

Following QAA's formal communication to UCAS Correspondents on 5 July 2023 announcing changes to the Access to HE Diploma, we are now issuing some further detail.

Changes come into effect for new Access to HE Diploma students registering for a Diploma from 1 August 2024 onwards.

For the new Subject Descriptor in Nursing and Health Professions there will be a pilot running from 1 August 2024 (for first entry to HE in Academic Year 2025-26) with full implementation from 1 August 2025 (for first entry to HE in Academic Year 2026-27).

The changes introduce some further standardisation to the Diploma and to students' experience of learning and assessment. There are no changes to the way transcripts and grades are presented and no changes to the UCAS Tariff Tables.

The following features of the Diploma remain in place:

- The Diploma will remain as 60 credits overall, with 45 level 3 credits (graded), with the remaining 15 credits at level 2 or 3 (ungraded)
- Unit sizes remain as 3, 6 or 9-credit units (where 1 credit = 10 notional learning hours)
- Grading of units will remain as Pass, Merit and Distinction
- The maximum credit that can be transferred under credit transfer remains at 30 credits
- UCAS Tariff Tables remain unchanged

For the most part, how you make offers to Access to HE Diploma students will not need to change.

- The changes to the may lead to some existing Diplomas changing the number and size of units offered, but the total number of credits will remain at 60 credits and the number of credits required to achieve the Diploma remains at 45 credits.
- The changes to the will not change the Pass, Merit and Distinction grades awarded for each graded unit and there is no impact on the UCAS Tariff Tables. As now, a Diploma student with an All Distinction profile will continue to be positioned at 144 tariff points and a student with an All Pass profile will continue to be positioned at 48 tariff points.

A minimum of one unit of EITHER 6 credits OR 9 credits to be included in each Diploma (graded or ungraded FUHGLWx	- Every Diploma student will study at least one unit that is larger than 3 credits. The purpose of this is to provide Access to HE students with experience of studying and assessment in at least one larger unit to aid their transition into HE. - If you currently receive students who have Diplomas made up of 20 x 3-credit units, you will no longer see a transcript with 20 units. The maximum number of units on a transcript will be 19. - As the larger unit(s) of study can come from graded or ungraded units, it will continue to be possible that the 45 graded credits required to achieve the Diploma can be made up of 15 x 3-credit units.
A maximum of 30 credits that can be made up of 6 or 9-credit units (ungraded and graded credits count towards the maximum of 30 credits).	- Every Diploma student will study at least 10 x 3-credit units. The remainder will be made up from a combination of 3, 6 or 9-credit units. - If you currently receive students who have Diplomas with a structure of, for example, 45 graded credits from 5 x 9-credit units, this structure will no longer be available. These Diplomas will be restructured to provide a broader balance of 3, 6 and 9-credit units. The content of the Diplomas will generally remain the same. If changes to content are required these will go through the same rigorous quality assurance and procedures that are currently in place.

The assessment and grading of the Access to HE Diploma is, and will continue to be, a dualistic system. Students are assessed on the Learning Outcomes of a unit through the Assessment Criteria in order to achieve credit for a unit. Grading criteria are then applied to distinguish between performance at the levels of Pass, Merit or Distinction.

The current Grading Scheme has seven different grading criteria (known as Grade Descriptors). Of these one is mandatory and there is a choice of a minimum of one, or a maximum of six, additional Grade Descriptors on which to base grading decisions. The

- Biology: a minimum of 15 Level 3 graded credits
- Professional Behaviours (Nursing and Health Professions): a minimum of 3 Level 3 ungraded credits
- Numeracy in Health Context: a minimum of 3 Level 2 ungraded credits

The essential content has been developed and defined in conjunction with HE, FE and professional bodies.

Beyond the 21 credits of defined content, the Subject Descriptor makes recommendations for the study of additional subjects in areas relevant to the intended progression route.

Admissions offers will continue to be made as now, on the basis of a student's qualifications, personal statement, reference and (where applicable) interview.

What you will have certainty about is that from 1 August 2025, all new students registering for the Access to HE Diploma (Nursing) and the Access to HE Diploma (Health Professions) will have followed the structure and content of the Subject Descriptor outlined above. The essential content detailed in the Professional Behaviours unit will give students an understanding of professional standards, the role of the regulatory bodies, ethics, managing

In the meantime, you can view the full information about the current and updated Diploma Specification, Grading Scheme and Subject Descriptor at: <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/access-to-he/access-to-he-recognition->