

Access to HE Diploma Specification & Assessment Framework

Diploma Title: Social Sciences

Learning Aim:	40015804
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 Social Sciences enables centres to choose from a range of social science subject areas.

The progression routes¹ from this Diploma could include, but are not limited to, degrees in psychology, criminology, sociology, criminal justice, social work, teaching, anthropology, politics, public services, business studies, international relations, social policy, sports psychology, counselling, humanities, education, law, child and youth studies, 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	Anthropology, criminology, politics, psychology, sociology and social work	Choices to be made from 2 or more subject areas
B	9 or 15	Graded	Additional units from group A or selected counselling, education, English & creative writing, history, law, maths, or professional studies	Number of credits dependent on choice of graded or ungraded IAS
C	6	Graded or Ungraded	IAS Social Sciences	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.

Please note: QAA regulations state - *the maximum number of credits that can be made up from 6 or 9-credit units is 30 credits. Graded and ungraded 6 and 9-credit units will count towards the maximum.* As the Independent Academic Study is a mandatory graded or ungraded unit of 6 credits (Unit Group C), this means that **no more than four other 6-credit units (24 credits)** can be registered across Unit Groups A, B and D.

Anthropology

Credits	Title
3	Introduction to Anthropology & Research Issues
3	The Human Body: Biological and Social
6	Personhood: Rituals and Symbols
3	Gender and Sexuality

Criminology

Credits	Title
3	Crime and Social Exclusion
3	Criminal Investigations and Forensic Psychology
3	Critical Issues in Criminology
3	The History of Crime and Punishment
3	Introduction to Criminology
3	Introduction to Criminal Justice
3	Introduction to Forensic Crime Scene Investigation
3	The Media and Crime
3	Theories of Crime and Deviance
3	Victims and Victimology
3	White Collar Crime
3	Youth Crime and Youth Justice

Politics

Credits	Title
3	Anarchist Ideology
3	Conservative Ideology
3	Ecologism
3	Feminist Ideology
3	Liberal Ideology
3	Multiculturalism

3	Nationalist Ideology
3	Referendums, Elections and Electoral Systems
3	Representation, Participation and Democracy
3	Socialist Ideology
3	Studying a Political Ideology
3	The UK Constitution
3	Politics and the State of Nature Debate

Psychology

Credits	Title
3	Applied Stress Management
3	Bio-Psychology
3	Child Development
3	Cognitive Psychology
3	Criminological Psychology
3	Cyberpsychology
3	Forensic Psychology
3	Introduction to Psychology
3	Introduction to Sport Psychology
3	Neuro-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

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 Education
3	The Sociology of Family
3	The Sociology of Health
3	The Sociology of Poverty
3	The Sociology of Religion
3	The Sociology of the Mass Media

Social Work

Credits	Title
3	Anti-discriminatory Practice
6	Defining Social Work
3	Development of Social Welfare
3	Essential Practice Skills for Social Work
6	Introduction to Social Work
3	Safeguarding Adults from Possible Abuse
3	Safeguarding Children from Possible Abuse
3	Safeguarding in the UK
3	Social Science Research Methods
3	Social Welfare in the 21 st Century
6	Social Work Practice

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.

Counselling

Credits	Title
3	Approaches to Counselling
3	Introduction to Person-Centred Therapy
3	Listening Skills in the Helping Professions
6	Loss and Bereavement Counselling

Education

Credits	Title
3	Education – A Focus on Quality
6	Education – Current Policy and Practice
3	Education Studies
3	The History and Politics of Education
3	Theoretical Perspectives of Education
3	Theories of Learning
3	Understanding a School's Culture

English Literature & Creative Writing

Credits	Title
3	Fairy Tales, Folklore and Culture
3	Introduction to Creative Writing
3	Literary Comparisons
3	Poetry
3	Prose
3	Short Fiction
3	Studying a Play
3	Studying Literature
3	Writing Poetry
3	Writing the Short Story

History

Credits	Title
3	History – Hidden Voices
3	Introduction to the Study of History
3	The Individual in History
3	Using Historical Sources Effectively
3	Wider Reading for History

Law

Credits	Title
3	The Role and Function of Law
3	The British Constitution
3	Consumer Law
3	Criminal Law
3	Law and Civil Liberty
3	Contract Law
3	Employment Law
3	Family Law
3	Health and Social Care Legislation within the UK
3	International Law
3	Legal Process
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

Professional Studies

Credits	Title
3	Developing Professional Practice in Healthcare
3	Understanding Adolescent Health
3	Understanding Ethics in Healthcare
3	Understanding Health and Well-being
3	Understanding Health Promotion and Health Education
3	Understanding Human Health and Disease
3	Understanding Mental Health

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 (Social Sciences)

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)	
<i>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.</i>	
Credits	Title
Ungraded Criminology	
3	The History of Crime and Punishment
3	Introduction to Criminology
3	Introduction to Criminal Justice
3	Theories of Crime and Deviance
Ungraded Politics	
3	Politics and the State of Nature Debate
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
3	The Sociology of Crime and Deviance
Ungraded Social Work	
3	Anti-discriminatory Practice
6	Introduction to Social Work
3	Safeguarding Adults from Possible Abuse
3	Safeguarding Children from Possible Abuse
3	Social Science Research Methods
Ungraded Counselling	
3	Listening Skills in the Helping Professions
Ungraded Education	
3	Theories of Learning
Ungraded English Literature & Creative Writing	
3	Introduction to Creative Writing
3	Literary Comparisons
3	Studying Literature
Ungraded History	
3	Introduction to the Study of History
3	Using Historical Sources Effectively
Ungraded Law	
3	Consumer Law
3	Contract Law
3	Family Law
3	Law and Civil Liberty
3	Legal Process

Ungraded Maths	
3	Arithmetic
3	General Mathematics
3	Statistics
3	Trigonometry
3	The Nature and Applications of Statistics
3	Collecting, Presenting and Using Statistics
Ungraded Professional Studies	
3	Developing Professional Practice in Healthcare
3	Understanding Ethics in Healthcare
3	Understanding Health and Well-being
3	Understanding Health Promotion and Health Education
3	Understanding Human Health and Disease

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.

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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>
Report	High / Moderate / Low	<p><i>A less frequently used model of assessment but required as many progression routes will employ this model and students should have some experience of it.</i></p> <p><i>This could be evidenced by the submission of the graded IAS or could be evidenced via a graded alternative unit of assessment.</i></p>

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>
Literary Review	Strongly Recommended / Recommended / Suggested	<i>A model used within the study of English Literature, English Language and Media which require the student to formulate a written critique of the given text which may or may not draw on alternative academic sources depending on the nature of the task. The model may be broadened within Media to include 'Textual Analysis' of film or other media.</i>
Workbook	Strongly Recommended / Recommended / Suggested	<i>May be used in relation to any unit.</i>