



Access to HE Provider Toolkit

Benefits of Access to HE

- A QAA-recognised Access to Higher Education (HE) Diploma is a full level 3 qualification and equivalent to A levels.
- The Access to HE Diploma is a qualification which prepares students for study at degree level and is often taken to enable a career change.
- It has been designed to give students relevant academic subject knowledge, and the opportunity to learn how to approach study at university-level and develop techniques to help them succeed.
- Access to HE students tend to be career-outcome focused, resilient and motivated.
- QAA-recognised Access to HE Diplomas are widely recognised by higher education providers throughout the UK – since September 2017, Access to HE Diplomas have been included in the UCAS points tariff.
- Diplomas are approved through a process of validation, involving representation from higher education – they can be flexible and respond to local as well as national needs.
- A student who successfully completes all course requirements is awarded the Access to HE Diploma. The ‘Access to HE Diploma’ is a reserved title. It can only be awarded to students on courses that have been approved through QAA’s Recognition Scheme.
- QAA-recognised Access to HE Diplomas are eligible for funding under legal entitlement and Advanced Learner Loans (in England).
- Students funded through the Advanced Learner Loan who achieve their QAA-recognised Access to HE Diploma and complete their higher-level studies can have the balance of their Advance Learner Loan written off.¹
- Access to HE courses are usually completed in one year. Some courses are offered on a part time basis for study over two or more years. All students must complete their studies within five years of starting the course.

¹ Tuition fee loans to cover the cost of a Level 3 foundation year are not written off on completion of a degree or higher level studies

- Access to HE courses are available in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.
- Students can study at a college or with a training provider, or at home through distance-learning - whichever meets their individual learning needs and best prepares them for their next steps into higher level learning.
- QAA-recognised Access to HE Diplomas are taken by students of all ages and backgrounds - what Access to HE students have in common is their commitment to return to learning to progress to higher level study or to refocus their career.
- Access to HE Diplomas do not expire but, as with any qualification, may lose currency over time. In some cases, students who apply to higher education several years after completing their Diploma may be asked by a university to evidence more recent studies or relevant experience.
- There are over 1,200 recognised Access to HE courses. All recognised courses are listed on the [database of QAA-recognised Access to HE courses](#).

