

Access to HE Diploma Specification & Assessment Framework

Diploma Title: Healthcare Professions

Learning Aim:	40015701
Approved:	16 May 2024
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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 knowledge, 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 Healthcare Professions enables centres to choose from a variety of units in biology, applied social sciences and professional studies. *If you wish to offer the QAA approved Nursing Subject Descriptor diploma, please see our Access to HE Diploma (Nursing).*

The progression routes¹ from this Diploma could include, but are not limited to, degrees in nursing (adult, child, mental health), midwifery, health studies, paramedic practice, occupational therapy, radiography, physiotherapy, healthcare science, podiatry, public health practice, operating department practice, 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	Biology Professional Studies Applied Social Sciences	
B	9 or 15	Graded	Additional units from group A or selected maths, counselling, law, physics, chemistry and other	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. Where appropriate minimum numbers of credits are identified for specific modules.

Biology (<i>minimum 12 credits</i>)				
Credits	Title			
3	Biochemistry for Healthcare			
3	Energy for healthcare			
3	Cells, tissues and organs for healthcare	or	3	Cell biology
3	Digestion and the liver for healthcare	or	3	Nutrition and digestion
3	Homeostasis for healthcare	or	3	Mammalian control systems
3	The musculoskeletal system for healthcare	or	3	Musculoskeletal system
3	Blood, circulation and gaseous exchange for healthcare	or	3	Cardiopulmonary system
3	Disease and body defence	or	3	Microbiology and immunity
3	Reproductive biology for healthcare	or	3	Reproduction and inheritance*
3	Mendelian and applied genetics for healthcare	or		

*Reproduction and inheritance cannot be taken with either Reproductive biology for healthcare or Mendelian and applied genetics due to content overlap.

Additional non-Healthcare specific biology	
3	Biodiversity
3	Evolution and Ecology
3	Genetics
3	Microbiology (<i>not for use with Microbiology and immunity unit above</i>)
3	Medical Biochemistry
3	Applications of Biology for Midwives

Professional Studies (*minimum 6 credits*)

Health

Credits	Title
3	Advising on Travel Health
3	Developing Clinical Skills
3	Developing Professional Practice in Healthcare
3	Diagnosis, Treatment and Support for Patients with Cancer
3	Health and Health Services
3	Nutrition for Health and Well-being
3	Pain Management
3	The Causation and Treatment of Common Physiological Disorders
3	The Environment and Health
3	Understanding Adolescent Health
3	Understanding Epidemiology

3	Understanding Ethics in Healthcare
3	Understanding Health and Well-being
3	Understanding Health Informatics
3	Understanding Health Promotion and Health Education
3	Understanding Human Health and Disease
3	Understanding Quality Improvement in Healthcare
3	Understanding Sexual Health
3	Understanding the Patient Journey

Mental Health

3	Health Promotion and Health Education in Mental Health
3	The Context of Mental Health Within Society
3	Understanding Mental Health
3	Understanding Mental Ill Health

Applied Social Sciences (minimum 6 credits)

Psychology

Credits	Title
3	Applied Stress Management
3	Bio-Psychology
3	Child Development
3	Cognitive Psychology
3	Introduction to Psychology
3	Neuro-Psychology
3	Psychology and Mental Health
3	Psychology and Therapy
3	Psychology of Early Socialisation
3	Psychology of Health
3	Research Methods in Psychology
3	Social Psychology
3	The Effects of Stress

Sociology

Credits	Title
3	Introduction to Sociology
3	Social Divisions
3	Social Research Methods
3	Social Stratification
3	The Sociology of Education
3	The Sociology of Family
3	The Sociology of Health
3	The Sociology of Poverty

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.

Chemistry	
Credits	Title
3	Body Chemistry
3	Chemistry for Healthcare
3	Drugs and Food Additives
3	Organic Chemistry
3	Organic Reaction Mechanisms
3	Pharmacology for Healthcare
Counselling	
Credits	Title
3	Approaches to Counselling
3	Introduction to Cognitive Behaviour Therapy
3	Introduction to Person Centred Therapy
3	Listening Skills in the Helping Professions
6	Loss and Bereavement Counselling
3	Professional Practice and Ethics in Counselling
Law	
Credits	Title
3	Health and Social Care Legislation within the UK
3	Tort Law
Maths	
Credits	Title
3	Arithmetic
3	Calculus
3	General Mathematics
3	Statistics
3	Trigonometry
3	The Nature and Applications of Statistics
3	Collecting, Presenting and Using Statistics
Physics	
Credits	Title
3	Physics for Radiography: Radiation
3	Physics for Radiography: Diagnostic Nuclear Medicine
3	Physics for Radiography: Therapeutic Nuclear Medicine

Other Units

Credits	Title
3	Sexuality and Gender
3	Safeguarding Children from Possible Abuse
3	Safeguarding Adults from Possible Abuse
3	Safeguarding in the UK
3	Development of Social Welfare
3	Anti-Discriminatory Practice
3	Social Welfare in the 21 st Century
3	Criminological Psychology
3	Cyberpsychology
3	Forensic Psychology
3	The Sociology of Crime and Deviance
3	The Sociology of Religion
3	The Sociology of the Mass Media

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) OR Independent Academic Study (Science)

Ungraded Units: SUBJECT 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
3	3	Practical Mathematics for Healthcare

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			
Ungraded Biology				
3	Biochemistry for Healthcare			
3	Cells, tissues and organs for healthcare	or	3	Cell biology
3	Homeostasis for healthcare			
3	Musculoskeletal system			
3	Blood, circulation and gaseous exchange for healthcare			
3	Reproductive biology for healthcare			
3	Mendelian and applied genetics for healthcare			
3	Cell Biology (<i>not for use with alt Cell Biology or Cells, tissues & organs for healthcare units above</i>)			
3	Genetics			
3	Applications of Biology for Midwives			
Ungraded Health (Professional Studies)				
3	Developing Clinical Skills			
3	Developing Professional Practice in Healthcare			
3	Pain Management			
3	Understanding Ethics in Healthcare			
3	Understanding Health and Well-being			
3	Understanding Health Promotion and Health Education			
Ungraded Psychology				
3	Cognitive Psychology			
3	Introduction to Psychology			
3	Psychology of Early Socialisation			
3	Research Methods in Psychology			
Ungraded Sociology				
3	Introduction to Sociology			
3	Social Research Methods			
Ungraded Chemistry				
3	Body Chemistry			
3	Chemistry for Healthcare			
3	Organic Chemistry			
3	Organic Reaction Mechanisms			
Ungraded Counselling				
3	Listening Skills in the Helping Professions			
Ungraded Maths				
3	Arithmetic			
3	General Mathematics			
3	Statistics			
Ungraded Other Units				
3	Safeguarding Children from Possible Abuse			
3	Safeguarding Adults from Possible Abuse			
3	Anti-Discriminatory Practice			
3	Scientific Investigation Skills			

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>Required by LASER Examination Policy and identified as a commonly used assessment model within HE.</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	Together with Examinations this constitutes one of the most predominant assessment methodology for HE.
Report ³	High / Moderate / Low	A frequently used model of assessment required as many progression routes will employ this model and students should have some experience of it.
Presentation	High / Moderate / Low	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.
Case Study	High / Moderate / Low	May be appropriate to units where there is a requirement for application of knowledge.
Reflective Log	High / Moderate / Low	A model of assessment which enables the student to reflect upon their skills acquisition and to identify their strengths and weaknesses for future development. Whilst this is a 'required assessment model', the focus of assessment need not necessarily be reliant on a 'placement' type setting. The emphasis must though be on encouraging students to engage with the cycle of 'reflective learning' which is a core aspect of training within the Healthcare sector.

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

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

Recommended Assessment Models:

Recommended Assessment Model	Possible Weighting	Comments
Workbook	Strongly Recommended / Recommended / Suggested	<i>May be used in relation to any unit.</i>
Project	Strongly Recommended / Recommended / Suggested	<i>May be used as a means of assessing independent learning in a subject area.</i>
Experiment	Strongly Recommended / Recommended / Suggested	<i>May be employed where a unit requires the testing of a hypothesis e.g. Psychology.</i>
Laboratory Practical	Strongly Recommended / Recommended / Suggested	<i>May be used in association with 'experiment' within the Science based areas of study within Healthcare.</i>
Information Leaflet	Strongly Recommended / Recommended / Suggested	<i>May be used for example in terms of a 'health promotion leaflet' on a given issue or disease.</i>