

Student Handbook

Access to Higher Education Diplomas



This handbook is designed for learners embarking on an Access to Higher Education Diploma. Access courses were designed in the late 1970's to encourage mature students to apply to university. They have moved on a very long way since then. Like A Levels they are a fully recognised admission route into university. In addition, they support learners to gain the necessary study skills to compete in an undergraduate setting. They recognise that learners who join them might have been out of education for some time and that some may not have positive memories of school and previous academic institutions. To that extent, you could argue that they offer a more holistic view of returning to learning. This booklet is designed to introduce how your diploma will work, discuss the support you will receive while studying with us, and to help you understand how units are graded and certificated.

Over the last decade so much has changed, individuals have found that they have more and more commitments and, of course since the pandemic, the option of studying online via distance learning models has become more attractive. In addition, negative experiences within previous educational establishments and learning barriers, such as social anxiety, might mean that an individual feels mainstream college is just not for them. With this in mind we designed our diplomas to fit around your commitments and offer comprehensive one-2-one support in order to help you progress and achieve that place at university. The course is fully accredited by Open Awards in Liverpool and available to anyone above the age of 19. There is no upper age barrier, all you need is a determination to succeed.



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Initial Advice and Guidance

You will have been sent this handbook when you made your initial enquiry about our Access provision. This is to allow you to read, absorb and understand about studying with us before you make the commitment to join us. The next steps are as follows:-

1. Apart from this handbook you will have been sent the **diploma specification** that is the detail of your diploma; the units you will study; progression information and testimonials of those who have studied on the diploma before you.
2. You will have also been sent an **application form** following your enquiry for you to complete and submit. Doing this demonstrates a formal interest in our diplomas. Should you later decide not to join us your application is vaulted for three years and then destroyed. Your data is not at risk.
3. You will have also been sent a link to book in for an **online tutorial/discussion** where you will get the opportunity to ask any questions you may have about the diploma, your studies, support and progression. The Educational Director, Sam McLean, will also show you how the online learning platform works, highlight the extent of learning resources available and discuss how your academic lecturer will work with you to enable you to complete your diploma with us.
4. Should you wish to move onto the next stage then you will be offered the opportunity to undertake an **initial assessment**. This is not a test, or a pass or fail scenario but it does allow you to see how you might work remotely and online. The assessment is based around a unit on all diplomas, that of Professional Behaviours. It consists of seven tasks on the topic area of communication with some activities aimed at supporting managing your studies and well-being. If you complete this initial assessment and decide not to join us, that is not a problem. If this is the case we will endeavour to help you decide what would work for and perhaps signpost you to alternative provision. However, if you do want to enrol at this point, this is what will come next.

Your unit on Professional Behaviours will be assessed and you will receive feedback and support on future academic developments. This will be sent with a **Next Steps** Email which gives the following detail:

- 🔔 **Payment plan** detail – your registration with our accreditation agent will not happen until you have paid the deposit
- 🔔 Information on how to start your **UCAS** application form with our buzzword
- 🔔 An invitation to the **first curriculum unit** on your diploma with a target deadline
- 🔔 An **introduction to your Curriculum Tutor** – this will prompt them to get in touch to help and support you in your academic journey with us
- 🔔 An invitation to an **Induction** via Zoom – these normally take place in the evening and enable us to take you through some of the key aspects of your diploma now you have decided to join us.
- 🔔 An invitation to join a remote space called **Support for Students**. In here you will find information on all aspects of support from debt advice to student cards to addiction help.

We look forward to helping you achieve your dream of going to university

The Access Curriculum Teaching Team

Studying Online – the distance learning model

When you begin a new unit, you will be sent an email invitation to join our **remote learning platform** via the Google Education Suite. Upon opening your email you click on the green box that says 'JOIN' you will then be taken into the remote learning space. Within this online classroom you will find the key components to completing the unit and they are:

- a) A **Unit Booklet/Assignment brief** - this document gives the detail of how you will be assessed for the unit, that is, what you need to do to achieve it. We use many assessment methods to include essays, reports, presentations and case studies. For some of your units you will have a choice as to how you are assessed and you can always approach your tutor if you have a study skill area you want more practice in.
- b) A **workbook/Task Sheets** – these will give you the foundation knowledge for the given unit subject area and they are designed to give you confidence in the curriculum area. The aim is to prepare you for your assignment. This workbook/task sheets are **not assessed** by your curriculum tutor
- c) **Reading and Wider Resource Material** – this may come in the form of extracts from key texts, journals, podcasts and other resources that your tutor thinks you might benefit from. There may be documentaries and other multi-media to assist you too. You should not need to purchase any other material unless you wish to as you have everything you need to complete your units of work in one, key space.
- d) When **you have completed your work**, you submit via an email attachment to your curriculum lecturer, who will send an email receipt. You can also submit within the google classroom. Please ask your tutor which they prefer you to do. The lecturer will endeavour to return your work to you within 14 days. Your feedback will give you guidance on your academic strengths and areas for further development as well as the overall grade you have achieved that is a pass, merit or distinction.

Support Package

We feel that we offer outstanding support to our learners and this may consist of:

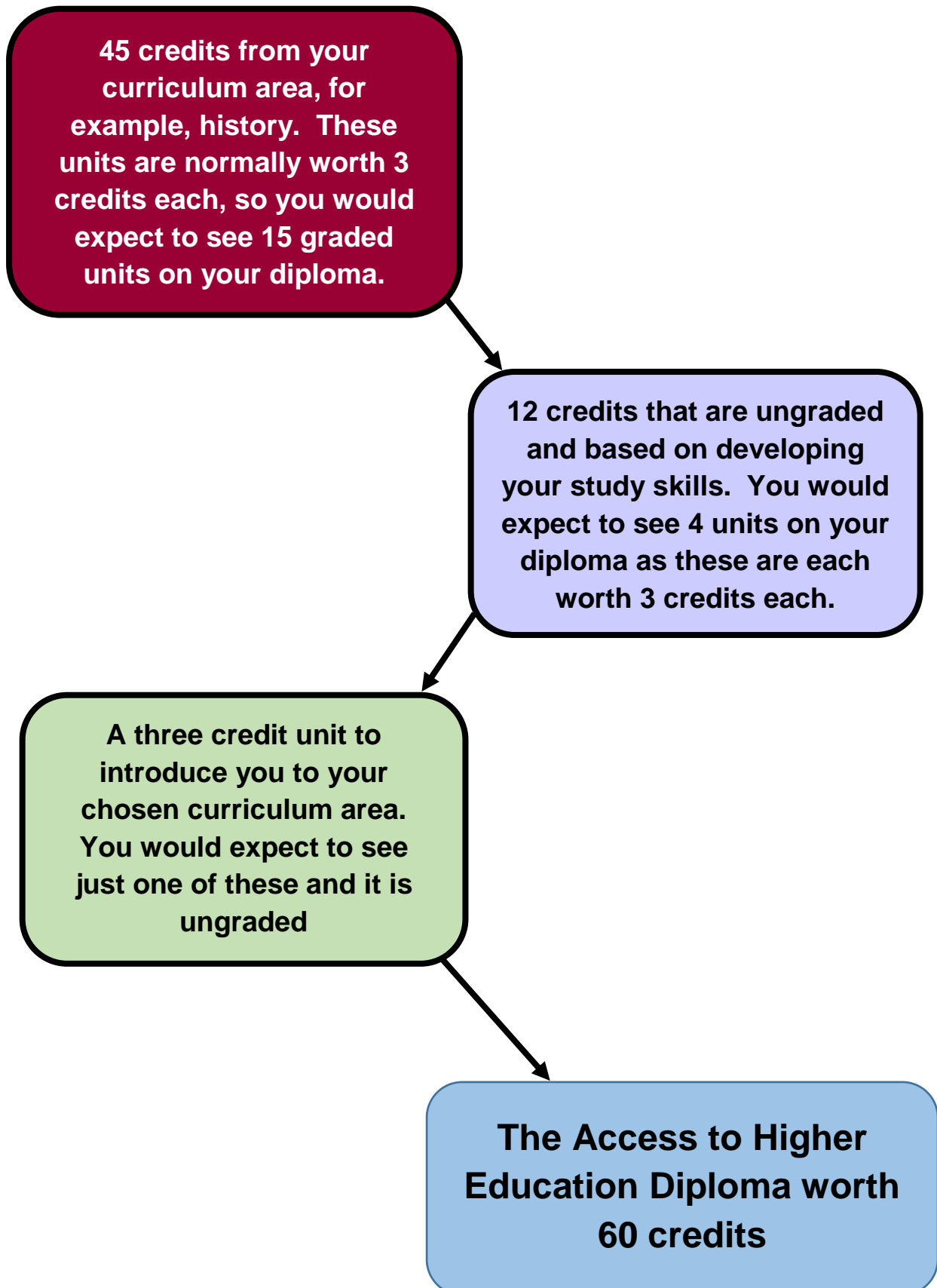
- ✓ Online **taught sessions** via Zoom– these are available on a request and may be opened to others on the pathway but only with your permission. These can be recorded and sent to you after the session.
- ✓ Contact with your curriculum tutor via **email, text, telephone and discussion board in the remote learning platform**
- ✓ Pathway **WhatsApp** groups so that you can support each other and share knowledge.

Many learners post articles that they think will support others, for example.

- ✓ A **Student Support Remote Platform** – this space holds lots of information that mirrors a Student Union at university or college. It houses information about managing your finances; a Totem card; keeping safe online; drug abuse and misuse plus many other aspects of student life.
- ✓ A **Developmental Units/Study Skill Guide Remote Platform** – this space hold the detail the study skill/ungraded units you complete with us along with lots of support materials from how to reference; essay writing; giving presentations and applying to university.
- ✓ We monitor your progress via a **Learner Journal** and you will be provided with this before induction. This document carries some basic personal contact information and holds a narrative of your academic journey with us. That is, it logs everything from the enquiry you made up to your exit interview! You will be expected to contribute to this narrative and this will be done at each Progress Review that you have during your course.



How Access Diplomas are Structured



The Building Blocks of your Access to Higher Education Diploma

These are, essentially, your units of study and they are measured in **learning outcomes** and **assessment criteria**. Learning outcomes denote what you will be able to do when you have completed the unit and the Assessment Criteria gives you the method. See the example below.

Learning Outcome Assessment Criteria

1. Understand how Hitler became Chancellor	1.1. Analyse the circumstances which led to Hitler becoming Chancellor in January 1933
This is what <u>you will</u> be able by the end of the unit. That is to understand how Hitler became Chancellor.	This is how you will do it. That is <u>analyse</u> the circumstances that led to Hitler becoming Chancellor in 1933

Within each of the unit assessment booklet you will find out what the learning outcomes and assessment criteria are and it is important that you study these. The meeting of the assessment criteria in your assignment is essential for you to pass the unit

Your curriculum lecturer will have created an assignment that meets the assessment criteria and the 'Assignment Support' section of your assignment brief will show that in more detail. See the example below.

The Rise of Nazism can solely be attributed the character of Adolf Hitler. True or False?

	<u>Key Points</u>	<u>Sources</u> <u>Notes</u> <u>Tips</u>
<u>Introduction</u> First slide – context Second slide - content	<p><u>Context</u> set the scene for a party like Nazism to grow in Germany post the First World War.</p> <p><u>Content</u> do you think that Hitler rose to power purely because he wanted to or were other factors that helped him into power? This is the key point to this essay. Make a decision and then set out your evidence before the reader which you have decided is the most compelling. Was Hitler just in the right place at the right time? Was power a master plan of his that can be dated back to the early 1920's and the Beer Hall Putsch?</p>	
<u>Main Body - Assessment criteria</u> Analyse the main events and turning points in Hitler's early political career (1.1)	<p>What do you think the main events were in Hitler's early political career? When do you think he became politically minded, was it in Vienna? How might you link Hitler's reaction to the war ending and the start of his political career?</p> <p>Consider 3 factors that contributed toward the appeal of the Nazis and the economic problems faced by Weimar.</p>	Pick as many slides as you feel you need for this section

<p>Discuss changing economic fortunes in Weimar Germany, 1919-1933 (2.1) Analyse the relationship between economic conditions and support for Hitler and the Nazi party in the 1920's (2.2)</p> <p>Discuss a variety of explanations for the collapse of the Weimar Republic and Hitler's rise to power (3.1) Evaluate different historical interpretations of Hitler's Rise to Power (3.2)</p>	<p>I would suggest you pick from the following list:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Anti-Semitism ✓ The Treaty of Versailles ✓ Growth of Communism ✓ Political instability ✓ Hitler's personality ✓ Problems in the Weimar government ✓ The Wall Street Crash and economic problems ✓ No alternative <p>Again you must integrate the role of Hitler and assess just how much he manipulated circumstance or was caught out by circumstance.</p> <p>The final part is to analyse the period from 1932 into 1933 and your timeline will really help you here. Try to consider how those months panned out for the key players, ie von Papen and Hitler, who got in the way/was outmanoeuvred. Hitler got his wish of only entering the Reichstag as Chancellor, how did he do that? Did he instigate it or was it more a case of there being no choice? Remember to integrate the differing historian interpretations of how Hitler and the Nazi party gained power in January 1933</p>	<p>Use the workbook activities to help and the reading material in the google classroom</p> <p>Make sure that you do analyse and move away from plain description</p>
<p><u>Conclusion</u> <u>Last slide</u></p>	<p>Return to the question and answer it pulling together the strands from each part of your presentation.</p>	

Most unit values are 3 credits but you may have some that are 6 credits, for example, research projects. Those values add up to meet the total of 60 credits for your diploma.

Grade Descriptors

From 1st August 2024 Access units will be graded using 3 rather than 7 descriptors. A grade is awarded for every level 3 unit that a student completes successfully. There is no overall or composite grade for an Access to HE Diploma.¹ Grading only takes place once a student has met all of the assessment criteria which means that they have passed the unit. From that point the student is assessed as to whether they have achieved a merit or a distinction for their work. The three grade descriptors are:

1. **Knowledge and Understanding**
2. **Subject Specific Skills**
3. **Transferable Skills**

Your Access to HE centre will use the detail within each of this to create your assignments and provide you with a full narrative of what you need to do to achieve beyond a pass. Please see the specifications of each descriptor below.

Knowledge & Understanding

<u>Merit</u>	<u>Distinction</u>
The student, student's work or performance:	The student, student's work or performance:
a) Generally demonstrates the ability to apply knowledge appropriately in a given context showing breadth or depth of knowledge in responding to the demands of the unit, with	Consistently demonstrates the ability to apply knowledge appropriately in a given context showing breadth or depth of knowledge in responding to the demands of the unit, with
b) A very good understanding and use of (choose from): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facts • Concepts • Theories • Models • Methods • Perspectives • Ideas • Principles • Practices • Procedures 	b) An excellent understanding and use of (choose from): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facts • Concepts • Theories • Models • Methods • Perspectives • Ideas • Principles • Practices • Procedures
There is no grading standard for pass. Students achieve a pass by meeting the requirements of the learning outcomes of the unit.	

¹ QAA – Section A – Introduction and Summary to the Access Grading Scheme – applicable for all new students registering from 1st August 2024.

Subject Specific Skills

<u>Merit</u>	<u>Distinction</u>
The student, student's work or performance:	The student, student's work or performance:
a) Generally demonstrates an ability in selecting and using skills as required by the unit with:	a) Consistently demonstrates an ability in selecting and using skills as required by the unit with:
b) Very good levels of (choose from) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accuracy • Precision • Efficiency • Creativity • Innovation • Reasoning • Insight • Focus • interpretation 	b) Excellent levels of (choose from) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accuracy • Precision • Efficiency • Creativity • Innovation • Reasoning • Insight • Focus • interpretation
There is no grading standard for pass. Students achieve a pass by meeting the requirements of the learning outcomes of the unit.	

Transferable Skills

<u>Merit</u>	<u>Distinction</u>
The student, student's work or performance:	The student, student's work or performance:
a) demonstrates very good communication and/or presentation skills evidenced by the use and/or selection of (choose from): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • format • structure • grammar • syntax • spelling and punctuation • imagery • artefacts • digital software • number • metrics • paralanguage 	a) demonstrates excellent communication and/or presentation skills evidenced by the use and/or selection of (choose from): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • format • structure • grammar • syntax • spelling and punctuation • imagery • artefacts • digital software • number • metrics • paralanguage

<p>b) demonstrates autonomy and/or independence evidenced by a very good ability to (choose from)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • plan, organise and complete work • respond appropriately to supervision • conduct independent research • manage time • collaborate with others • take responsibility for own contributions • reflect on own performance 	<p>b) demonstrates autonomy and/or independence evidenced by an excellent ability to (choose from)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • plan, organise and complete work • respond appropriately to supervision • conduct independent research • manage time • collaborate with others • take responsibility for own contributions • reflect on own performance
<p>c) generally adheres to academic and/or professional conventions in use of technical/specialist language and/or format in responding to the instructions set out in the assignment brief</p>	<p>c) consistently adheres to academic and/or professional conventions in use of technical/specialist language and/or format in responding to the instructions set out in the assignment brief</p>

Your tutor will set assignments and provide detail as to how to achieve beyond the standard pass, that is secure a merit or distinction within your assignment. Please see example below.

Grade descriptor	Merit	Distinction
<p>1 Knowledge and Understanding</p>	<p>Your work will generally demonstrate an ability to apply knowledge appropriately in a given context showing breadth or depth in responding to the demands of the unit and showing a very good understanding of perspectives, principles and ideas.</p> <p>In other words your assignment will demonstrate that you can provide clear and general definitions relating to the concepts, principles and ideas of Liberalism, Socialism and Feminism. Furthermore that you can apply concepts, principles and ideas with either breadth or depth to demonstrate a very good understanding of how they view liberty, the role of the state, democracy and equality.</p>	<p>Your work will consistently demonstrate ability to apply knowledge appropriately in a given context showing breadth or depth of knowledge in responding to the demands of the unit and showing an excellent understanding of perspectives, principles and ideas.</p> <p>In other words your assignment will demonstrate that you can provide clear and consistent definitions relating to the concepts, principles and ideas of Liberalism, Socialism and Feminism. Furthermore that you can apply concepts, principles and ideas with either breadth or depth to demonstrate an excellent understanding of how they view liberty, the role of the state, democracy and equality.</p>
<p>2 Subject Specific Skills</p>	<p>Your work will generally demonstrate an ability in selecting and using skills required by the unit with very good</p>	<p>Your work will consistently demonstrate an ability in selecting and using skills required by the unit with excellent levels of reasoning, insight and interpretation.</p>

	<p>levels of reasoning, insight and interpretation.</p> <p><i>In other words your assignment will demonstrate that you can generally apply appropriate skills in order to present a very good level of reasoning relating to how the three political philosophies evolved and developed. Furthermore, how they reasoned concepts such as liberty, the role of the state, democracy and equality. Your work must also show very good levels of insight and interpretation into each of the three political philosophies.</i></p>	<p><i>In other words your assignment will demonstrate a consistent application of the appropriate skills needed in order to present an excellent level of reasoning relating to how the three political philosophies evolved and developed. Furthermore, how they reasoned concepts such as liberty, the role of the state, democracy and equality. Your work must also show excellent levels of insight and interpretation into each of the three political philosophies.</i></p>
<p>3 Transferable Skills</p>	<p><i>Your work will demonstrate a very good presentation of spelling, grammar and punctuation. Furthermore, that it will generally adhere to academic and/or professional conventions in the use of technical/specialist language and/or format in responding to the instructions set out within this assignment brief. That is your work will be presented in a way that demonstrates you have attempted to eliminate spelling, grammar and punctuation errors resulting in a very good presentation. Furthermore, that you have, in the main, followed the instructions of the assignment brief.</i></p>	<p><i>Your work will demonstrate an excellent presentation of spelling, grammar and punctuation. Furthermore, that it will consistently adhere to academic and/or professional conventions in the use of technical/specialist language and/or format in responding the instructions set out within this assignment brief. That is your work will be presented in a way that demonstrates you have eliminated spelling, grammar and punctuation errors resulting in an excellent presentation. Furthermore, that you have followed the instructions of the assignment brief consistently.</i></p>

Student Feedback and Progress Reviews

Student Feedback - When you submit your assignment your tutor has up to 15 working days to return your work full assessed. This should be sufficient time for the feedback to be incorporated and acted upon in your current unit of work. You must submit your work and the formal feedback sheet at the same time.

It is really important that you read the feedback thoroughly and this will be provided both within the assignment itself (annotated in the text) and on the formal feedback sheets that accompany your assignment. Please make sure you have completed the learner comments and signed the declaration on the formal feedback sheet before you submit your assignment. Please see example below.

Learner's Name: Joe Bloggs	
Learner Declaration: <i>I can confirm that, apart from correctly referenced quotations, this assignment is my own work and contains no plagiarised content. All sources have been acknowledged and referenced.</i>	
Learner Signature: <i>J. Bloggs</i>	Date: 11/12/22

<p>Learner Comments:</p> <p>1. Did you understand what this assignment required? <i>Yes. I read all the workbook plus viewed the resource material before analysing the question</i></p> <p>2. Did you find any section of the assignment particularly difficult? <i>I found that I struggled to work out how much information was needed, I felt once I started researching that I opened a can of worms on the subject and could have written forever.</i></p> <p>3. Do you have any suggestions as to how the assignment could be improved? <i>No, I was happy with all the help I received from my tutor. Thank you.</i></p>

Feedback on your assignments will be in two forms, what went well, that is the good work you have done, and areas for development. You will be assessed against the grade descriptors for that unit. This may be shown in the following way:

Feedback against Grade Descriptors	Grade
<p>Knowledge and Understanding</p> <p><i>You provide an excellent demonstration of understanding regarding liberalism and focus on economic liberalism and Smith. Your discussion of socialism was insightful and contained all the key elements needed to show its origins and the influence of those early thinkers like Richardo. Impressive evaluation of Owen and a keen argument generated as to his influence on the co-operative movement and the development of socialism in the 19th and 20th centuries. Similarly, your discussion of feminism, its origins and key thinkers is excellent. In addition you provide an excellent evaluation of how each philosophy views the role of the state, democracy and equality. This last section really shone, so very well done!</i></p> <p>DP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Try and be more comprehensive in your discussion, you discuss Smith but his focus was economic Liberalism and I would have liked to see you discuss Classical Liberalism and Progressive Liberalism.</i> 	Distinction

OR

Feedback against Grade Descriptors	Grade
1. Knowledge and Understanding	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very good discussion of the main types of evidence available to archaeologists with some general examples of the evidence discussed. • Very good discussion of the different conditions for the survival of the evidence types discussed. • To improve, link your discussion to specific (real life) examples of the evidence and how they were preserved. 	Merit
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Progress Reviews – you can expect at least 3 full progress reviews during your diploma studies and these are held within your **Learner Journal**. Your tutor will usually initiate a review but you also can call one at any time during your studies. Please see an example of one below:

Review Date 13/3/23

Pathway History

Subject	Comments
<p><u>Proactivity/ Destination</u> <i>Punctuality/meeting deadlines/ attending zooms/tutorials</i></p> <p><i>University offers</i></p>	<p>Keele University Education and History VX13 Year 1 Application reply deadline 08 Jun 2023 Conditions for acceptance</p> <p>This offer is subject to you obtaining A total of 96 UCAS Tariff points from Level 3 qualifications. Your offer differs from our published entry requirements as we have considered your individual circumstances when reviewing your application.</p> <p>University of Wolverhampton History with Secondary Education (QTS) VX13 Year 1 08 Jun 2023</p> <p>This offer is subject to you obtaining</p> <p>Achieve Access to HE Diploma (Full Award). Pass of 60 credits of which a minimum of 45 credits must be at level 3 including 24 at Merit or Distinction. Provide GCSE English Language & Maths at grades 4/C or above. Complete fitness to teach form. You will need to undergo a DBS check &</p> <p><i>Jo is happy with the offers given but is just not sure about which university she wants to go to. She has open days to attend at each one over the next week or so. So she is hoping that this will help to clarify.</i></p> <p><i>She is on course to achieve the offers from the universities, so that there is no concern about that.</i></p>
<p><u>Progress</u> <i>What has the learner achieved so far? What are they good at?</i></p>	<p>Praise Points – Jo works very methodically and uses the materials effectively. The developing and consistency of argument is helping to secure the grades she is achieving.</p> <p>Polish Points – Jo has found that studying units with a high emotional content means that she has to adapt her learning to administer some self-care too. From her assignments her work needs to have a reference list and bibliography in alphabetical order. Consider too really evidencing and using stats to back up what you are saying. Think around the question, look at it from all angles before you make your mind up</p>

	<p>regarding an argument. For example, when discussing the middle class development, does that also tell us something about changes in the other social classes?</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Key Traditions in Political Philosophy</td> <td>Dist</td> </tr> <tr> <td>The Industrial Revolution in Britain: Origins 1700-1760 [3]</td> <td>Dist</td> </tr> <tr> <td>The Industrial Revolution in Britain: Nature and Scope 1760-1830 [3]</td> <td>Dist</td> </tr> <tr> <td>The Industrial Revolution in Britain: Social Consequences 1800-1850 [3]</td> <td>Dist</td> </tr> <tr> <td>History of Social Policies [3]</td> <td>TBM</td> </tr> </table>	Key Traditions in Political Philosophy	Dist	The Industrial Revolution in Britain: Origins 1700-1760 [3]	Dist	The Industrial Revolution in Britain: Nature and Scope 1760-1830 [3]	Dist	The Industrial Revolution in Britain: Social Consequences 1800-1850 [3]	Dist	History of Social Policies [3]	TBM
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<p>Study Skills Which areas is the learner to focus on from here, that is anything from sentence structure to being more analytical in their work</p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Communication: Academic Essay Writing [3]</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Communication: Presentation Skills [3]</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Professional Behaviours [3]</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Personal Development: Applying to HE [3]</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Studying History: an Introduction [3]</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> </table>	Communication: Academic Essay Writing [3]		Communication: Presentation Skills [3]		Professional Behaviours [3]	Pass	Personal Development: Applying to HE [3]		Studying History: an Introduction [3]	Pass
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<p>General</p>	<p>British Values – Studying the slave trade has really sharpened my knowledge and understanding of contemporary BV and it is evident that they have not always been there. It has made me see just how important they are and how could it be that people were treated with such as lack of respect and discriminated against in the past.</p> <p>Safeguarding – Chev Douglas and Sharon Nash. Jo says she would email them should an issue arise. She has been in the google classroom for Support for Students where she could see their contact details.</p> <p>Keeping safe online – Jo feels safe online, she is careful with what she discloses online, keeps her passwords complex and has a robust anti-virus software fitted.</p>										
<p>Concerns or additional support needs For example, completing in time to get to university/dyslexia/ Mental health issues, etc</p>	<p>Throughout this course, I have become more self-disciplined and have developed my research and writing skills. However, I have realised that when working on emotionally charged essays, I need to change my routine and allocate extra breaks to prioritise my mental health. This is especially important for me as I tend to become extremely hyper focused on a topic, which can be mentally exhausting. I need to allow myself additional breaks to reset my focus. For example, working on the essay about the Slave Trade is mentally challenging, as it requires reading about the atrocities committed by humans.</p>										

UCAS POINTS

Each unit of study and what you achieve in that unit in terms of grades has a UCAS point value. When you apply to university, your offer will consist of a condition, usually based on the number of UCAS points you need to achieve. Here are some examples of what this might look like:

A conditional offer based on you of achieving 96 UCAS points is equal to:

- 15 credits (5 units) being achieved at a Pass
- 15 credits (5 units) being achieved at a Merit
- 15 credits (5 units) being achieved at a Distinction

A conditional offer based on you achieving 112 UCAS points is equal to:

- 9 credits (3 units) being achieved at a Pass
- 12 credits (4 units) being achieved at a Merit
- 24 credits (8 units) being achieved at a Distinction

A conditional offer based on you achieving 128 UCAS points is equal to:

- 3 credits (1 unit) being achieved at a Pass
- 9 credits (3 units) being achieved at a Merit
- 33 credits (11 units) being achieved at a Distinction

A conditional offer based on you achieving 144 UCAS points is equal to:

- All graded units being distinction grade and all ungraded being achieved

You can keep a track of your points as you progress by clicking on the link below

[UCAS Tariff Points - Calculate Your Entry Requirements](#)



Deadlines, Extensions and Resubmissions Policies

It is vital that you get used to meeting deadlines and tutors are often asked specifically about this as part of your academic reference to UCAS. When you start a new unit, you will be given a **'working or target deadline'**. This is in line with the time that the tutor thinks you will need in order to complete satisfactorily. As this deadline approaches you and your tutor will negotiate a **'firm deadline'** and this must not be broken.² A late unauthorised submission is capped at a pass. All first submissions must be made before the Awards Board date.

Tutors may agree an **extension** period of up to two weeks by negotiation and where genuine reasons can be evidenced. In exceptional circumstances you may be granted longer than two weeks to submit however, that would need to be supported by your tutor and the Educational Director of Return to Learning Ltd.

Resubmissions [ungraded units] - A first submission that fails to meet the assessment criteria is returned to the student [with feedback] for resubmission within a short-designated period. A timely

² Only with extenuating circumstances can this be changed and evidence of reason must be provided to your tutor who will need to validate why there has been a change. For example, you may be asked for a note from your doctor to verify illness.



resubmission date is set that meets all the assessment criteria as being “achieved”.

Resubmissions [graded units] - A first submission that fails to meet all of the assessment criteria is returned to you for resubmission. Feedback must relate to the assessment criteria but may not make reference to the grade descriptors and components. Resubmission should be within a few days [no longer than a week] and be proportionate to the degree of non-achievement. A timely resubmission that meets all the assessment criteria is considered for further grading.

Unauthorised Late Submissions - If all the assessment criteria have been met, then the unit is capped at a Pass

Referrals

A student whose resubmission [Submission 2] fails to meet all the assessment criteria can request a referral i.e.; the opportunity to make a second resubmission [Submission 3]. The request is made of the assessor (your tutor) and Internal Verifier (IV) who will collate evidence and subsequently convey the request to the QASA [Quality and Standards Advisor at Open Awards]. Even if the assessor and IV believe the situation didn't warrant a referral, it should still be referred to the QASA for confirmation or challenge. The QASA informs the IV and the assessor of the decision. If approved, conditions of referral are set by the QASA and conveyed to the centre. Decisions about referrals made by the QASA must include:

- Whether or not a second resubmission opportunity should be offered
- The nature and extent of the requirements for second resubmission
- Compliance with the relevant requirements for first resubmissions

Referrals undergo assessment by the tutor, internal verification and external moderation. If all assessment criteria are met, achievement is capped at a Pass. If all assessment criteria are not met the result is a fail. A student is limited to referrals for assessments to a maximum of 15 credits.

Assessment method in resubmissions and referrals

Normally, the assessment method used for a resubmission is the same as that used for the original submission. However, there may be exceptions such as:

- ✓ if it is not possible or practicable for resubmission requirements to replicate the original assignment or assessment task [e.g. with some types of group work, or practical research] then [unmet] learning outcome[s] should be assessed through an alternative task/assessment form which makes comparable demands to those of the original.
- ✓ if undue advantage could be gained by resubmission of the same assessment

task then an equivalent one should be devised to assess the learning outcome[s] not yet achieved.

OR

- ✓ although delays in returning student work is inconsistent with Access Validating Agency (AVA) requirements for timely feedback, this might be considered if students can be informed of their grade and provided with feedback on their achievement in the task[s].

Reasonable Adjustments and Considerations Policy

We have clear policies on the handling of disabilities and events that may affect a student's ability to be assessed

1. Reasonable adjustments

Reasonable Adjustments are adjustments made to an assessment for a qualification so as to enable a student to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understanding. The nature of any reasonable adjustment depends on the particular requirements as well as on the qualification and assessment methods. Reasonable adjustments are generally not appropriate where the student's particular difficulty directly affects performance in the actual features to be assessed. Units within an Access to HE Diplomas are assessed through internally set and internally assessed assessments. For this type of assessment, the Internal verifier (IV) may give permission for reasonable adjustments for a student without having to apply to the AVA for approval, provided that such arrangements do not confer an unfair advantage. Examples of reasonable adjustments include but are not exclusive to: low vision aids, overlays, use of a practical assistant brailing of non-secure assessment, material use of a communicator, amplification, taped questions and responses, supervised rest breaks, use of sign language. The IV must approve and record the details of all reasonable adjustments made at the discretion of the centre and must make this available for External Moderation.

2. Special considerations

Special consideration is where consideration is given to a student who has temporarily experienced: an illness or injury, or some other event outside of their control - which has had or is reasonably likely to have had an effect on their ability to take an assessment or on their level of attainment in an assessment. Special consideration is not appropriate for a minor illness or a minor disturbance. You should note that it may not be possible to apply special consideration

where an assessment requires you to demonstrate practical competence. In some circumstances it may be more appropriate to offer you an opportunity to take the assessment at a later date rather than apply special considerations.

Recognition of Prior Learning/Credit Transfers and Exceptions

Recognition of prior learning (RPL) may apply to you if you already have some qualifications at level 3 or above in the subject area you will be studying on the Access diploma. For example, you may have started an Access course before and have some partial certification or you have studied at degree level some component parts of your current Access diploma. Please ensure that you have completed the education section effectively. The qualifications entered here will be checked with the government **Learner Records** website for accuracy. Should you have qualifications stated above then you may be able to apply for a credit transfer or be exempt from completing certain units in your diploma. If you feel that this is the case and this has not already been raised with you during initial tutorials/induction³ please do not hesitate to bring this to our attention.

If it is the case that you can apply for RPL we will complete the necessary paperwork and gain authorisation from our awarding body.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is when you present work or ideas from another source without recognising the author. When you do this you are committing an illegal act by taking someone else's intellectual property and presenting it as your own. This does not mean you cannot use others' ideas, data or perspectives but when you do, you must reference that source. There are a number of resources in the Google classroom 'Developmental Ungraded Units –Study Skill Guide' and these will show you how to reference using either the Harvard or Chicago method. You will also receive support from your subject tutor.

Return to Learning Ltd regards plagiarism as a serious matter, cases of it will be investigated and penalties may range from a deduction of grade to an expulsion from the course. If plagiarism is detected in submitted work by an assessor they will pass that assignment to the organisation's internal verifier for a second opinion. If there is no evidence of a breach, the matter will be solved, however, if the investigation demonstrates that this was a wilful act then the learner will be referred

³ When your application form is checked we are focussed on identifying whether you will be able to claim RPL and you should be approached by the Educational Director if this is the case.

to a disciplinary panel which will include our awarding body. The ultimate decision on action will reside with the Director of Education and that decision will be final.

Costings and Pricings

The cost of all Access to HE diplomas is £2350. You will be offered a number of financing options, however, each one does require a deposit of £500. Should you not maintain the finance agreement then, in the first instance, you will be contacted and asked to continue payments. Should you not do this then your studies will be paused until you reconvene payments. Should you not do this, then after 30 days you will be formally withdrawn from the diploma. You will not be able to request a refund in this situation.

Withdrawal from the Diploma

Withdrawal from the diploma might happen for a number of reasons, for example, if you commit plagiarism or you decide to discontinue your studies. You should inform the Director of Education if you wish to withdraw and you will be sent a formal withdrawal letter that you sign and return. The details of that withdrawal will depend on the circumstances and will be made clear in the withdrawal letter. Any units of work achieved will be certificated at the next Awards Board and your registration with the accreditation agency will be terminated.

Meet the Team

Sam McLean

Director of Education



Hi, my name is Sam and I am the Director of Education at Return to Learning Ltd. I am also the curriculum lecturer for Modern History, Social Science and Humanities diplomas. I completed an Access course in 1994 when I was 30 years old, so I do have a very good idea of how it feels to return to learning. I gained a history degree, graduating in 1998 and have been teaching ever since. I have taught Access for the whole of that time but also taught on A Level programmes. I am an Access enthusiast and just love how this qualification changes lives and opens up a world of opportunity. For me it was as if someone had switched the light on and let the world in! I hope you enjoy the course and I look forward to supporting you over the coming months.

Jenny Arnold

Lecturer in Ancient History and Archaeology



Hello, my name is Jenny and I am the Archaeology and Ancient History curriculum lecturer. I have been an Ancient History enthusiast from a young age, gaining an Archaeology degree from Reading University in 2014. I love the opportunity that Access provides to individuals and to be able to share this brilliant subject with others is fantastic! I began working with the online model in 2020 and have found working with learners, who share my fascination with the past, to be amazing and inspiring. I hope that you love the course as much as I do and I look forward to supporting you during our time working together.

Neil Molyneux

Lecturer in Health Professions and Psychology



Hello, my name is Neil and I am the curriculum lecturer for Health Professions and Psychology. I gained a BSc in Biology & Geography in 1997 followed by a PGCE. I have been teaching ever since. Initially in Secondary Schools, then FE teaching A level Biology. Then I apprehensively agreed to teach Access. Now I am a convert with over 15 years' experience as a teacher and an Access Coordinator. So, I understand that it may not have been an easy decision for you to join us, but I hope you will learn to love it as much as I do. This course empowers people as they gain confidence and knowledge, as they step into a bright new world. I sincerely hope that you will find the Access course an immensely satisfying and rewarding experience.

Eleanor Littlewood

Lecturer in Business based diplomas



Hello, my name is Eleanor but most people call me Nell. I completed my degree at Manchester University in Business and Finance and achieved a first class honours. I began teaching with Access using the online model after travelling for 6 months in 2019. My travels took me to Thailand, Vietnam, Bali and Australia and I enjoyed connecting with the cultures of these countries. I mainly focus on lecturing in accountancy and finance but love all of the business diplomas. Teaching is an amazing job and I am really focussed on helping others to achieve getting into university and securing their dream, whatever that might be!

Asa Bradford

Lecturer in Business based diplomas



Hi, I'm Asa. When I went to university as a mature student I did so with the express intent of becoming a teacher and inspiring people to unlock their potential. I've certainly enjoyed the 15 years of pursuing this vocation and have met so many interesting people that have inspired me as much as I have motivated them. It's an amazing job and I'm fortunate to be working with Sam and the team to help you achieve your goals.

Dave Hawdon

Lecturer in English and Media



Hello there, I'm Dave. I have more than 23 years of experience teaching on Access programmes; I know they do just what is stated 'on the tin'. I'm committed to the Access pathway to university, not least because they offer learners a second chance at H. E. but also incredible flexibility in terms of how to achieve their goals. Like my colleagues, I have witnessed first-hand how someone's life chances can dramatically change through education.

In terms of my subject area, successful students have gone on to study English, English Literature, and linguistics at degree level. In addition, creative writing, journalism, philosophy, theology, teaching, history, film studies and media studies are just some of the possible university options.

The journey requires hard work and commitment, but it is undoubtedly worth it. I look forward to meeting you.

Testimonials

Archaeology and Ancient History	<p><i>“The feedback from Jenny on each assignment was extremely helpful and highlighted areas where I could improve in future assignments. The turnaround on each assignment was also very quick, which I really appreciated throughout. Overall this has been a positive experience for me, and I feel it has prepared me really well for going on to do a degree. I genuinely never expected to achieve the grades I have, so thank you for delivering a course that inspired me to work so hard!”</i> Frances</p> <p><i>“The support I received throughout this course was amazing, and I’m truly so grateful to Jenny and Sam.”</i> Rebecca</p>
Business	<p><i>“Overall, I have thoroughly enjoyed completing my Access to HE course and looked forward to receiving each new unit. Likewise, feedback from Nell was super useful and encouraged further thinking and research where relevant (via the Google Docs notation). Likewise, Sam was amazing (and very patient!!!) when sorting out my UCAS application. She made sure it was sent off in a timely manner, completed to the best of my ability, and that I had chosen my courses and universities carefully (via guidance in the Applying to HE unit). Thank you both immensely!”</i> Kyle</p>
Business and Management	<p><i>“I have thoroughly enjoyed my Business and Management Access to HE course and cannot recommend it enough. The variety of topics covered was good and provided a nice foundation in preparation for university. For example, calculating business accounts (and preparing them for a hypothetical business) and investigating the legalisations faced by businesses in the UK. Of the units I struggled with, support from Nell was great and cushioned how hard I found them.”</i> Amber</p>
Business and Accountancy	<p>“Overview of my Journey <i>I can’t lie, it was super hard! However, balancing a full-time job, alongside completing this course, as so many others taking this course will, was one of the best decisions I have made. It has given me an opportunity to ‘re-do’ my a-levels and prove my capability to myself and Universities. At the beginning I would never have imagined in my wildest dreams I would achieve 144 UCAS points, which has now demonstrated to me my own capabilities and potential.”</i> Daisy</p>
English and Media	<p><i>Dave was amazing, I loved English Literature but was nervous about doing units of study on the subject. His support enabled me to achieve getting a distinction for my essay on Death of a Salesman. I thought the materials</i></p>

	<p>were fantastic and my whole experience was so positive, especially after trying to do the course with another provider. Thanks Dave! Emma</p>
<p>Health Professions</p>	<p>“When I first applied to do this access course, I remember feeling so overwhelmed and anxious that I would not be able to complete it to a good enough standard, especially after being out of education for so long. However, I could not have been more wrong. Sam and Neil helped me through every blip and was always a reassuring email away. The process has been so smooth and well planned.” Emily</p> <p>“I liked that Google classrooms were used for the unit resources and assignments as it is easy to use and doesn’t take long to learn your way around if you’re using it for the first time. Working remotely and solely-online for this course meant that I was able to fit it around my part-time work and other commitments which gave me great flexibility. The pace of the units allowed enough time to complete my work without making it too pressurised from a time-management perspective.” Lewis</p>
<p>Modern History</p>	<p>“This course had been absolutely brilliant and has boosted my confidence academically. Sam was able to understand my strengths and weaknesses quickly and encouraged me to work on my negatives, to allow me to improve my work. From Sam’s techniques of understanding on how I learn best, I have been able to improve my academic ability and feel confident about University.” Kareem</p> <p>“Overall, a great experience and Sam was approachable, helpful, supportive throughout the process!” Dylan</p> <p>“The course in general was brilliant and I was not sure what to expect but the classrooms really helped and they were laid out really well. I feel I was well supported by Sam.” Alice</p> <p>“For me the course was really good and I found it useful to see how I would manage my time, especially with children. I needed to be organised as I worked full time and it made me realise just how much I wanted to achieve. You have to be focussed and self-disciplined. The fact I did not have to stop work to do it was fundamental, I would never have been able to do this course without it being online.” Kirstie</p>

Humanities and Social Science	<p><i>“Overall, I can confidently say that I enjoyed my assignments and feel I have gained vast insight into important historical subjects and contemporary issues and philosophies. Opportunities to present my work in varied forms e.g., presentations, reports and essays, has prepared me for a variety of assessment methods when I go to university.” Hannah</i></p> <p><i>“My tutor, Sam, was positive and knowledgeable from start to finish, whilst also trusting in my ability to complete the assignment or ask for help – an approach which really worked well for me! Not once did I feel lost or alone, despite working remotely in a pandemic! If you are a willing to put in the hard work, ask for help from these lovely people when you need it, and WANT to further your horizons I would 100% recommend this pathway.” Emma</i></p>
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Social Science	<p><i>“Personally I found this Access to HE course suited me down to the ground. The course is what you make of it and allows you the flexibility to complete at a pace that works around your life. I found the content was fantastic and each work book was filled with so much quality information which made the assessments very achievable. Time management has been key to completing the course but as long as you organise this around your lifestyle it is absolutely manageable. The feedback and tutor support has been a highlight of the course for me. Sometimes online courses can lack appeal due to the fear of not having a point of contact or help whenever you need it, however, Sam has been a text message/phone call/zoom chat away whenever any support has been needed and this really made the course worthwhile. One bit of advice to other learners would be to always keep in mind your end goal and why you decided to apply for the course. Sometimes it can be easy to let life get in the way and lose a bit of motivation so keeping your goal in mind just gives you that boost of determination to keep on going. All in all, I have found this course has given me the opportunity to achieve what I didn’t think I could and has offered me a way into higher education that I didn’t even know was possible after high school and that feels amazing.” Holly</i></p> <p><i>“I found the Access to HE Diploma in Social Sciences very interesting and varied. I enjoyed every module and have already recommended it to friends and family members who are seeking to study in this area. The support documents and literature I received were very informative and were relevant to the assignments I needed to complete. Each module content was very well planned and easy to read and concise. I received exceptional support from my tutor who not only was able to answer my enquiries promptly but was able to support my thought process throughout my Access to HE Diploma journey, which built up my confidence at every stage. I feel that the Access to HE Diploma and the support that I received has enabled me to transition into Higher Education as I acquired important, critical thinking and academic writing skills that are invaluable” Eysha</i></p>
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Sociology and Criminology	<i>“At the start of the Access Course I felt completely out of my depth, having never written an essay I was starting from scratch. With the support of my tutor and peers my confidence began to build and I became competent in my abilities which was evident in my marks. My journey continues with further study at degree level and I am excited about what lies ahead.” Phena</i>
Teaching	<i>“I have found the programme completely ideal. The information I needed right in front of me and the support really suited my learning style. It gave me the opportunity to just go and get on with it. It was a key motivator in improving my time management and this has really prepared me for university.” Jay</i>

Our Awarding Body

Our Awarding body is an AVA (Access Validating Agency) called Open Awards. They are based in Liverpool and, as part of their licensing agreement with the QAA, they undergo a number of quality checks throughout the academic year with us. This is what they do to check that you are receiving a good quality of education on our distance learning diplomas:

October – Annual Compliance Review to assess provision, internal quality systems and accurate standardisation and format of diplomas.

November – Review of unit assessment arrangements undertaken by subject specialist external moderators.

February – Mid-Year Compliance Review – QASA speaks with learners and staff regarding the quality of provision at the provider

January –June – Subject Specialist moderation of learner work. External moderators check that all learner work is accurately assessed and that feedback is both supportive and developmental.

June and August – Final Awards Board where learners’ progress and achievement is checked and they are certificated.

This is what they have said about us

Positive feedback provided from the learners with regard to the remote way of learning, support and guidance provided by the tutors has been received from learners following their exit review. Good grades achieved by the learners, with a high percentage falling within the merit and distinction grading bands.
 Good level of progression recorded, 100% for Business & Law, Humanities & Social Science.
 Excellent support provided to learners in terms of access to resource materials and one to one interaction with tutors.
 Good management of the provision and collaboration with Open Awards.

Useful sources

The QAA website <http://www.accesstohe.ac.uk/Pages/Default.aspx>

Read the Access success stories in the case-studies.

UCAS website <http://www.ucas.ac.uk>

Universities and Colleges Admissions service

Open Awards website <https://openawards.org.uk/>

The Student Room the world's largest remote student community base

<https://www.thestudentroom.co.uk/> <https://www.thestudentroom.co.uk/forum.php> ·

International Student Forum and Blog <https://www.topuniversities.com/community>