcome to your Access to Higher Education Diploma.

Your course is designed to equip you with the skills and knowledge required to progress to Higher Education studies at university or college.

The course team all have extensive experience, and a wealth of knowledge about their different subject areas, ensuring that you have the best learning experience during your time with us.

We work closely with our awarding organisation to ensure that your study materials are current and that your assignments meet the academic requirements.

This course offers you many exciting opportunities for your further studies and I hope that your experience with us will be fulfilling and rewarding.

Good luck!

Wendy Lomas

Director of Access to HE Diplomas

Your Access to HE Diploma

The Access to HE Diploma is a nationally recognised level 3 qualification, regulated by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA). In order to achieve the Access to HE Diploma you must achieve:

- 60 credits overall
- 45 graded credits at Level 3 from units concerned with academic subject content
- Academic units are those whose content is drawn from the knowledge and skills of subjects that are directly related to the subject of the named Diploma(s) in which the unit will be used.
- 15 ungraded credits at Level 3

As part of our approval process with the awarding organisation (Open College Network West Midlands), the rules of combination for each diploma have been checked and agreed. This is to ensure that the units that appear in your programme provide you with the correct combination of graded and ungraded units, and enable you to achieve the 60 credits required for the full diploma.

Ungraded units

The focus of these units is to develop the study skills you are going to need to help you to complete your Access programme, as well as being skills that you need to develop in preparation for study at university. These are completed predominantly at the beginning of your programme. There are no grades applied to these units – you will therefore either Pass or Refer.

Some of the ungraded units included in your Diploma are subject related to enable you to develop your academic writing skills before you progress to the graded units.

Graded units

These are subject specific units and each will attract either 3 or 6 credits. On the first page of the study materials for these units it will state that the unit is graded and how many credits it is worth. These units are graded as either Pass, Merit or Distinction. The grade descriptors that are used for marking purposes can also be found on this page. You will therefore be able to see what you need to do in order to achieve a Merit or Distinction grade. Should your preferred university require you to achieve a certain number of credits at Merit or Distinction, it is these units where you need to focus your attention on achieving the higher grades required.

You will find more information about assessment and grading later in this handbook.

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Course duration

How long it takes you to complete your Access course really depends upon how much time you are able to dedicate to your studies. The programmes are designed to give you the flexibility to study at times that are suitable for you, and to fit your studies around your other commitments. The maximum time you have to complete your Diploma is outlined in your Individual Learning Plan (ILP). The minimum time you can complete your Access course is six months.

Individual Learning Plan (ILP)

All students are provided with an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) for their course. Your ILP can be found in the blue banner at the top of the screen or under 'course statistics' in the main menu on your dashboard.

The ILP outlines:

- Your course title
- The title and credit value of each of your units of study
- The start date, end date and duration of each of your units of study – this includes the submission date for each of your assignments
- Guided Learning Hours for each unit
- Your course end date

This document is provided so that you have clearly defined targets for your studies to help you to achieve your goals.

The assignment submission deadlines must be adhered to.

If for any reason you believe that you may be late submitting an assignment you should request an extension following the guidelines given later in this handbook. A late submission of an assignment may result in your grade being capped at a Pass (graded units only).

ACCESS TO HE UNIT TITLE	UNIT NATIONAL CODE	CREDIT	START DATE	END DATE	LENGTH	GLH	Assignment
Preparing for Success	SACIAG	0	02/09/2018	14/10/2018	42 days	10	→ STUDYING
Preparing to Study	HC73MR030U	3	14/10/2018	25/11/2018	42 days	20	NOT STUDYING
Academic Writing Skills	HB73MR004U	3	25/11/2018	06/01/2019	42 days	20	NOT STUDYING
Preparing a Written Assignment	HC73MR028U	3	06/01/2019	17/02/2019	42 days	20	NOT STUDYING
Cell Biology	RH33MR041U	6	17/02/2019	31/03/2019	42 days	20	NOT STUDYING
The History of the National Health Service	PA13MR085	3	31/03/2019	12/05/2019	42 days	20	NOT STUDYING
Human Nutrition and the Digestive System	RH33MR046	3	12/05/2019	23/06/2019	42 days	20	NOT STUDYING
The Roles and Responsibilities of the Registered Nurse	PH13MR001	3	23/06/2019	04/08/2019	42 days	20	NOT STUDYING
Introduction to Psychology	PK13MR043	3	04/08/2019	15/09/2019	42 days	20	NOT STUDYING
Human Reproduction, Growth and Development	RH33MR047	3	15/09/2019	27/10/2019	42 days	20	NOT STUDYING
Approaches to Health	PA13MR080	3	27/10/2019	08/12/2019	42 days	20	NOT STUDYING
The Human Muscular and Skeletal Systems	RH33MR051	3	08/12/2019	19/01/2020	42 days	20	NOT STUDYING
Social Factors in Health and Social Care	EE23MR069	3	19/01/2020	01/03/2020	42 days	20	NOT STUDYING
The Brain and Nervous System (Psychology)	RH43MR013	3	01/03/2020	12/04/2020	42 days	20	NOT STUDYING
The Human Endocrine and Nervous Systems	RH33MR050	3	12/04/2020	24/05/2020	42 days	20	NOT STUDYING
Inequalities in Health and Illness	PA13MR084	3	24/05/2020	05/07/2020	42 days	20	NOT STUDYING
Human Immunity	RH33MR045	3	05/07/2020	16/08/2020	42 days	20	NOT STUDYING
Poverty and Health	EE23MR068	3	16/08/2020	27/09/2020	42 days	20	NOT STUDYING
Study Skills Portfolio Building	SACSS	0	27/09/2020	08/11/2020	42 days	10	NOT STUDYING
Human Disease and Prevention	RH33MR044	3	08/11/2020	20/12/2020	42 days	20	NOT STUDYING
Equality and Diversity within Healthcare	PA13MR081	3	20/12/2020	31/01/2021	42 days	20	NOT STUDYING

Completing your units of study

Your course has been put together in a specific order in collaboration with our awarding organisation, a number of universities and representatives of the professions that you may wish to enter. You will therefore need to work through the units in the order that they appear.

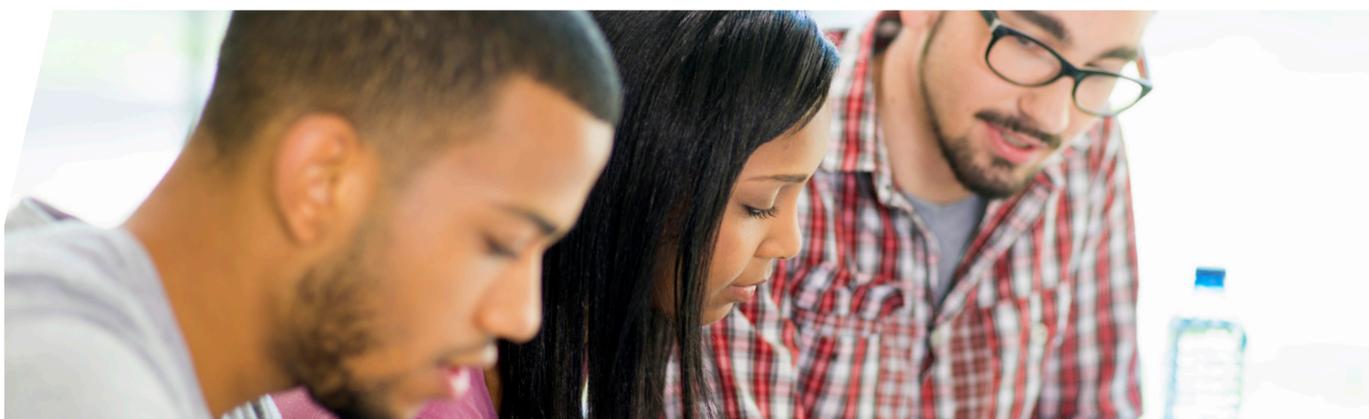
We often get asked if it is important to complete the first few units of your Access course as students would rather focus on the subject specific units. It is extremely important that these units are completed as they contribute to the 15 credits of ungraded units that you need in order to achieve your overall qualification; therefore, they are mandatory. Also, the purpose of these units is to develop the study skills you are going to need throughout your Access programme but also when you get to university. Without these skills you will find completing the graded/subject specific units later in your Access course challenging.

Next steps

During your time with us, it is likely that you will complete your university applications in readiness to continue your education once you have achieved your Access to HE Diploma. Therefore, your next steps will be to prepare to start your degree course.

If, by the time you have achieved your Access to HE Diploma, you have not yet applied to university then this is the next step for you to be considering.

Most university applications are made via UCAS and we will support you with this process. Each year we issue our UCAS Applications Guide. The information contained within this guide will support you with the completion of your application form. The guide will be posted to your account and you will find it at the top of the page where you access your study materials and assignments, in the red box. If you decide to apply for your further studies directly to the university or college and require an academic reference from us then you will need to request this from the Access to HE Manager.

The UCAS logo is displayed in a large, bold, black font. The letter 'A' is stylized with a red triangle pointing upwards, forming the top of the letter.



Completing your course

Once your final unit has been marked and graded, your assignments are subject to final moderation before your grades can be considered as final. Your final grades must then be presented to the Final Assessment Board for ratification. We can then order your certificate.

This entire process can take up to six weeks to complete, so if you are intending to start your degree in September then you must have your Access course complete by the end of June of the same year. For example, if you intend to start your university degree in September 2020 then you must have your Access course **complete by 30 June 2020 at the latest.**

If the course end date that is given in your ILP is before 30 June 2020 then you must have your course complete by the set end date stated in your ILP.

To ensure that you meet this deadline you will need to plan your time carefully and, in most cases, you will need to work ahead of the deadlines in your ILP. Put yourself a study plan together that gives you deadlines that you can be working towards, for example, if you have 12 units left to complete in the next 120 days then you need to be submitting 1 assignment for marking every 10 days as a minimum.

Access to HE Course Team

We have a dedicated team for our Access courses who are here to provide you with the support and guidance that you will need to successfully complete your qualification. In 'support contacts' when you open a new message in your course account, you will find a number of contacts listed. The responsibilities of the course team are outlined below including who you should contact with different types of queries.

Access to HE Manager

The Access to HE Manager is responsible for academic leadership, and the strategic and day-to-day management of the courses. In addition, the Manager acts as the main contact between our centre and the awarding organisation for all programme related issues including attendance at Final Assessment Boards and other course management meetings.

You should contact the Manager with any general queries about your course, if you are experiencing problems or difficulties, or have concerns or complaints that you wish you raise. All queries relating to UCAS or university applications should also be sent to the Manager.

Tutors/assessors

Unit tutors/assessors are qualified and experienced scientists, healthcare workers, psychologists, sociologists and other professionals who are responsible for guiding and supporting your unit specific learning. They are also qualified tutors and teachers who are responsible for marking your assignments and providing you with feedback about your work. If you are having difficulties with an assignment, or with understanding the content of your study materials, you should use the messaging system to contact your unit assessor. They will be able to advise you accordingly. You should contact your unit assessor if you require clarification or guidance about a particular unit or assignment, including any feedback that you may have been given about your work.

Please note: due to the nature of Access courses your assessor will change depending on the subject area and unit, so it won't necessarily be the same person throughout your entire course. You will only be able to contact your assessor for your next unit once your current assignment has been marked and has passed. At this point your assessor contact details will automatically update. You are advised to check who your current unit assessor is before sending any draft assignments for review or contacting your assessor with queries about a particular unit; this is to ensure that you are sending it to the right person.

Student Support Team

We have a dedicated Access to HE student support team who can provide you with guidance a number of general areas relating to your course. For example, should you require an extension for your assignment, advice about certification or queries of a general nature. The student support team will also contact you periodically to check on your progress and to make sure that your studies are going to plan.



Payments Support

For all queries relating to your course payments you need to use this contact.

Technical Support

If you need guidance about how to use the system, or if you are experiencing technical difficulties, then you will need to contact Technical Support for assistance. If you are experiencing technical problems then you need to include as much detail as possible about the problem and attach a screen shot to your message. This will help us to locate the problem and get it resolved more quickly for you.

However, there is guidance in this handbook (p13-14) that you should refer to in the first instance as this should resolve most technical issues without the need for you to contact Technical Support.

Certification Support

All queries relating to certification should be sent to either the Access to HE Student Support Team or to the Access to HE Manager. You should not use the Certification Support contact in your list as this will help to avoid delays with your queries being dealt with.

Programme Administrator

If you have any other queries, then you can contact the Programme Administrator. However, you are advised to contact either the Access to HE Student Support Team or to the Access to HE Manager initially as this will help to avoid delays with your queries being dealt with.

How to contact the course team

All contact with the Access to HE Manager, your unit tutors/assessors and other support contacts must be via the messaging system on your course account in the first instance. This is to ensure that all messages are tracked and dealt with in case of sickness or holidays.

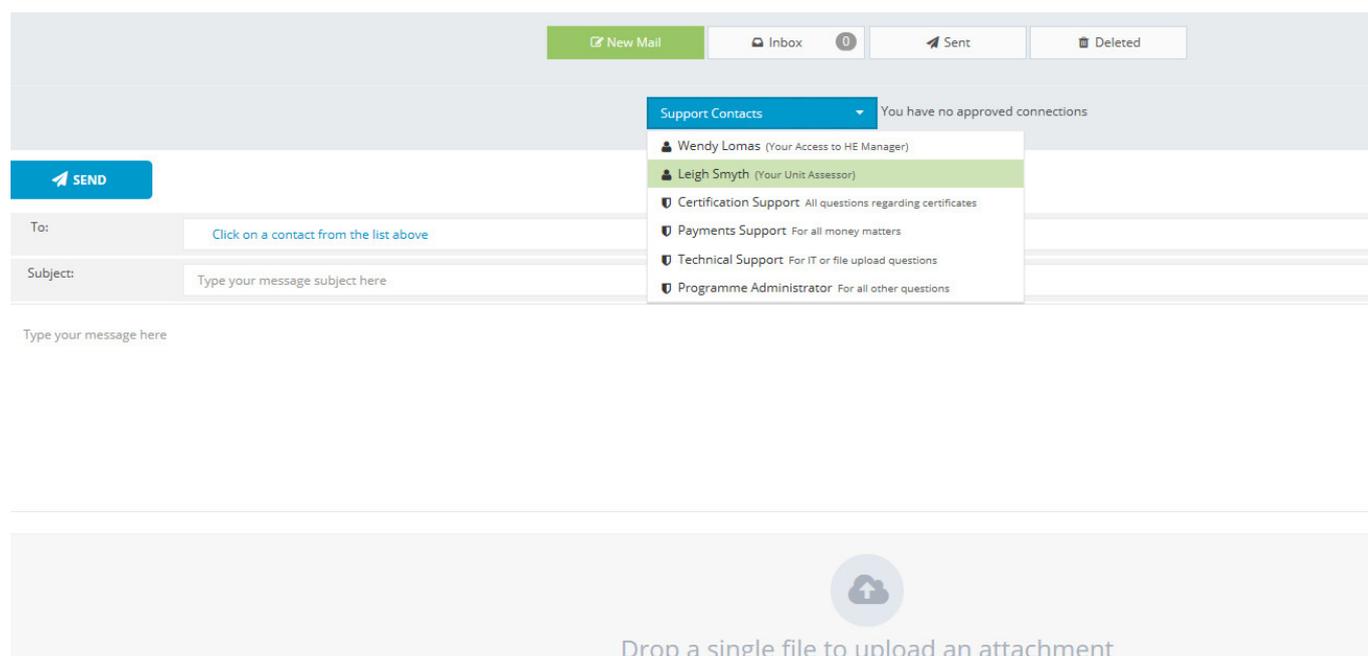
The only exception is the Access to HE Student Support Team who can be contacted using our dedicated email address. This is: A2HESupport@epearl.co.uk

When contacting the A2HESupport email address please include your full name and learner reference number.

All staff have a good understanding of our Safeguarding, Prevent, and Health & Safety policies and procedures and have been trained to deal with difficult and sensitive situations. If you feel that you need to talk to someone about these areas then please contact the Student Support Team in confidence. Further information about Safeguarding, Prevent, and Health & Safety can be found on pages 21 and 22 of this handbook.

Using the messaging system

The messaging system works in the same way as email. You can send a new message, contact other students on your course and reply to messages received.



If you wish to send a message, open a new mail and go to support contacts. Here you will find listed the Access to HE Manager, your current unit assessor, and the other support contacts detailed on page 9 of this handbook. Simply select the relevant person that you wish to contact and send them a message adding the unit title and number in the subject line.

If you do not have all of the support contacts listed in the image above, then you do not need to be concerned. Simply contact the Access to HE Student Support Team or the Access to HE Manager with your query and they will be able to advise you.

Please remember to be clear and courteous at all times when using the messaging system.

When uploading attachments to the messaging system you will only be able to attach one document per message. If you wish to send a spreadsheet or presentation document via a message then you are also advised to save your document as a pdf file to ensure that it uploads to the message successfully. Word (or similar) documents should upload to messages without any difficulty.

Please note: all messages to your course team are replied to within 48-72 hours.

An Introduction to the System

If you click on 'courses' in the menu and select your Access to HE Diploma this will take you to your units of study.



You will find detailed information about your course in our **Access to HE Course Handbook**. Please make time to read this as it explains how your course is structured, marked and graded, along with details that will help you throughout your studies.

Please also make time to read our **UCAS 2020 Applications Guide**. This will help you to prepare your UCAS application. It also contains all important dates and critical deadlines for those intending to start university in 2020, including when you will need to have your Access course complete.



Access to Higher Education Course Handbook
Click to view/download PDF
📄 [5.1MB]



UCAS 2020 Applications
Click to view/download PDF
📄 [203KB]

Unit	Study Materials	Extended Learning	Assignment	Unit Debate	Assessor Feedback	Unit Author	Status
Unit 1: Preparing for Success							Studying
Unit 2: Preparing to Study							

Against each unit of study in your course, you will find buttons for each of the following:

- **Study materials**
- **Extended learning** – glossary of terms, reading lists, other resources.
- **Assignment** – this is your unit assignment. ***You should not attempt to complete any assignment without first working through the study materials.***
- **Debate** – these are included to allow you to discuss the subject matter with your fellow students and to share ideas. When posting comments to debates you must respect the views of others and not use inappropriate language of any kind. All debates are monitored on a regular basis – if the comments being posted are deemed to be inappropriate and in contravention of our student code of conduct, we reserve the right to remove the debate function from your course.
- **Assessor feedback** – when a completed assignment has been marked you can access the feedback from your assessor here.
- **Unit author** – this will provide a short biography of the author of the study materials for this assignment. Please note that the unit author is not necessarily your tutor for this unit.

Assignments

You will only be able to submit one assignment at a time and only when all previous units have been marked and have passed. If you have a unit that is currently waiting to be marked, you will need to wait until this has passed before you can submit your next assignment.

1 Preparing for Success

1

Section 1: Assignment

1 QUESTION

ANSWER

Write a summary about your future Higher Education studies by answering the following questions.

- a) What do you think you would like to study at university?
- b) Where would you like to study?
- c) When you would like to start your university degree?
- d) What career path are you interested in?

GUIDANCE

You must answer all four of these questions within your summary.

Your summary needs to be between 200 and 300 words in length.



[View Assessment Criteria](#)

MY ANSWER TO QUESTION 1

Start typing your answer to this question here

Word Count: 0

Optional supporting evidence: [UPLOAD](#) 0

Sending draft assignments to your Tutor/Assessor

You will need to use the messaging system to send draft assignments to your assessors for review.

If you wish to send your assessor a word (or similar) document then you should be able to upload this straight away to your message using the 'upload document' function.

If you wish to send a spreadsheet or presentation slides then you will need to save these as a pdf file. You can then attach the pdf to your message.

If you wish to send a video of your presentation then follow the instructions below regarding video files.

Uploading your assignments to the system for submission

Where your assignment comprises short answer questions then we recommend that you write your responses in the text boxes.

Where the assignment brief asks you to produce a report, essay, presentation, journal article etc. we recommend that you produce your work in a Word (or similar) document and upload this to the system. If you use the text box for larger assignments then all formatting will be lost and it can make it difficult to read and understand.

If you have problems submitting your assignments then review the following in the first instance.

1. Go back through the study materials and make sure that all multiple-choice questions have been answered correctly.
2. Make sure that all 'challenges' such as maths, English, resilience etc. have been completed in full.
3. If you have uploaded files to your assignment, write something in the text box, for example, "see attached".

If you have problems uploading documents to your assignment then try the following:

- a. Ensure that your file name only includes letters, words and spaces. Do not use characters, symbols or hyphens in your document names. Avoid using +_)(*&^%\$£"- etc. at all times.
- b. Make sure that your file name is short – the system will not accept lengthy document names.
- c. Try to avoid using numbers in your document names.
- d. Try saving your document as a pdf file and then try to upload.

Video files

You will need to produce video files for any assignment that requires you to carry out/deliver a presentation. To avoid issues with trying to upload large files to the system please use the following instructions.

1. Go to YouTube.
2. Set up an account.
3. Upload the video file to your account.
4. You can define the video as Private, Unlisted or Listed. You must ***select Unlisted*** for your course video files.
5. Once you have done this you need to generate a web link for the video by clicking on the 'share' button on the video's web page. Doing this means that the video can be stored on YouTube and shared with people that you send a link to. It will not appear in public YouTube search results.
6. The link can then be used in the following ways:
 - a. Send this in a message to your assessor if you wish to send them a draft assignment for review.
 - b. Copy the link into the text box in the relevant question in your assignment – you can then submit this for marking without the need to upload the actual video file to your assignment.

DO NOT delete any of your course video files or close your YouTube account until you have completed your course and received your certificate. Your video files will be needed during the final moderation process before your results can be finalised.



Assessment

Assessment activities have been created to cover the learning outcomes for each unit and are designed to test your knowledge, understanding and skills. The range of assessment activities may include:

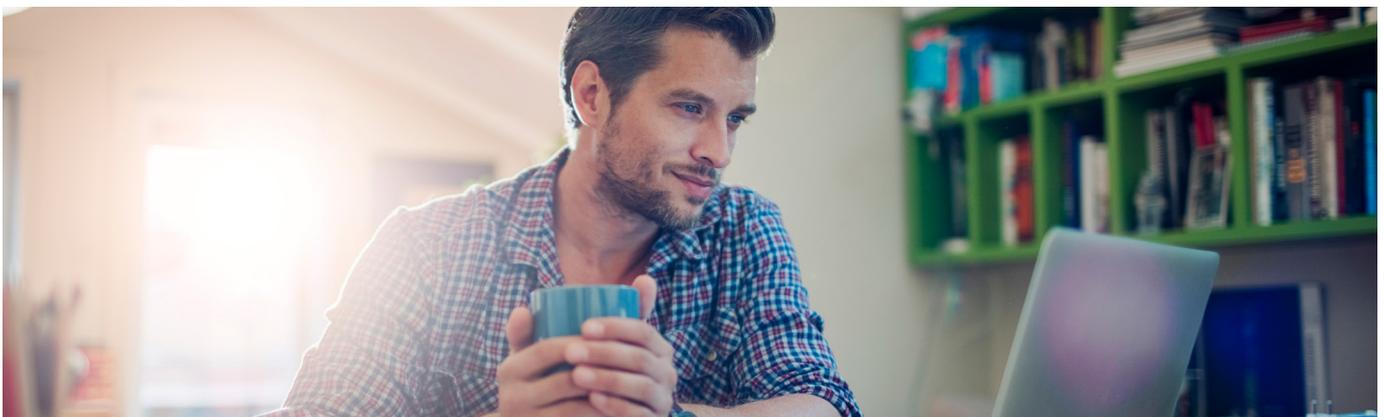
- Essay
- Academic report
- Presentation
- Online timed tests
- Case study
- Research report
- Journal article

Assessment is undertaken at the end of each unit. For each unit there is an assignment brief which outlines:

- The task(s) you are required to complete.
- The word or time limit available to you.
- The assessment criteria that each task(s) relate to.
- The grade descriptors (statements concerning what is expected for Merit and Distinction grades) being used when marking and grading your work. These only apply to your graded units.

Once you have submitted an assignment for marking you will receive feedback from the relevant unit assessor within our standard turnaround time of 3-5 working days.

The submission date by which you need to have completed and submitted each of your assignments will show on your dashboard and in your ILP. It is imperative that you meet these deadlines as late submissions can result in your grade being capped at a Pass (graded units only).



Ungraded units

You will achieve a Pass or Refer for these units. A successful submission (pass) for an ungraded unit will be classed as 'Achieved'. If you refer any of the assignments for an ungraded unit you will only be permitted to resubmit one more attempt and you will only be able to amend the part of the assignment that you have not achieved and not the entire piece of work. Should you receive a referral, you may wish to contact your unit assessor to gain clarification of the feedback they have provided prior to amending and resubmitting your work.

You are permitted to email a draft of your ungraded unit assignments to your assessor in order to gain feedback before you submit your final piece of work for marking. You will only be able to send a draft assignment for review where the assignment brief states that this is permitted. You can use the 'upload' document functionality within the messaging system for this purpose.

For some of the ungraded units you will find that not all of the assessment criteria for the unit are included within the actual assignment brief. This has been done for a reason. You should work through your study materials in their entirety before starting any of these assignments as you will need the information that they contain throughout your course. When it comes to completing the assignment, you should answer only what you are asked to do. Put simply, just follow the instructions given in the assignment brief for each unit.

Once you have had the ungraded units marked you may notice that 'your progress' or your e-portfolio will show some of them as only partially achieved. Not all of the assessment criteria for these units are completed at the beginning of your course. You will come back to these units later on and complete the remaining assessment criteria. Your progress/e-portfolio will update to 'achieved' once you have passed the relevant assignment. This is nothing to be concerned about and it will not affect the completion of your qualification.

Graded units

These attract either a Pass, Merit or Distinction grade. The grade descriptors that are used for marking purposes are clearly visible on the first page of the study materials for each unit and again with the assignment brief. If you need to achieve Merits or Distinctions in order to meet the entry requirements for university you will need to refer to the grade descriptors so that you know what you will need to do to achieve the higher grades. You are also permitted to contact your unit assessor to gain clarification and guidance before you start work on the assignment.

When you submit your assignment for a graded unit, it will achieve either a Pass, Merit or Distinction grade. Once the grade has been awarded it cannot be changed. You are not permitted to resubmit work until you achieve the grade you need for university. You must therefore work with your unit assessors so that you fully understand what you need to do in order to achieve the required grades.

If you refer a graded unit assignment no credit can be awarded, it is not eligible for grading and the grading process will not be applied. You will only be permitted to resubmit one more attempt and you will also only be able to amend the part of the assignment that you have not achieved and not the entire piece of work. It is therefore imperative that you do not submit any assignments until you have worked through all of the study materials for the unit and fully understand the requirements of the assignment brief. In the case of a referral, you may wish to contact your unit assessor to gain clarification of the feedback they have provided before making any changes to your original work and resubmitting it for marking. Providing that the first attempt was submitted on time, and that the resubmission is successful, you will be awarded with a Pass, Merit or Distinction grade.

If you submit a graded unit assignment after the set deadline your grade will be capped at a Pass unless there are extenuating circumstances that resulted in the late submission.

All units

You will only be able to send a draft of your work to your unit assessor if the assignment brief states that you are permitted to do so. You can use the 'upload' document functionality within the messaging system for this purpose. This option will not apply to all units in your course due to qualification rules, so you must check each assignment brief carefully.

Any feedback given about draft assignments for graded units will not be grade specific; the feedback cannot provide information about predicted grade indicators or other detailed information about possible grading judgements. Your assessors can only provide you with feedback about your draft and engage in dialogue of a general kind that allows you to see how you might develop your response to the assignment brief.

If you resubmit your work but at the second attempt it has still not achieved a Pass, then a formal request for another opportunity to submit must be made in writing to the Access to HE Manager. Making this request does not automatically result in a second resubmission being granted. All requests are subject to approval by both the Access to HE Manager and the awarding organisation. These requests can only be approved for a maximum of 15 credits and grades for these units will be capped at a Pass. If you find yourself in this position you must message the Access to HE Manager using the messaging system to request another opportunity to submit your assignment before you start to make any changes to your work.



Word limits

All assignment briefs will specify the maximum length/size of work that is required from you. This will be in the form of word or time limits. These limits must be adhered to and your assignments will clearly state the maximum words or time available. Please remember that elements of a written assignment such as appendices, bibliography, references list, contents page and title page are not included in the word count.

Often students feel that they cannot possibly do justice to a subject within the limit that has been set. However, the skill that you need to develop is the ability to write/present your work concisely and demonstrate that you understand that some points are more important than others.

Appeals

The procedure for appeals applies when you ask for grade indicators to be reconsidered after work has been graded but prior to Internal Moderation. If you wish to ask for reconsideration of one or more of the grade indicators given by your assessor for any individual assignment you must do so within one week of receiving feedback of your graded work.

In the first instance, you must contact your unit assessor to ask for a full explanation of the grading decisions made. This process should give the reasons for the grade and how you could more fully have met the assessment and grading criteria.

If you are not satisfied with the explanation provided by your unit assessor you should refer to the matter to the Access to HE Manager.

Moderation of assignments

All units are subject to both Internal and External Moderation as part of our Quality Assurance processes. A random sample of completed assignments will be selected for each part of the moderation process. If for any reason, after moderation has been completed, you have not achieved the grade(s) you need for your degree you should contact your preferred university to seek their advice – sometimes they are willing to review applications on a case-by-case basis. If your preferred university is not willing to review your application you may need to look at alternative options for your degree studies.

Final Assessment Board

The Assessment Board will take place at the end of your course. At this meeting your results will be ratified and formally approved by the Academic Board. On successful completion of your Diploma you will receive your Access to HE Diploma certificate together with a transcript of your achievement. The transcript will detail the grades you have achieved for the graded units (45 Level 3 credits). The remaining 15 credits (ungraded units) will be shown as 'Achieved' and the level you have achieved them at (Level 3).

Other important information

Extensions to assignment submission dates

Time management is an important skill for you to develop early in your course particularly as you are studying online. However, we accept that there may be occasions when you are unable to meet an assignment deadline. In these situations, you must follow the guidance outlined below.

If you require a **short term (up to 14 calendar days)** extension on medical or other grounds you must make this request in writing to either the SSOs or to the Access to HE Manager before your submission date. These requests will only be granted at our discretion and are likely to permit you a limited number of days to complete and submit your assignment. The number of days approved for an extension will depend on the reasons for your request and will not automatically be a 14-day extension.

Your grade will not be capped at a Pass provided that your assignment is submitted within the revised deadline. These requests will be recorded on your student account, including the length of extension approved and the nature of the request. Any repeat or frequent requests for extensions of this nature will be closely monitored and may result in future requests being declined.

If you are experiencing personal extenuating circumstances which may seriously impair your ability to complete your assignment then you may request an **extension due to extenuating circumstances**. Examples of extenuating circumstances include a serious accident or injury, long term illness or bereavement of an immediate relative. These requests must only be made if you require longer than 14 calendar days to complete and submit your assignment. Requests on grounds of extenuating circumstances may only be made formally in writing to the Access to HE Manager and must be accompanied by verifiable and current third-party evidence. No request shall be considered after the submission deadline for an assignment has passed unless there are valid and exceptional reasons such as physical incapacity due to a serious accident.



Equality and Diversity

We value diversity in our staff and student population and promote equality as one of our core values. This means it is central to the way we do everything.

We aim to promote equal opportunities for all students, and also for staff and visitors. This means treating everyone fairly, making sure everyone gets the same chances and putting a stop to discrimination, bullying and harassment. We want to ensure that groups of students do not face any barriers and that everyone has an equal chance of success.

We aim to provide a safe and harmonious learning environment where everyone feels that they belong (we call this community cohesion), and we try to promote good relations between all groups of students.

Safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults

We have a Safeguarding Policy for the protection of Children/Young People and Vulnerable Adults. The term "Children and Young People" is used to mean "those under the age of 18". A vulnerable adult includes (but is not exclusive to) individuals with any of the following:

- Learning Difficulties
- Physical Impairments
- Sensory Impairments
- Mental Health Needs
- Brain Injuries

We would also consider a vulnerable adult to be a person who is struggling to cope on their own; a person who is finding difficulty to be rational and appears to be unsafe.

If you are experiencing problems outside of your studies that could be considered as a Safeguarding or Prevent issue, and which may be affecting your progress, then please contact:

- The Student Support Team – there is a dedicated Safeguarding representative in this team who can help
- The Access to HE Manager.

Health & Safety

All members of staff and learners are responsible for maintaining health and safety standards. Everyone is required to behave in a manner that aims to ensure they do not place themselves or others at risk. All are responsible for immediately reporting any potential hazard or risk to health and safety that they may identify to the Access to HE Manager.

PREVENT

The Government published the Prevent Strategy in 2010. Since then, there has been an awareness of the specific need to safeguard children, young people and families from violent extremism. There have been several occasions on a national basis where extremist groups have attempted to radicalise vulnerable children and young people to hold extreme views including views justifying political, religious, sexist or racist violence, or to steer them into a rigid and narrow ideology that is intolerant of diversity and leaves them vulnerable to future radicalisation.

We value the freedom of speech and the expression of beliefs/ideology as fundamental rights underpinning our society's values. Individuals have the right to speak freely and voice their opinions. However, freedom comes with responsibility, and free speech that is designed to manipulate the vulnerable or that leads to violence and harm of others goes against the moral principles in which freedom of speech is valued. Free speech is not an unqualified privilege; it is subject to laws and policies governing equality, human rights, community safety and community cohesion.

The normalisation of extreme views may also make children and young people vulnerable to future manipulation and exploitation. We are clear that this exploitation and radicalisation should be viewed as a safeguarding concern.

To aid the promotion of community cohesion we have added a PREVENT module to your programme. For some students this is a mandatory component of the course, for others it is an optional addition.

If you are experiencing problems outside of your studies that could be considered as a Safeguarding or Prevent issue, and which may be affecting your progress, then please contact:

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- The Access to HE Manager.

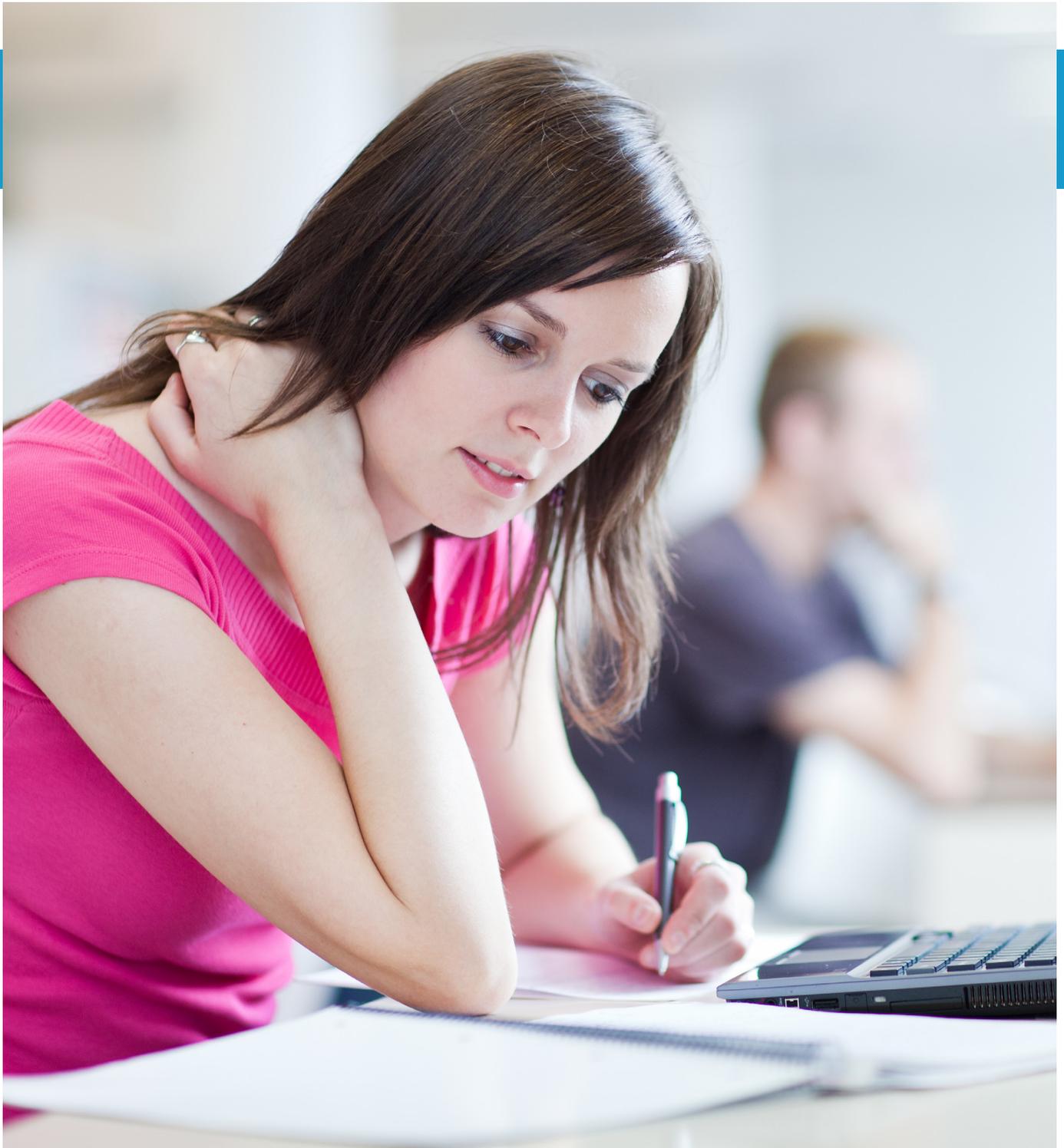
Concerns or complaints

If for any reason you experience problems during your studies, or wish to make a complaint, then you will need to refer the matter to the Access to HE Manager or your SSO. All matters are investigated fully and our aim is to find a resolution within 7 working days.

If, however, you feel that the response to your complaint is unsatisfactory then you should follow the procedure outlined in our Complaints Policy; a copy of which is available from the Access to HE Manager.

Additional support

If you have been diagnosed with a particular learning or physical disability then you can apply for additional support with your assignments. You will need to make this application in writing to the Access to HE Manager and include evidence to support your application such as a diagnostic report which confirms your condition. All requests will then be considered, and where required, approval will be sought from the awarding organisation for reasonable adjustments to be made.



The Learner Voice

During your course you will be asked to complete learner surveys. We use the outcomes from these to review, update, amend and improve the quality of our courses and services.

If you have any suggestions, or constructive criticism, that you would like us to consider then please contact the Access to HE Manager.

Your feedback is important to us!

Student Code of Conduct – what we expect from you during your studies

The activities and assignments you will complete as part of your course are designed to enable you to:

- Attain the aims and learning outcomes for individual units and the programme as a whole
- Identify, develop and apply a range of related skills
- Encourage your interaction with the indicative content contained in the course units
- Develop your ability to be an independent and successful learner by using reflective learning techniques

Reflective learning is a key concept on a course of this nature. It is a means by which you can observe and experience events which take place during your studies and then, by a process of reflection and thought, identify answers to key questions such as why that event took place, how it could have been improved upon and where good practice can be repeated.

Reflection includes the consideration of your own performance and the skills you need to develop more fully in order to have a positive influence on your progress and to help you to achieve your goals.

It should be remembered that personal reflection is strengthened if you possess underpinning knowledge of fact and theory to provide a foundation for your thinking. You are therefore encouraged to read and research your subjects widely in order to broaden your consideration of factors beyond the boundaries of your study materials.

Student Discipline and Behaviour

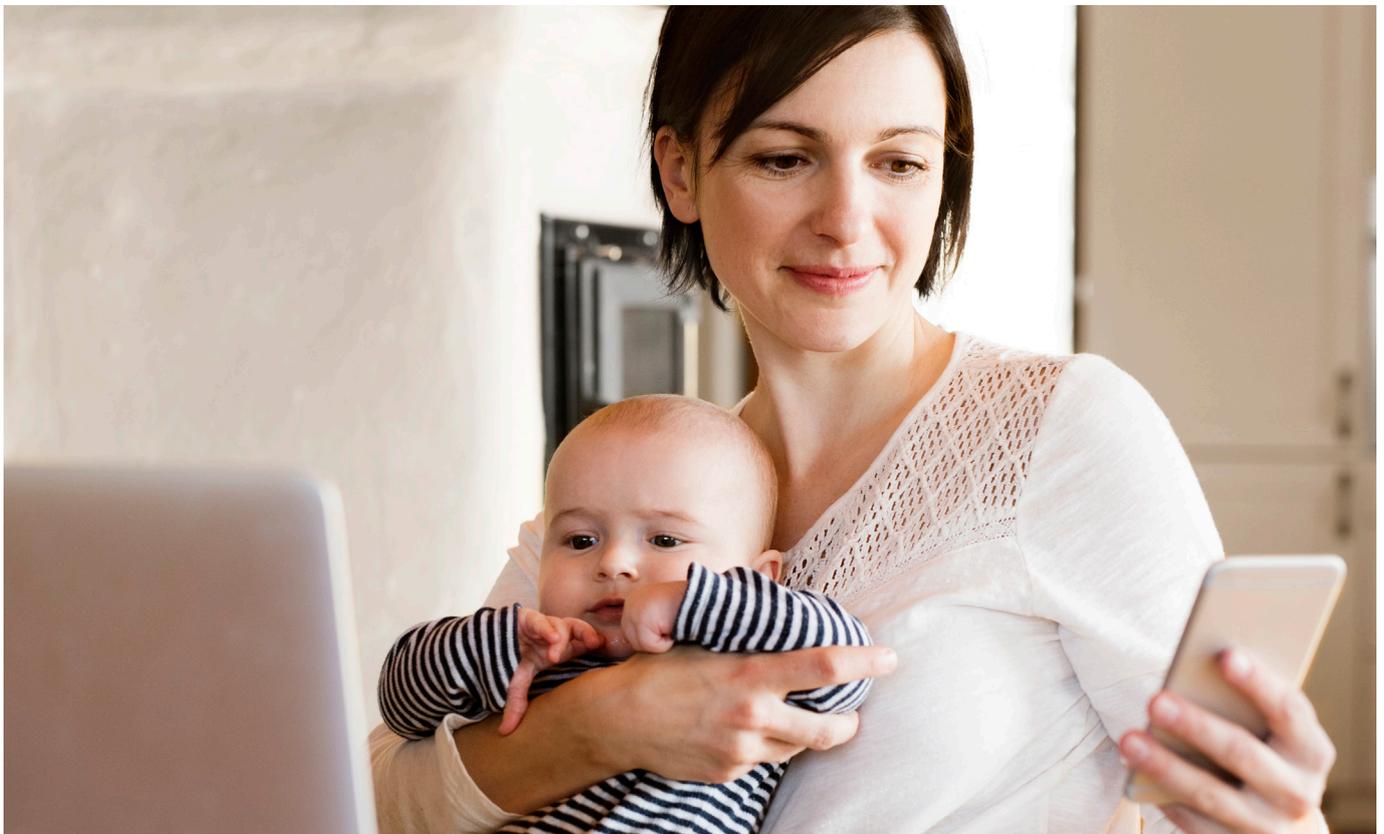
During your time on your programme, you can expect that:

- The course content and assignments will be appropriate to your needs and the requirements of the qualification awarding organisation
- Your specific learning needs in relation to literacy, numeracy, language and dyslexia etc. will be assessed and support offered where required
- Your assessors will be qualified, experienced and committed
- You will receive fair and consistent assessment, and prompt feedback about your work
- You will be informed about the academic appeals procedure
- You will be treated with respect

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In return, we expect you to:

- Behave appropriately and professionally
- Abide by regulations pertaining to health and safety, and equality and diversity
- Follow good academic practice
- Work conscientiously and to the best of your ability
- Complete and submit unit assignments on time
- Promote equality, community cohesion and good relations between students and staff
- Show respect for course content and materials, staff, the college itself, and one another
- Take responsibility for your studies and for your progress on your course



Acceptable Use of IT Systems

The following terms of acceptable use apply the Virtual Learning Environment and other connected services. These terms also cover remote access regardless of which device is used to make the connection e.g. personal computer, smart phone or tablet.

All activity on your account is linked to you as an individual; you are therefore responsible for any misuse. Access may be restricted or removed as a result. Therefore, you must not share your login details or password. This is also in accordance with the following:

- The Data Protection Act 2018
- Copyright, Designs & Patents Act 1988
- Computer Misuse Act 1998
- Telecommunications Act 2018
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997

Copies of these acts are available online from the official government website for UK citizens – www.direct.gov.uk. If you are found to be breaking the law, legal sanctions will apply.

The following are not permitted at any time:

1. The creation, display, production, storage, circulation or transmission of pornographic or other offensive material in any form or medium. (Including sending, posting or displaying offensive images, language or any other type of offensive content including the bullying, harassment or intimidation of others.)
2. Users must not create, run, store or transmit:
 - Defamatory or libellous material
 - Material that infringes copyright including unlicensed or illegal software
 - Unauthorised software
 - Unsolicited commercial or advertising material

3. Users must not:

- Intentionally provide or submit false information (i.e. in assignments)
- Flood debate/forums with inappropriate content, material or comments
- Use others' passwords or log-in identities
- Deliberately introduce any virus, worm, Trojan horse or other harmful or nuisance programme or file, or deliberately circumvent any precautions taken by us to prevent this from happening
- Use any part of the system for commercial purposes or profit
- Use any part of the system for political purposes
- Use any part of the system inappropriately
- Copy any code, software or content provided
- Enable access to non-College members

Should a user contravene this policy, disciplinary action will be taken which could result in you being withdrawn from your programme of study.

Disciplinary action

Any behaviour which is likely to cause offence or harm to others, or bring the college into disrepute, could result in disciplinary action. Such behaviour could include:

- Offensive language and/or behaviour, including contravention of Equal Opportunities Policy
- Any bullying, taunting or harassment of others whether directly, or through messages, debates or forums
- Non-submission of work and inadequate academic performance
- Any contravention of the Acceptable use of IT Systems policy
- Any contravention of the Student Code of Conduct, such as demonstrating a lack of respect to others

Breaches of discipline may be minor, major or gross. Examples of each type of breach are given below for guidance. This list is not exhaustive and professional judgements will need to be made about the severity of each breach.

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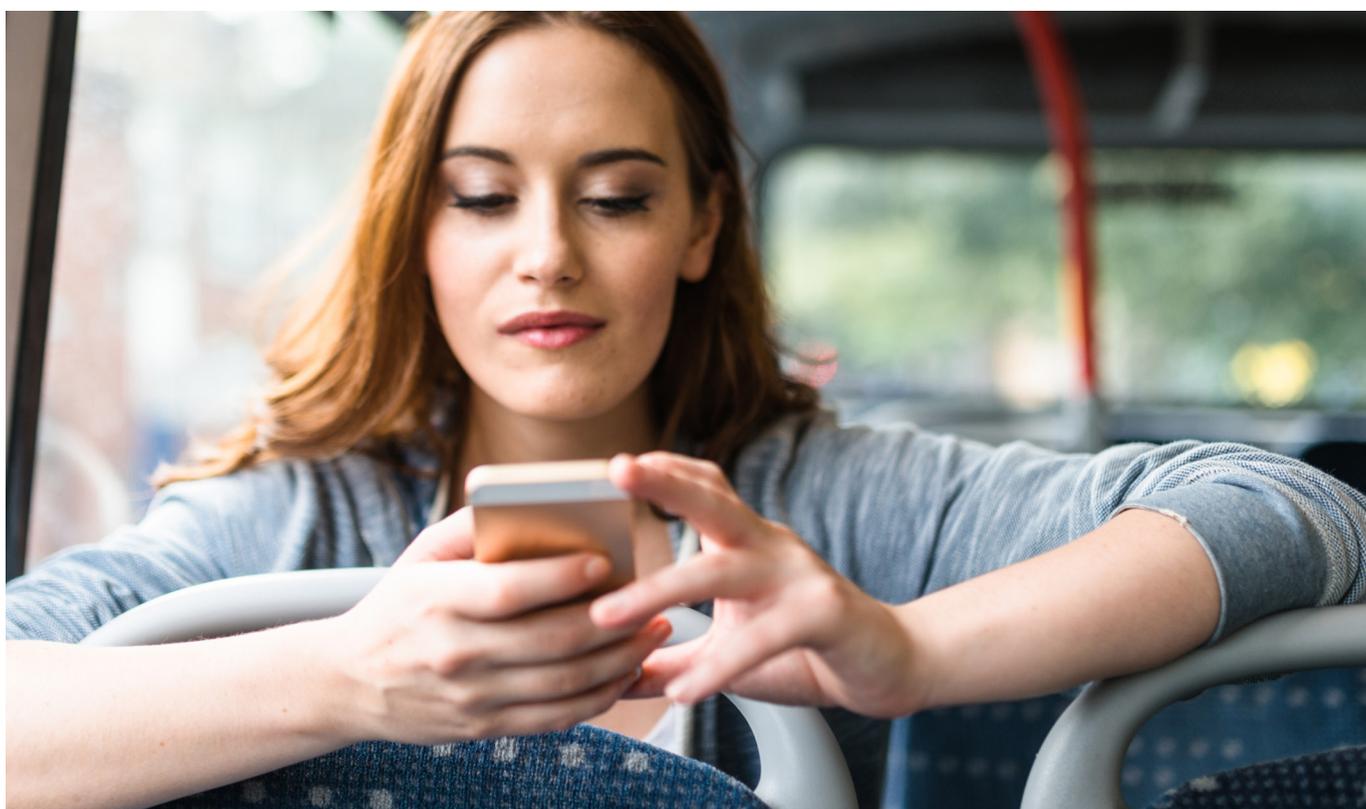
The following terms of acceptable

Minor Breach – late submission of assignments, wilful submission of sub-standard work or sub-standard performance.

Major Breach – persistence of a minor breach, acting in an unsafe manner including failure to comply with Health and Safety Policy and Regulations, plagiarism or copying the work of other students, repeated non-submission or late submission of assignments, repeated wilful submission of sub-standard work or sub-standard performance.

Gross Breach – persistence of a major breach, serious threat including threats made in messages or debates/forums, mobile phone and text messages, harassment, bullying, breach of the Equal Opportunities Policy, and any criminal activities affecting the college or other students, or which could bring the college into disrepute.

Any breach of discipline will be fully investigated, and depending upon the severity and frequency, will result in appropriate action being taken. This could include restrictions to functionality within the system i.e. removal of access to debates/forums or being blocked from contacting other students. In the most serious cases (gross breach), you may be withdrawn from your course and access to your account removed.



Academic offences

Throughout your studies, and when you progress to Higher Education, it is expected that you will produce assignments that represent 'best academic practice'. By this we mean that your work is your own, it is referenced appropriately and you have not committed any academic offence.

An academic offence is any act that is intended to modify or evade the conditions of assessment in an unauthorised manner and by unfair means. The following are examples of such academic offences but do not represent an exhaustive definition.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the deliberate attempt to gain advantage by presenting work that is not your own as if it were. Plagiarism is commonly the word for substantial duplication of phrases or sentences in written work, or in oral presentations, where the source is deliberately not mentioned. In all cases, such sources may include the work of other students, an educational institution, the internet or other recognised published works. Plagiarism comes in a variety of forms and includes (in descending order of seriousness):

- Copying an entire assignment word-for-word from a book, journal or website, with or without mentioning or referencing the source.
- Copying another student's assignment or an assignment downloaded from the internet.
- Copying large sections of books, journals or websites and inserting your own comments every now and then without mentioning or referencing sources.
- Wholesale paraphrasing of extended passages from a book, journal or website without mentioning or referencing sources.
- Wholesale paraphrasing of extended passages from a book, journal or website but mentioning sources. From time to time, a small amount of paraphrasing of descriptions of concepts or theories is allowable, sometimes necessary and even occasionally good practice, but the source must be referenced appropriately.

Examples of copying sources that do not count as plagiarism, but will impact on the grade that you achieve, include:

- Significantly large amounts of properly quoted material with references so that your assignment does not contain your own thoughts or interpretations.
- Keeping rigidly to the structure or argument of a textbook instead of varying your argument to suit the assignment requirements.
- Quoting trivial passages or unreliable sources of information.

We reserve the right to check any student's work for plagiarism. If you are found to have committed plagiarism you will be subject to disciplinary action. In serious and repeated cases, the awarding organisation will be notified and your place on your course will be at risk.

Fabrication of results

It is an academic offence for a student to claim to have carried out surveys, questionnaires, experiments, observations, interviews or any form of primary research which they have not in fact carried out.

Collusion

Collusion is the deliberate attempt to gain advantage by presenting work that is not solely your own as if it were, and where the source of the unreferenced work is that of another student who has schemed in the deception. Collusion is recognised by the duplication of passages or phrases in written work or in oral presentations, and it involves a conspiratorial attempt to deceive.

Collusion must not be confused with the good practice of collaborative learning and peer support, where collaborative learning means that a student may benefit from sharing third-party material (books, articles etc.).

Being party to collusion by providing material to another student is just as much an academic offence as using such material. Sharing your assignments, either completed or draft, is therefore inadvisable.

If you are approached by another student requesting to see copies of your assignments decline the request and inform your unit assessor or the Access to HE Manager immediately.

Bad academic practice

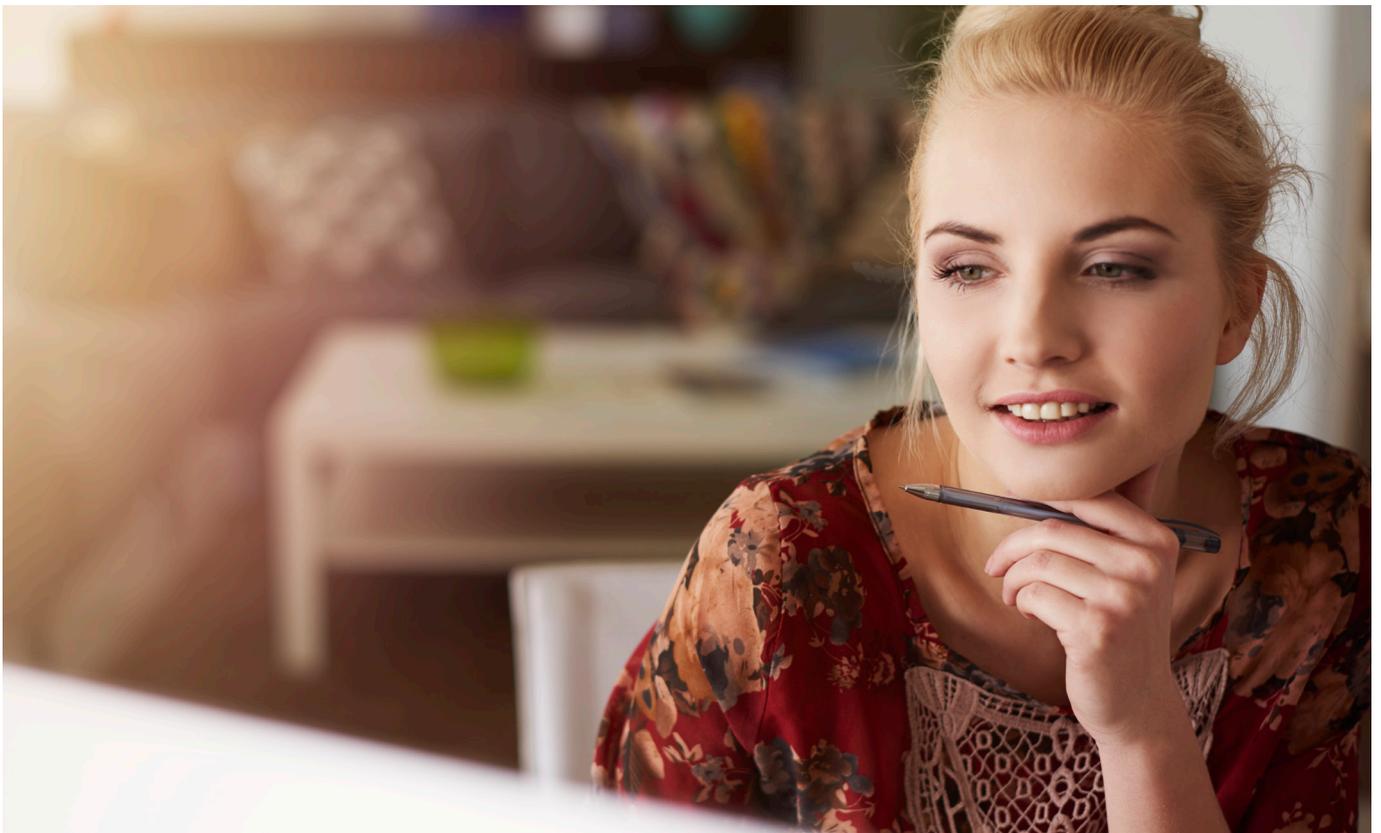
Bad academic practice is the presentation of work that is not your own as if it were. However, in this context it is the passing off of ideas, data or other information that are not common knowledge within the subject area as if you had originally discovered them. It is also the word-for-word duplication of short phrases in written work or oral presentations, where the source is not mentioned and where such duplication is minor in scale.

Cheating in timed tests

A candidate commits the offence of cheating in a timed test if they:

- Deliberately acquire advanced knowledge of the content of the test questions
- Copy from the assignment of another student
- Allow another student to copy from their assignment
- Obtain any other assistance from another student or third party
- Impersonate another student or allow themselves to be impersonated
- Does any other thing with the intention of gaining unfair advantage over other students

In such circumstances, all students concerned may be deemed to have committed an academic offence and therefore subject to disciplinary action.



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Whilst this handbook contains much of the information that you will need to know about your Access to HE Diploma we have also included here some other FAQs that may help you.

Do I need to buy any books for my course?

You are not required to purchase any books for your course unless you wish to. There is a reading list, including web links, within the Extended Learning area of your study materials for each unit. You should review this for each of your units as there will be differences dependent upon the subject area. If there are books that you would like to look at you are advised to use your local library in the first instance as buying books can end up being quite costly! You could then source a used copy of the book online to save you money.

I can only access a few sections of the study materials, why is this?

If you are applying for a loan from the Student Loans Company you will have restricted access to our system until such a time that your loan is approved. However, you will have access to everything you need to complete your first few units. Once your loan is approved you will gain access to all your course materials.

I am looking at the CPD courses that you can buy with Lifelong Learning Credits but I was wondering how long these courses are and at what level? Are they qualifications that I can include in my university application? Are there any that you would recommend to complement my Access course?

CPD courses usually take anywhere between 2 weeks and 3 months to complete. They are unaccredited courses and so will not feature as part of your university entry requirements quoted on any conditional offer. CPD courses are there to expand your knowledge in lots of different areas. These courses are grouped by subject area so you can either look for something to compliment your diploma or find something in a completely different area.

I'm completing maths and English as part of my Access programme, are these GCSEs?

The Independent Learning Skills that you added to your programme when you first enrolled are there to help you to improve your skills in these areas. These are not qualifications. If you need to achieve maths and English qualifications in order to meet the entry requirements for your preferred university then you need to contact your SSO for advice and guidance.

I don't have my GCSE certificates anymore – how do I get copies?

If you can remember which examining board you took your GCSEs with then you can contact them direct to order replacement certificates. The most popular examining boards for GCSEs are Edexcel/Pearson and OCR. They will charge you for this service and replacement certificates are likely to take up to 8 weeks to be sent to you.

If you cannot remember which examining board you took your GCSEs with then you can contact AQA who will be able to issue you with a letter which confirms your exam results. There is a charge for this service. You should also check with your preferred university if they will accept this letter or whether they need to see certificates as well.

You can also get information about replacement certificates from this website:

www.gov.uk/replacement-exam-certificate

Policies and Procedures

There are a number of policies and procedures that govern your Access to HE Diploma. These include:

- Appeals
- Complaints
- E-safety
- Equality & Diversity
- Health and Safety
- Malpractice, Maladministration, Fraud & Anti-Bribery
- Prevent
- Safeguarding
- Student Disciplinary Code of Conduct

If you wish to view a copy of any of these documents then please contact the Access to HE Manager.

Access to Higher Education Diploma

