

Qualification Guide



LASER Level 3 Award in Research Skills

National Approval Number: 600/2786/1

Operational Start date: 1 September 2011



Laser Learning Awards (LASER)

LASER works with centres to develop flexible and responsive credit based awards and qualifications that widen access to lifelong learning and address exclusion, participation and achievement. The structure of our qualifications provides opportunities for learners to achieve unit credits and use these to gain access to full qualifications and further learning.

Quality assurance, supported at the point of delivery, underpins all LASER credit achievement and qualifications. LASER approves centres that can demonstrate the ability to meet national requirements for course delivery and quality assurance to support credit awards and qualifications. LASER has wide-ranging experience in centre and programme approval and supports centres to ensure all awards are valid and valued.

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1. About the Level 3 Award in Research Skills

Introduction

This qualification is only available through LASER Recognised Centres. For further information about becoming a Centre or about working in partnership with a Recognised Centre please access the LASER website or telephone LASER (01932 569894).

Existing Centres must complete a New Course Notification Form before starting to deliver the qualification. **To access a New Course Notification Form [Click Here](#)**

2. Offering the Qualification

2.1 Aims and Objectives of the Qualification

The Level 3 Award in Research Skills is intended for students engaged or about to engage with Level 3 programmes of study, who need knowledge and understanding of how to undertake research, regardless of the subject area. The Award will enhance students' Level 3 studies in mainstream subjects and prepare them for future Level 4 work.

This Award will help students to:

- define the range and methods they need
- assess the reliability of their sources
- understand how to use researched material safely and effectively
- understand referencing

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2.2 Entry Requirements

There are no formal entry requirements, but students should usually have achieved Level 2 in in previous studies or have comparable experience, in order to benefit from the Award.

2.3 Target Group and Restrictions on Learner Entry

Students must be a minimum of 16 years of age to undertake the qualification.

2.4 Achieving the Qualification

To gain the qualification, students must achieve the 2 credit mandatory unit, Research Skills for Academic Study.

2.5 Guided Learning Hours

There are no set guided learning hours, but at least 14 hours of class contact are recommended for most students.

2.6 Language Requirements

The qualification is only available in English.

2.7 Progression Opportunities

The Award will support learners in preparing to continue their studies at Level 4. It is also especially useful for those going on to study vocational subjects.

2.8 Recommended Prior Learning

There is no recommended prior knowledge, attainment or experience needed by learners wishing to enrol on these qualifications. [\(back to content list\)](#)

3. How the Qualifications will be Assessed

3.1 Overview of the Assessments

This qualification is assessed by the Centre and subject to LASER's quality assurance processes, including internal and external verification. For further guidance please refer to the [LASER assessment guidance](#).

The qualification consists of one unit with 3 learning outcomes. See Appendix 1 page 9. The second page of the unit contains details of prescribed assessment methods that must be applied to the unit at some point in the assessment.

Ofqual Qualification Accreditation Code			600/2786/1/	
LASER Awards Unit Code	Unit Title	Mandatory/ Optional Unit	Credit Value	Level
WIY871	Research Skills for Academic Study*	Mandatory	2	3

**Note that in Assessment Criteria 2.1 and 3.4, the term 'range' requires the use of at least three sources for each criterion, although the same sources may be used in 2.1 and 3.4 if appropriate.*

3.2 Assessment Design

One assessment method is prescribed for this unit, and other, relevant methods may be used at the discretion of the assessor. The prescribed assessment method is 'written description'. This means that students must include a written description at some point in the unit, but not that this method must be used to evidence all criteria.

The [Assessment Definitions](#) for 'Written description' at Level 3 give the following guidelines – note that there is considerable flexibility:

Consideration of a particular subject, situation or example selected by the tutor or by learners, which enables learners to apply knowledge to specific situations and to present them in written format.

The learning may be assessed by:

- Tutor.
- One to one tutorial.
- Discussion.

Evidence could include:

- Tutor record of observation.
- Learner notes.
- Tutorial notes.
- Completed report.
- Charts.
- Plans.

	Activity	Assessment	Evidence
Level Three	<i>Subjects should allow the application of knowledge in a range of complex areas, in a variety of familiar and unfamiliar context. GL = 1000 words.</i>	<i>Assessment through self-assessment and tutor assessment.</i>	<i>Evidence could be: tutor record, learner record, summary of feedback or completed work.</i>

Other assessment methods as listed under the Assessment Information within the unit may be used as appropriate. These assessment methods are considered to be particularly appropriate:

- Oral Question and Answer
- Written Question and Answer
- Essay
- Report
- Project
- Group Discussion

The [Assessment Definitions](#) for these methods must be referred to if assessors choose to use them. Assessors must ensure that all assessment criteria are evidenced, although more than one criterion may be evidenced within a specific task.

The use of a [Tutor Assessment Planning Sheet](#) is recommended, as it helps to set out the various tasks, their assessment methods and the evidence to be produced in a simple plan that is then available to the internal verifier and quality reviewer. It also allows the assessor to set out the options where more than one assessment method could be used for any one task: this information can then be transferred as required to the Individual Learner Record for each student, allowing for some different methods to be used for individual students, if individualised learning is appropriate.

- The [Tutor Assessment Planning Sheet](#) will help you to plan your learners' assessments.
- To record an individual learner's achievements you can use the [Individual Learner Record](#).

These planning sheets can be customised as Centres prefer, as long as all essential information is included. It is also acceptable to design one large learning record spreadsheet for a group of students, but it must be printed for verification and Quality Review and each student's achievement must be signed off with an original signature.

All assessment methods must be suitably evidenced, and templates for assessors' use are all contained on the [LASER website](#). Note particularly the use of a group witness or individual witness statement, to be used in conjunction with a list of questions or discussion prompts (or sample recordings) when the methods 'group discussion' or 'oral question and answer' are used.

It is acceptable for the evidence to be held in a mixture of places, for example in a student file and/or tutor file and on an intranet using a specific student programme. If this is the case, it must be clear for each student precisely where the information is held, (by using one record sheet such as the Individual Learner Record), and that the evidence is complete. Electronic evidence must be available to Quality Reviewers when required. [\(back to content list\)](#)

4. Special Arrangements

4.1 Introduction for learners with particular requirements

Assessment is designed to be accessible and inclusive. The assessment methodology is appropriate and rigorous for individuals or groups of learners.

For further information on special arrangements please refer to the LASER policy document "Access to Fair Assessments". This gives clear guidance on the reasonable adjustments and arrangements that can be made to take account of disability or learning difficulty without comprising the achievement of the assessment criteria. [\(back to content list\)](#)

5. Approval to Offer the Qualification

Centres wishing to offer the Level 3 Award in Research Skills should complete a [New Course Notification Form](#) and contact LASER Learning Awards.

If you are not currently an approved LASER Centre please contact us via email enquiries@laser-awards.org.uk or telephone 01932 569894.

Full details of all LASER requirements are provided in the LASER Centre Handbook available from the LASER website www.laser-awards.org.uk

5.1 Tutor Qualifications

LASER recommends that tutors, assessors, internal verifiers and quality reviewers should be experienced clear understanding of the subject matter and should have or be working towards a relevant teaching/assessing (as appropriate) qualification. ([back to content list](#))

6. Quality Assurance of the Qualification

As a recognised centre you will have to meet the requirements regarding internal quality assurance arrangements as detailed in the [LASER Centre Handbook](#). The LASER appointed Quality Reviewer will regularly monitor compliance with these requirements. The Quality Reviewer will report on the progress of any agreed actions for quality improvement.

Centres delivering LASER qualifications must have internal verification systems in place to underpin the delivery of the qualification. Internal Verification is a process by which the centre regularly samples and evaluates its assessment practices and decisions and acts on the findings, to ensure consistency and fairness. It involves two key processes – verification and standardisation – and is carried out by one or more internal verifiers. Systems will vary between centres according to their particular situation for example; practices that work in a large centre will not necessarily be effective in a smaller one. There are, however, two key points:

- there must be an appropriate system in place.
and
- there must be evidence that it is implemented effectively.

The outcome of the internal verification process is the award of credit to learners. LASER supports two ways in which credit can be awarded to learners; through appointment of a LASER Quality Reviewer, or through Direct Claims status.

6.1 Direct Claims Status (DCS)

Direct Claims Status can be awarded to a centre where there is one or more Approved Internal Verifier (AIV) for the sector or course(s) for which learners are being recommended for the award of credit. Such centres will be able to claim the award of credit directly from LASER. Approved status is monitored by the Quality Reviewer and can be withdrawn at any time if quality systems are not operating effectively

Where there is evidence that the required standards have not been met, LASER retains the right to withdraw DCS.

6.2 Standardisation

LASER will hold standardisation events to ensure consistent application of assessment. Centres will be required to contribute to LASER's programme of standardisation and also to carry out appropriate internal standardisation.

LASER will hold standardisation events on a rolling basis to ensure that comparable standards are being achieved year on year and that there is a consistency of delivery and assessment across centres. Quality Reviewers will identify samples of learners' work that they wish to retain for standardisation purposes during verification visits. Where an AIV is in place they will be expected to identify samples of learners' work to submit to national standardisation events. Centres are required to retain records of the assessment and internal verification process to contribute to standardisation events. Where units are common to other awarding organisations' qualifications LASER will work collaboratively to ensure standardisation requirements as set out in the QCF are met.

6.3 Retaining Evidence

For all qualifications centres must retain complete and accurate records, for at least three years from the end of the year to which they relate. These records must be made available to LASER on request. [\(back to content list\)](#)

APPENDIX 1 - Unit Content for Research Skills for Academic Study

Unit Title:	Research Skills for Academic Study
Unit Level:	Three
Unit Credit Value:	2
GLH:	14
Unit Code:	WIY871
Unique Reference Number:	HC7/3/SR/029

This unit has 3 learning outcomes.

LEARNING OUTCOMES	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA
The learner will:	The learner can:
1. Understand how to plan research on a given topic.	1.1. Establish the purpose of the research. 1.2. Analyse the nature of the research to be undertaken. 1.3. Identify and justify appropriate methods of research.
2. Be able to assess the reliability of a range of different types of information sources.	2.1. Evaluate a range of information sources taking account of reliability, for example, a reference book, a newspaper article or periodical, a webpage.
3. Be able to utilise information to inform own writing.	3.1. Explain ways of using information gained, for example, quotation, paraphrase and explanation. 3.2. Define the meaning of 'plagiarism' and analyse the consequences of its use. 3.3. Explain the importance of footnotes/endnotes and bibliographies. 3.4. Demonstrate the use of information from a range of sources to inform own writing.

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UNIT ASSESSMENT INFORMATION

Guidance:

This grid gives details of the assessment activities to be used with the unit attached. Please refer to the Assessment Definitions document for definitions of each activity and the expectations for assessment practice and evidence for verification

Assessment activities for this unit are indicated in the table below.

Any of these assessment methods considered appropriate may be used. However, if a **P for Prescribed** appears against any assessment method, it *must* be used to assess some part/s of the unit.

Case study		Project	
Written question & answer/test/exam		Role play/simulation	
Essay		Practical demonstration	
Report		Group discussion	
Oral question and answer		Performance/exhibition	
Written description	P	Production of artefact	
Reflective log/diary		Practice file	

Additional Assessment Information:	Note that in Assessment Criteria 2.1 and 3.4, the term 'range' requires the use of at least three sources for each criterion, although the same sources may be used in 2.1 and 3.4 if appropriate.
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APPENDIX 2 - Qualification Summary Sheet

Register of Approved Qualifications Code: 600/2786/1	Funding Information: Confirmed for 16-18 Funding
<p>LASER-Learning Awards is a leading credit-based organisation, recognised by the Qualifications Regulators in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.</p>	
Purpose and Aim of qualification	<p>The qualification addresses the needs of students embarking on Level 3 qualifications, and who need to learn the skills of research for academic study. The unit is also contained within each qualification in the Managing Your Future suite of qualifications</p>
Who is it for?	<p>The minimum age is 16. The qualification is intended for students in all areas of the curriculum and can be contextualised.</p>
Entry Requirement	<p>There is no minimum entry requirement although learners will benefit most if they are studying mainly at Level 3.</p>
Rules of Combination	<p>Learners must achieve the mandatory 2 credit unit.</p>
Units	<p>To see the unit content click here</p>
Assessment	<p>The unit is achieved by providing evidence of minimum competence. Details of assessment methods are contained within the information in each unit. There is no external assessment: evidence is assessed and internally verified by the provider, and verified externally by LASER.</p>
Cost	<p>The cost of the full qualification is: £12.00 (from 1 September 2011 to 31 August 2012)</p>
Dates	<p>Operational start date: 01.09.11</p>
To deliver this qualification:	<p>Providers must be a Recognised Centre. Click here to find details of recognition procedures.</p> <p>Recognised centres should contact their Business Development Manager to discuss delivery. Click here to find contact details.</p> <p>Centres must download this Qualification Guide before activating delivery.</p>

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