

Access to HE Diploma Specification & Assessment Framework

Diploma Title: Counselling

Learning Aim:	40015671
Approved:	16 May 2024
Validation dates:	01 August 2024 - 31 July 2029
Date of next review:	September 2028

Purpose and aim of the Access to HE Diploma

The Access to HE Diploma is intended to prepare people without traditional entry qualifications for degree level study at university. It may also be used by people wishing to make a career change or who have been out of formal education for a significant time to gain the skills and confidence required for direct progression to employment or further study. The Access to HE Diploma is regulated by QAA and widely recognised as a progression route by universities across the UK.

Target Group

The Access Diploma is open to all learners but is designed to be accessible for individuals who, because of their socio-economic or personal circumstances, may not have been able to consider progression to degree level study. The Access Diploma therefore provides a second chance for individuals who, for whatever reason, were not able to take full advantage of their formal secondary education.

About the qualification

The Diploma Specification for Counselling enables centres to choose from a range of units within counselling and psychology with additional choices of suitable complementary subjects.

The progression routes¹ from this Diploma could include, but are not limited to, degrees in counselling, person-centred counselling, psychology and counselling, coaching and mentoring, speech and language therapy, etc.

Specification Rules

All LASER Diplomas are made up of 45 graded credits (sections A, B, C below) and 15 ungraded credits (section D). The policy for the LASER Access to HE Diploma Specification & Assessment Framework is available at [Validated Diploma Specifications](#) or by contacting the Access Office.

Section	Minimum Credits	Graded/Ungraded	Modules	Notes
A	30	Graded	Counselling and psychology	Minimum 21 credits to be taken from counselling
B	9 or 15	Graded	Additional units from group A or selected law, professional studies, social work, sociology	Number of credits dependent on choice of graded or ungraded IAS
C	6	Graded or Ungraded	IAS Professional Studies	MANDATORY UNIT
D	9 or 15	Ungraded	Study Skills units or selected ungraded options from sections A and/or B	Study Skills units can be at level 2 or 3 Number of credits dependent on choice of graded or ungraded IAS

¹ Suggested progression routes have been taken from provider feedback and HE consultation, they may be subject to change and further review and do not indicate any guarantee of progression in these fields. LASER would always recommend students ensure the diploma they wish to enrol on is appropriate for their future progression.

Unit Choices: SUBJECT GROUP A

30 graded credits to be selected from the modules listed below, these units are chosen as specific to the subject of the named Diploma and are all at level 3. Minimum credits to be achieved indicated below.

Counselling (minimum 21 credits)	
Credits	Title
3	Approaches to Counselling
3	Difference and Diversity in Counselling
3	Introduction to Cognitive Behavioural Therapy
3	Introduction to Person-Centred Therapy
3	Introduction to Psychodynamic Counselling
3	Listening Skills in the Helping Professions
6	Loss and Bereavement Counselling
6	Principles and Practice of Counselling
3	Professional and Personal Development in a Counselling Context
3	Professional Practice and Ethics in Counselling
3	Specialist Areas in Counselling
Psychology	
Credits	Title
3	Applied Stress Management
3	Child Development
3	Cognitive Psychology
3	Criminological Psychology
3	Cyberpsychology
3	Introduction to Psychology
3	Psychology and Mental Health
3	Psychology and Therapy
3	Psychology of Early Socialisation
3	Psychology of Education
3	Psychology of Health
3	Research Methods in Psychology
3	Social Psychology
3	The Effects of Stress

Unit Choices: SUBJECT GROUP B

9 or 15 graded credits (depending on choice of graded or ungraded IAS unit from Group C) to be selected from either the modules listed in Group A and/or from the additional modules offered in below, these units are related to the subject of the named Diploma or will complement learning. These units are all at level 3.

Law	
Credits	Title
3	Family Law
3	Health and Social Care Legislation within the UK
3	Tort Law
Professional Studies	
Credits	Title
3	Developing Professional Practice in Healthcare
3	Health and Health Services
3	Health Promotion and Health Education in Mental Health
3	The Context of Mental Health Within Society
3	Understanding Adolescent Health
3	Understanding Epidemiology
3	Understanding Ethics in Healthcare
3	Understanding Health Promotion and Health Education
3	Understanding Mental Health
3	Understanding Mental Ill Health
3	Understanding Quality Improvement in Healthcare
3	Understanding Sexual Health
Social Work	
Credits	Title
3	Anti-discriminatory Practice
3	Development of Social Welfare
3	Safeguarding Adults from Possible Abuse
3	Safeguarding Children from Possible Abuse
3	Safeguarding in the UK
3	Social Welfare in the 21 st Century

Sociology

Credits	Title
3	Introduction to Sociology
3	Social Divisions
3	Social Research Methods
3	Social Stratification
3	The Sociology of Crime and Deviance
3	The Sociology of Family
3	The Sociology of Health
3	The Sociology of Poverty
3	The Sociology of Religion

Independent Academic Study: IAS GROUP C

6 credits are achieved from the appropriate Independent Academic Study unit (IAS) for the Diploma title. This unit is at level 3 and can be offered as graded or ungraded (but not both) within a centre's Rules of Combination.

Independent Academic Study

Credits	Title
6	Independent Academic Study (Professional Studies)

Ungraded Units: GROUP D

15 or 9 ungraded credits (depending on choice of graded or ungraded IAS unit from Group C) are selected from the modules listed in Group D. These units are generally at level 3 but some study skills units may be available at level 2.

Applied Study Skills		
Level	Credits	Title
3	3	Academic Communication Skills
3	3	Critical Thinking
3	3	Data Analysis using IT
3	3	Essential Digital Skills for Students
3	3	Giving a Presentation to an Audience
3	3	Note Taking and Note Making
3	3	Preparing for and Taking Written Exams
2 or 3	3	Skills for Study: Essay Writing
2 or 3	3	Skills for Study: Research
2 or 3	3	Skills for Study: Writing
2 or 3	3	Using ICT for Study
Personal Reflection & Development		
Level	Credits	Title
3	3	Citizenship: Rights and Responsibilities for UK Professions
3	3	Cultural Diversity and Professional Practice
3	3	Mental Health and Self-Care Whilst Studying
3	3	Personal Organisation and Time Management
3	3	Reviewing and Planning for the Future
General English		
Level	Credits	Title
2	3	English Language Skills
3	3	Studying Literature
3	3	Communication – Reading and Writing
3	3	Communication – Speaking and Listening
General Maths		
Level	Credits	Title
2	3	Understanding Maths
3	3	Application of Number - Calculation
3	3	Application of Number – Data Interpretation
3	6	Introductory Mathematics for HE

Ungraded Academic Subject Content (all at level 3)

Units cannot be included within a centre's Rules of Combination as both graded and ungraded, but centres can choose to offer some academic subject units as ungraded versions. These must be identified as part of the course approval and will apply to all cohorts on this diploma title within a centre. If a centre wishes to include other units in Groups A or B as ungraded content, this will need to be requested for consideration by the AVA, giving valid reasons for inclusion, as part of course approval.

Credits	Title
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Ungraded Counselling

3	Listening Skills in the Helping Professions
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Ungraded Psychology

3	Cognitive Psychology
3	Introduction to Psychology
3	Psychology of Early Socialisation
3	Research Methods in Psychology

Ungraded Law

3	Family Law
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Ungraded Professional Studies

3	Developing Professional Practice in Healthcare
3	Understanding Ethics in Healthcare
3	Understanding Health Promotion and Health Education

Ungraded Social Work

3	Anti-discriminatory Practice
3	Safeguarding Adults from Possible Abuse
3	Safeguarding Children from Possible Abuse

Ungraded Sociology

3	Introduction to Sociology
3	Social Research Methods
3	The Sociology of Crime and Deviance

Diploma Assessment Framework

All LASER validated Access to HE programmes must include a **Diploma Assessment Plan** as a part of their validation/revalidation process and the plans will be required to be updated and available for review as part of the yearly External Quality Assurance cycle. In identifying assessment models, practitioners should also give due consideration to the requirements of the LASER [Guidance on the Use of AI](#) to ensure the veracity of assessments as measures of student achievement.

The policy for the LASER Access to HE Diploma Specification & Assessment Framework is available via [Validated Diploma Specifications](#) or by contacting the Access Office.

Required Assessment Models:

Assessment Model ²	Suggested Weighted Frequency of Use	Comments
Examination	High / Moderate / Low	<p><i>Required by LASER Examination Policy and identified as a commonly used assessment model within HE.</i></p> <p>The LASER Examination Policy requires all LASER validated Diploma Titles to contain at least three opportunities for students to experience appropriate forms of ‘summative’ examination which contribute to the final assessment and grade of the unit. Unless there is a compelling reason, no diploma should contain more than six examinations. The full policy can be viewed here: Access Policies</p>
Essay (Include as necessary)	High / Moderate / Low	<i>Together with Examinations this constitutes one of the most predominant assessment methodologies for HE</i>
Presentation	High / Moderate / Low	<i>Very high frequency of use in HE but not always as a summative assessment tool. Students should have moderate but not substantive experience of this form of assessment.</i>

² Definitions of the meanings of given **Assessment Models** are contained within Annex One of the LASER Access to HE Diploma Specification & Assessment Framework.

Recommended Assessment Models:

Recommended Assessment Model	Possible Weighting	Comments
Project	Strongly Recommended / Recommended / Suggested	<i>May be used as a means of assessing independent learning in a given subject area.</i>
Extended Essay	Strongly Recommended / Recommended / Suggested	<i>Although not the norm this assessment tool is used with moderate frequency in HE and therefore students should have some experience of it.</i>
Case Study	Strongly Recommended / Recommended / Suggested	<i>May be appropriate to units where there is a requirement for application of knowledge... E.g. Law or Psychology</i>
Report ³	Strongly Recommended / Recommended / Suggested	<i>A less frequently used model of assessment but required as many progression reports will employ this model and students should have some experience of it.</i>
Workbook	Strongly Recommended / Recommended / Suggested	<i>May be used in relation to any unit</i>

³ This could be evidenced by the submission of the graded IAS or could be evidenced via a graded alternative unit of assessment.