

The Diploma

Information taken from http://www.ucas.ac.uk/he_staff/curriculumandquals/diplomas/

Diplomas are new qualifications which offer students an alternative to the traditional GCSE and A level route. They are offered at three levels - Foundation, Higher and Advanced - in 14 broad employment sectors, supplemented by three additional subject-based Diplomas in science, humanities and languages. The first five Diploma lines (sector areas) are being taught by selected consortia of schools, colleges and training providers from September 2008. By 2013 all students in England will be entitled to access all 17 Diploma lines.

All Diplomas require students to achieve a minimum standard in English, mathematics and ICT, complete a project and do a minimum of 10 days' work experience. Diploma students will also be prepared for success in employment and higher education by gaining skills and knowledge both special to the discipline being studied and those which are common, like teamwork, self-management and critical thinking skills.

Diplomas lines (subject areas) available

There are 17 Diploma lines that are being introduced over the next few years - all will be available throughout England by 2013. Click on the Diploma title to view the relevant website. All website links open in a new window.

Each of the Diplomas will be piloted for three academic years following its introduction.

Phase 1: From September 2008-2011

Construction and the Built Environment
Creative and Media
Engineering
Information Technology
Society, Health and Development

Phase 2: From September 2009-2012

Business, Administration and Finance
Hair and Beauty Studies

Environmental and Land-based Studies
Hospitality
Manufacturing and Product Design

Phase 3: From September 2010-2013

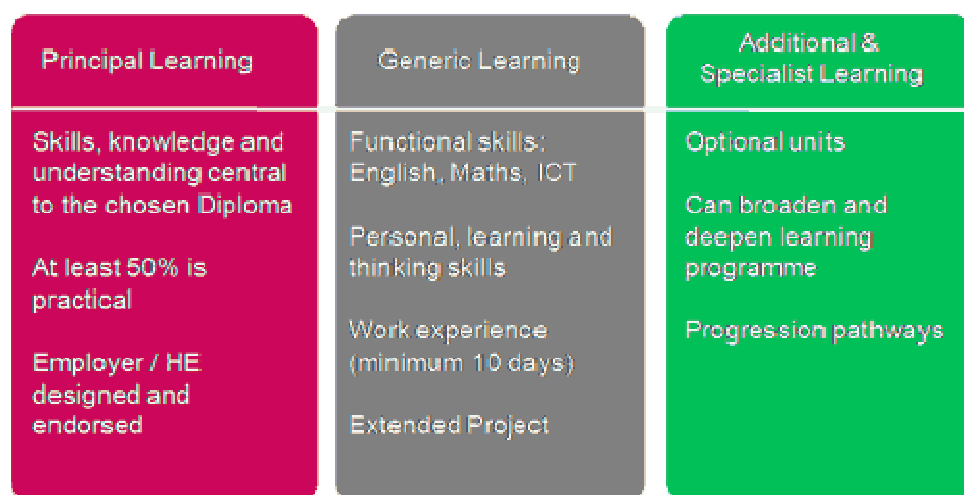
Public Services
Retail Business
Sport and Active Leisure
Travel and Tourism

Phase 4: From September 2011-2014

Humanities
Science
Languages

Structure of the Diploma

The Diploma will bring together:



1. **Principal learning** is sector and subject related learning

Principal learning focuses on developing and applying the knowledge and skills that are relevant to the particular line of learning. At each level a minimum of 50% must be concerned with the application of knowledge and skills through tasks, problems and situations that are related to work in the sector or subject area.

Principal learning will be made up of units of assessment that have been newly developed and accredited for each Diploma. The size of units will vary according to the level of the Diploma.

- At level 1 and 2 units may be of 30 and 60 guided learning hours (GLH).

- At level 3 units may be 30, 60 or 90 GLH.

2. **Generic learning** has a wide application and can be developed and is subsequently integrated in a variety of contexts, including through and across principal learning and additional and specialist learning (ASL). The different parts of generic learning are described in further detail below:

Generic learning includes:

- **Functional skills:** Diplomas require learners to gain functional skills in English, mathematics and ICT. The Foundation Diploma requires level 1 achievement. Higher and Advanced Diplomas require achievement at level 2. Functional skills are part of the generic learning component of the Diploma, but learners will have opportunities to develop and apply functional skills across all Diploma curricula.

Functional skills are free-standing qualifications that are separately assessed. They are an essential component of several learning programmes (for example, in GCSEs as well as the Diploma).

- **Personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS)** are necessary for work and for general learning. A framework for PLTS sets out the requirements for the following six skills:
 - independent enquiry
 - creative thinking
 - reflective learning
 - team working
 - self-management
 - effective participation.

Learners will have opportunities to develop and apply all six skills within principal learning. Learners may also develop and apply PLTS within work experience and the extended project. PLTS will not be separately assessed as part of the Diploma; instead PLTS will be integrated into the assessment criteria for principal learning. Each learner's achievement of PLTS will be recorded in the Diploma transcript.

- **Extended project** will be available at levels 1, 2 and 3. The project is a free-standing, single-unit qualification and is a constituent qualification of the Foundation, Higher and Advanced Diplomas.

The Extended project will:

- contribute to the overall Diploma grade
- will be locally assessed and moderated
- will require 120 GLH of directed study encourage critical, reflective and independent learning
- be sector and subject relevant.

At level 3 the project will provide the opportunity for learners to:

- demonstrate their full potential, interests and creativity within set parameters
 - focus in more depth and breadth on their sector- and subject-related learning by engaging in an investigative piece of work on, for example, environmental, social, economic, political and/or other issues related to their principal learning
 - develop and apply decision-making and problem-solving skills
 - develop and apply skills creatively, demonstrating initiative and enterprise
 - extend their planning, research, critical thinking, analysis, synthesis, evaluation and presentation skills
 - apply functional skills and PLTS
- **Work experience:** All learners will be expected to undertake a minimum of 10 days' work experience to support their programme of study.

Work experience:

- supports the development and recognition of work-related learning
- develops sector or subject skills when set in relevant settings
- develops general employability skills in other settings
- enhances the overall learning experience
- allows flexibility in how evidence of attainment is achieved.

Each learner at each level of the Diploma must do at least 10 days of work experience; for older learners, in some cases, part-time work could provide some, or all, of the required experience, with appropriate structured recording of skills development. Work experience will not be assessed.

3. Additional and specialist learning (ASL) comprises components which either give more depth in a specialist area and/or greater breadth to the chosen line of learning programme of study, eg through a language or science qualification.

The Advanced Diploma catalogue for 2008 lists an extensive choice of existing qualifications and units for each of the five lines of learning introduced in September 2008. It is possible for HEIs to indicate required choices of ASL for progression to particular HE courses.

ASL within the Advanced Diploma:

- supports choice and progression within a coherent whole programme
- enables the learner to specialise and/or take up relevant complementary learning
- consists of qualifications chosen by the learner from the Diploma catalogues
- provides opportunities to meet particular entry requirements for HE progression
- includes level 2 and 3 qualifications but also includes qualifications from a higher level (such as level 4 qualifications) from HE.

For specialist learning, sector and subject experts will identify qualifications that can be combined to allow learners to explore the sector or subject in ways relevant to them. Options will be grouped together to create progression pathways.

- ASL catalogues can be located at: National Database of Accredited Qualifications (NDAQ): www.accreditedqualifications.org.uk

UCAS Tariff Points

Progression Diploma*

Grade	Tariff points
A*	350
A	300
B	250
C	200
D	150
E	100

*Points for the Progression Diploma come into effect for entry to higher education from 2010 onwards.

Advanced Diploma = Progression Diploma plus Additional & Specialist Learning (ASL). Please see the appropriate qualification to calculate the ASL score. ASL has a maximum Tariff score of 140.

University of Worcester Statement on Diplomas

The University of Worcester welcomes the new Advanced Diplomas as a suitable alternative to the traditional A level route into HE courses. Applications will be accepted from Advanced Diploma students for entry to many undergraduate programmes, both related HE courses at foundation degree and honours degree level, and other courses in the university. For more detailed information please contact our Admissions Office 01905 855111 or e-mail admissions@worc.ac.uk.