



QAA



Access to HE

**Information for higher
education admissions**

The Diploma and admissions to higher education

The current specification was introduced in 2013 and all students who have achieved the full Diploma will offer:

- exactly 60 credits
- exactly 45 credits from graded Level 3 units concerned with academic subject content

Inclusion in the UCAS tariff (2017)

- Made possible by the current specification - consistency of structure and volume of academic content
- Research identified that in published entry requirements the significant majority of higher education courses accept Access to HE Diploma as an alternative to three A levels
- Methodology therefore treats Diploma as equivalent in size to three A levels for calculation purposes

Tariff methodology

- Uses the same methodology for Access to HE Diploma grades as for A level grades
- Ascribes points to grades on same ratio as used for A level A, C and E grades
- Makes it possible to generate points for any Access to HE Diploma grade profile

New tariff methodology

- Tariff points for A level grade C are twice that for grade E
- Tariff points for grade A are three times that for grade E
- To be consistent with this, the weighting for Pass, Merit and Distinction within the Access to HE Diploma should be the same
(Pass : Merit : Distinction = 1 : 2 : 3)

New tariff methodology:

A level grades:

- A = 48 tariff points
- C = 32 tariff points
- E = 16 tariff points
- AAA = 144 new tariff points (48+48+48)
- CCC = 96 new tariff points (32+32+32)
- EEE = 48 new tariff points (16+16+16)

Conversion factor

- The current specification for the AHE Diploma requires 45 credits from graded units
- Therefore, a conversion factor of 1.066 is required to convert from base 45 to base 48

Access to HE examples

- **45 credits at Pass x (conversion factor) = 48 new tariff points**
- **45 credits at Merit x 2 x (conversion factor) = 96 new tariff points**
- **45 credits at Distinction x 3 x (conversion factor) = 144 new tariff points**
- **30 credits at Distinction x 3 + 15 credits at Merit x 2 x (conversion factor) = 128 new tariff points**

Tariff points example - 112 points

Credits at Distinction	Credits at Merit	Credits at Pass
30	0	15
27	6	12
24	12	9
21	18	6
18	24	3
15	30	0

- A level - AAE, ABD, ACC, BBC
- BTEC National Diploma - DMM

QAA guidance to higher education admissions staff



Recommended good practice in setting requirements and making offers

- Recommendation 1: Refers to **'the Access to HE Diploma'**
- Recommendation 2a: In entry requirements, **refer to generic disciplines** for Diplomas, not particular titles
- Recommendation 2b: In conditional offers, refer to **the title of the Diploma named on the application**

How that might look

Entry requirements (examples):



- a) the Access to HE Diploma in any subject
- b) the Access to HE Diploma with 48 tariff points
- c) the Access to HE Diploma in a health-related or science subject
- d) the Access to HE Diploma in Art and Design or creative arts subject.

Conditional offers (examples):

- a) the Access to HE Diploma (title as given on application)
- b) the Access to HE Diploma (title as on application) with 48 tariff points
- c) the Access to HE Diploma (Health Studies)
- d) the Access to HE Diploma (Art and Design).

Setting requirements and making offers

- Recommendation 3a: To ensure consistency in requirements about the amount of achievement in a particular subject, **refer to the number of credits to be achieved** (not the number of units) in that subject

Credits	Units
	

Setting requirements and making offers

- Recommendation 3b: In conditional offers, ensure that any specification of requirements **does not exceed 60 credits**
- Recommendation 3c: In conditional offers, consider whether **more detailed specifications about particular requirements**, citing particular subjects offered by a particular student, might be necessary or helpful

How that might look

Entry requirements (examples):	Conditional offers (examples):
a) the AHE Diploma in any subject, with 30 Level 3 credits in arts or humanities units, of which at least six credits are from units in English literature	a) the AHE Diploma (Combined Arts), with 30 Level 3 credits from English literature, history or philosophy units, of which at least six credits are from units in English literature
b) the AHE Diploma in a science or engineering subject, with 12 Level 3 credits from units in mathematics	b) the AHE Diploma (Engineering), with 12 Level 3 credits from units in mathematics

Setting requirements and making offers

- Recommendation 3d: If tariff points are included in conditional offers, **any additional specific requirements relating to the required grade profile or specific subject areas** should also be specified
- Recommendation 4: When making requirements and offers based on achievement of grades, **specify the number of credits (not units)** which must be achieved at **Merit or Distinction** (within the maximum total available of 45 credits)

How that might look

Entry requirements (examples):	Conditional offers (examples):
a) the Access to HE Diploma in any subject, with 128 tariff points	a) the Access to HE Diploma, with 128 tariff points (title as given on application)
b) the Access to HE Diploma, with 128 tariff points in a health-related or science subject	b) the Access to HE Diploma, with 128 tariff points (Health Studies).

How that might look

Entry requirements (examples):

a) Access to HE Diploma (specify discipline area, if required) with 18 credits from science units at Merit or Distinction, of which six credits must be achieved in biology units awarded at Distinction (74 tariff points and above)

Conditional offers (examples):

a) Access to HE Diploma (Nursing) with 18 credits from science units at Merit or Distinction, of which six credits must be achieved in biology units awarded at Distinction (74 tariff points and above)

Setting requirements and making offers

- Recommendation 5: Consider asking for a **second reference** to gain more information about students' academic potential
- Recommendation 6: Consider **alternative approaches** to making **unconditional** offers

Setting requirements and making offers

- Recommendation 7: If any **additional qualifications or other requirements** (such as work experience) are a prerequisite, ensure that such requirements are made clear in published entry requirements

Support for admissions

- Guidance documents available from QAA website www.qaa.ac.uk
- QAA will respond to enquiries AHE@qaa.ac.uk



qaa.ac.uk



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