

# Diplomas

## Frequently Asked Questions



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## General Diploma Information

### What is a Diploma?

The Diploma is a new qualification designed to recognise achievement of the 14 - 19 learner group. It combines practical skill development with theoretical and technical understanding and knowledge.

Diplomas:

- provide credible, industry-verified applied learning, linked to interdependent general learning, with real opportunities to practise skills.
- open up choices for young people.
- offer routes into further or higher education, apprenticeships or employment.

### Why have Diplomas been introduced?

Diplomas have been introduced as part of a range of changes to 14-19 education that aim to widen the choice of courses available to young people, motivate them and encourage them to continue learning for longer. The Diploma blends theoretical and applied learning with key Functional Skills (English, Mathematics and ICT) in a work-related context to allow learners to develop a broad skills base to move into further education or employment.

### Are Diplomas replacing A Levels and GCSEs?

No. Diplomas will sit alongside GCSEs and A Levels and can be studied as either an alternative or in combination with them.

### What is a Sector Skills Council?

Sector Skills Councils are employer-led organisations covering all sectors of the economy which are responsible for tackling the skills, productivity needs and training in the UK.

### What are Diploma Lines of Learning?

Lines of learning are the 14 qualifications that are being developed over the next three years across a sector. [View our lines of learning \[http://diplomainfo.org.uk/AQA-City-and-guilds-diploma-lines-of-learning.aspl\]](http://diplomainfo.org.uk/AQA-City-and-guilds-diploma-lines-of-learning.aspl).

### What does a Diploma involve?

The Diploma is comprised of compulsory and optional elements. Compulsory elements include Principal Learning (a qualification based on your chosen subject eg. engineering), Functional Skills (English, Mathematics and ICT), a Project and 10 days work experience (at each level). Optional elements include Additional and Specialist Learning, which are programs selected by the learner in consultation with the teacher, that allow the learner to explore a specialist area or broader area such as a language. This balanced learning approach will allow learners to develop Personal, Learning and Thinking Skills and knowledge to prepare for further education or work.

### How does the Diploma relate to the national curriculum?

Key stages 3 and 4 have been altered, which will be phased in from September 2008, with the introduction of the Diplomas. Functional Skills (English, mathematics and ICT) have been built into the new curriculum. They have been written in the same format as the subject programmes of study, increasing coherence of learning at key stage 4.

## What is the difference between each Diploma level?

Each level of the diploma is structured as follows:

	Principal Learning	Generic Learning			Additional and Specialist Learning
	Main Subject eg. Creative and Media	Project	Functional Skills	Work Experience	Optional courses agreed with course coordinator
Foundation Diploma	Practical assessments + 1 exam	Foundation Project	ICT / Maths / English Level 1	Minimum 10 days	Choose from a range of qualifications including:  City & Guilds vocational qualifications  GCSEs  A levels  Not required
Higher Diploma	Practical assessments + 1 exam	Higher Project	ICT / Maths / English Level 2	Minimum 10 days	
Advanced Diploma	Practical assessments + 2 or 3 exams	Extended Project	ICT / Maths / English Level 2	Minimum 10 days	
Progression Diploma	Practical assessments + 2 or 3 exams	Extended Project	ICT / Maths / English Level 2	Minimum 10 days	

## What is the Progression Diploma?

This is a variant on the Level 3 Advanced diploma, which does not require that learners complete the ASL (and which thus attains fewer UCAS points)

## How does the Diploma compare to A Levels and GCSEs?

In terms of challenge and length of study each level of the Diploma is broadly comparable as follows:

Study Level	Equivalent to	Guided Learning Hours
Foundation Diploma (Level 1)	5 GCSEs (D-G grade)	600
Higher Diploma (Level 2)	7 GCSEs (A*-C grade)	800
Advanced Diploma (Level 3)	3.5 A levels (A*-E grade)	1080
Progression Diploma (Level 3)	2.5 A Levels (A*-E grade)	720

## How many points are Diplomas worth?

The Diploma has extra points awarded to it to recognise achievement of the whole qualification and passing all elements of the Diploma, in addition to the points awarded to the component parts of the qualification. Therefore the score for the Diploma is greater than those awarded for the combination of PL and EP as it includes an extra allocation awarded for completion of key/functional skills, personal learning and thinking skills (PLTS) and work experience. Whilst these generic learning components do not attract Tariff points if taken as stand alone activities they are included within the Tariff considerations as students cannot achieve the Diploma without successfully completing them. Tariff points for ASL qualifications are additional to those awarded for achievement of the Diploma grade.

With regards to the assignment of these recognition points, they are awarded in line with the overall Diploma grade (which comes from achievement in Principal Learning and Extended Project). Should you wish to learn more about Diploma aggregation rules, they are available in Chapter 4 of Ofqual's

document Ofqual/08/3865, Arrangement for awarding and setting standards in the Diploma ([http://www.ofqual.gov.uk/files/ofqual-08-3865\\_DASG\\_report.pdf](http://www.ofqual.gov.uk/files/ofqual-08-3865_DASG_report.pdf))

### Level 3

Progression Diploma (Points for the Progression Diploma come into effect for entry to Higher Education from 2010 onwards).

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

Advanced Diploma = Progression Diploma plus Additional and Specialist Learning (ASL). Please see appropriate qualification to calculate the ASL score.

UCAS Tariff points Advanced Diploma	Principal and Generic Learning		Additional and Specialist Learning			
	Grade	Tariff	Grade	Tariff		
	A*	350	A*	140		
	A	300	A	120		
	B	250	B	100		
	C	200	C	80		
	D	150	D	60		
E	100	E	40			
Progression Diploma	<i>The UCAS Board agreed Tariff points for accredited components of the Advanced Diploma:</i>					
	Principal Learning		Extended Project		Progression Diploma	
	Grade	Tariff	Grade	Tariff	Grade	Tariff
	A*	210	A*	70	A*	350
	A	180	A	60	A	300
	B	150	B	50	B	250
	C	120	C	40	C	200
D	90	D	30	D	150	
E	60	E	20	E	100	

### Functional Skills\*

Grade	Tariff
Level 2	10

\*Functional Skills will attract Tariff points for 2010 but will be removed from the Tariff for entry into higher education from 2011 onwards.

### How are Diplomas graded?

The Diploma grades are derived from the aggregate score of Principal Learning and the Project. The grading of the Diploma will be reported in the following way:

- Foundation Diploma: A\*, A, B or ungraded (U)
- Higher Diploma: A\*, A, B, C or ungraded (U)

- Advanced Diploma: A\*, A, B, C, D, E or ungraded (U).

Each Learner will receive a Diploma transcript from the Diploma Aggregation Service (see below) which will:

- record and report achievement in units and qualifications within the Diploma programme
- contain grades at unit level for Principal Learning
- record the achievement of Personal, Learning and Thinking Skills (PLTS)
- record the completion of Work Experience.

### **Can learners move from Diplomas to other qualifications?**

Yes, learners have great flexibility in the qualifications they can choose – perhaps by taking a Higher Diploma (at level 2) followed by A-levels, or GCSEs following an Advanced Diploma. Diplomas can include a GCSE or A level within the program.

### **Will the Diploma certificates be a joint certificate from both AQA and City & Guilds?**

Yes, Diploma certificates will be awarded as AQA-City & Guilds.

### **Are Diplomas only available in England?**

Yes, although Wales is reviewing how Diplomas might fit into their quality framework.

### **What is the Diploma catalogue?**

[The Diploma catalogue \[http://www.accreditedqualifications.org.uk/DiplomaCatalogueSelection.aspx\]](http://www.accreditedqualifications.org.uk/DiplomaCatalogueSelection.aspx) [ allows users to view the Principal Learning and Project qualifications available, as well as a full listing of the Functional Skills or Additional and Specialist Learning options relevant to the specific line of learning and level.

The Diploma catalogue enables centres to put together their Diploma offers, and learners are able to view combinations of qualifications that may be available as part of a Diploma package in their area. Please visit [www.ndaq.org.uk](http://www.ndaq.org.uk) for further details.

### **Who are Diplomas for?**

Diplomas are suitable for all 14-19 learners as they provide a balanced learning approach with excellent progression routes to Higher or Further education or employment. Diplomas provide learners with opportunities to stretch and demonstrate their abilities no matter what their future goals or learning preferences are:

- for those with academic goals, diplomas provide the stretch to demonstrate that they not only have the theoretical understanding but know how to apply knowledge in a relevant way
- for those who prefer practical work to theory, Diplomas provide the opportunity to demonstrate their skills through practical problems and situations
- for those who prefer a variety of learning styles, Diplomas give the flexibility to learn and achieve in new and innovative learning environments.

### **Will Diplomas prepare learners for specific jobs?**

No. While Diplomas focus on equipping learners with essential transferable skills in a work-relevant context, they are designed to provide an awareness of a broad employment sector without narrowing options. Diplomas develop self-motivated, creative and forward thinking individuals valued by employers. The Diploma includes a minimum of 10 days work experience which may or may not be related to the primary study area of the Diploma.

## Will Diplomas prepare learners for Higher Education?

Yes. Diplomas were developed in consultation with Higher Education to ensure that learners are well prepared for progression into University or College. There is also flexibility within the Diploma to allow students to undertake relevant A Level courses to satisfy specific entry requirements. Some universities and colleges have provided a statement regarding their view of the Advanced Diploma on the [UCAS website \[http://www.ucas.ac.uk/students/beforeyouapply/diplomas/14-19diplomas/statements\]](http://www.ucas.ac.uk/students/beforeyouapply/diplomas/14-19diplomas/statements).

## What Resources are available?

Please see the Diploma Resource Zone on the website and discuss with your Diploma Support Team. The specification also contains suggested resources at the end of each unit.

## What do the various Acronyms stand for?

- A** ASL – Additional and Specialist Learning
- C** CAB – Component Awarding Body
- D** DAB – Diploma Awarding Body
- G** GLH – Guided Learning Hours  
GQ – General Qualifications
- L** LoL – Line of Learning  
LSC – Learning and Skills Council
- P** PL - Principal Learning  
PLTS – Personal, Learning and Thinking Skills
- Q** QCF – Qualifications and Credit Framework
- V** VQ – Vocational Qualifications
- W** WE – Work Experience

## Who can I contact for more information?

Our dedicated Diploma team is here to help with all aspects of preparation for delivering Diplomas from the gateway process, teacher training and curriculum development through to assessment and moderation.

To arrange a visit please complete our [online form \[http://www.diplomainfo.org.uk/book-diploma-advisor.asp\]](http://www.diplomainfo.org.uk/book-diploma-advisor.asp) or call 08700 24 24 66.

[www.diplomainfo.org.uk](http://www.diplomainfo.org.uk)

<http://store.aqa.org.uk/admin/library/AQA-DIPLOMA-ADMIN.PDF>

DCSF has published nuts and bolts guides. The full list of nuts and bolts guides now available are:

Leading Diploma Administration  
Quality Assurance  
Gender equality

Functional skills  
Implementation Planning  
Workforce Planning  
Communications

They can be found at the following link:

[www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19/nutsandboltsguides](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19/nutsandboltsguides)

## Principal Learning

### How do I register for the Principal Learning component of the AQA-City & Guilds Diploma?

To register fill in the [Consortium Diploma Expression of Interest form \[https://secure.aqa.org.uk/consortium/index.php\]](https://secure.aqa.org.uk/consortium/index.php).

This formalises your interest in our Diploma qualification(s), as well as ensuring that we send you all the relevant information on our procedures. Alternatively, [register your interest with our Diploma Support Team \[http://www.diplomainfo.org.uk/book-diploma-advisor.asp\]](http://www.diplomainfo.org.uk/book-diploma-advisor.asp) and someone will contact you to guide you through the application process.

### Can a learner take a level 3 Diploma with no prior knowledge of the subject?

Yes. Learners do not need any previous knowledge of a subject to do a Diploma at any level.

### Is it possible to co-teach levels and units?

This will depend on the Diploma and units in question, as this does not always apply. Please speak to your Subject Manager and moderator for further guidance.

### Can learners transfer between levels or lines of learning?

It is possible for learners to transfer between levels, however it is more difficult as the Diploma progresses as results achieved in one level may need to be re-assessed to meet the criteria of the new level. To support learner progression it is recommended they are entered at the highest level they can attain, rather than taking the lower level as a safe option. Learners can revisit missing components later to achieve the full Diploma.

It is more difficult to change between lines of learning, as there are no common elements between Principal Learning for each line. However there are some bridging opportunities with Functional Skills, project, work experience and potentially ASL.

### Is there any provision for alternative units within Principal Learning?

Generally Principal Learning units are compulsory as set out within the Principal Learning specification, however the Creative and Media specification allows some scope for alternative units.

### Can learners use their project work for the Project component of Principal Learning?

Yes, however the assessment work completed must be submitted separately and independently marked according to the assessment criteria for each qualification. There is likely to be additional work required to satisfy the criteria of each qualification.

### **Will there be sample material available to assist in standardisation?**

Yes. [Sample Assessment Material \[http://www.diplomainfo.org.uk/315.asp\]](http://www.diplomainfo.org.uk/315.asp) is already available for all lines of learning, and more is being added as we progress with development of the new lines.

### **Does a learner need to achieve a pass in ALL units of Principal Learning to gain the Diploma?**

No. Due to the compensatory model of assessment within Principal Learning a learner may fail a unit and still pass the overall qualification provided their achievement in other units is satisfactory.

### **What is Applied Learning?**

High quality applied learning is likely to include:

- interaction with professionals
- learning activities linked to professional job roles
- real investigation and active enquiry
- learning through doing
- interaction with other learners through group work
- learning in different contexts.

## **Functional Skills**

### **What are Functional Skills?**

Functional Skills are practical skills in English, Mathematics and ICT that allow individuals to work confidently, effectively and independently in life and at work. They will also help develop important skills like communication, team working, presentation and problem solving.

Functional Skills are a mandatory part of the Generic Learning component of the Diploma and have been identified as being vital for building confidence and gaining the most out of work, education and everyday life.

Functional Skills will be required at the Foundation Diploma at Level 1 and at the Higher and Advanced Diploma a Levels 2.

For further information go to:

[www.diplomainfo.org.uk/diploma-functional-skills.asp](http://www.diplomainfo.org.uk/diploma-functional-skills.asp)

### **What level of Functional Skills is required for each Diploma level?**

Diplomas require learners to gain Functional Skills in English, mathematics and ICT:

- at level 1 for the Foundation Diploma
- at level 2 for the Higher and Advanced Diploma.

### **Are Functional Skills integrated with GCSEs?**

No. Functional Skills are stand-alone qualifications.

### **Where can I find more information on Functional Skills?**

Both AQA and City & Guilds offer Functional Skills. To find out more information visit:

[www.diplomainfo.org.uk/diploma-functional-skills.asp](http://www.diplomainfo.org.uk/diploma-functional-skills.asp)

## Personal, Learning and Thinking Skills (PLTS)

### What are Personal, Learning and Thinking Skills (PLTS)?

Personal, Learning and Thinking Skills (PLTS) are essential skills for work and general learning. The PLTS framework comprises six groups of skills that, together with the Functional Skills of English, mathematics and ICT will prepare learners to confidently enter work and adult life as confident and capable individuals. The six groups of skills are as follows:

- Independent enquirers
- Creative thinkers
- Reflective learners
- Team workers
- Self-managers
- Effective participators

### How will PLTS be assessed?

PLTS are embedded into the Principal Learning units of all AQA-City & Guilds Diplomas, and opportunities to develop these skills are clearly signposted. As such they are not assessed, but it is the responsibility of the centre to ensure that the learner has sufficiently covered requirements for developing PLTS.

### How do we track PLTS?

This is entirely at the consortium's discretion, but AQA-City & Guilds has provided a tracking document which is available at:

[www.diplomainfo.org.uk/PLTS.asp](http://www.diplomainfo.org.uk/PLTS.asp)

### Where can I find more information on PLTS?

[www.diplomainfo.org.uk/plts.asp](http://www.diplomainfo.org.uk/plts.asp)

## Additional and Specialist Learning (ASL)

### Is there a list of approved Additional and Specialist Learning (ASL) available?

AQA-City & Guilds has put together sample ASL pathways to demonstrate some of the options available to learners, and the full list of approved qualifications can be found on the NDAQ website. It should be noted that, at Level 3, some universities are requesting specific ASL to assist with entry to certain courses, but that such demands are not an AQA-City & Guilds' requirement.

### Will there be duplication between ASL and Principal Learning?

Each consortium is responsible for selecting the ASL offered to learners, from the NDAQ catalogue of approved qualifications. This list of approved qualifications is intended to provide learners with wide choice of ASL that doesn't duplicate Principal Learning, however it is at the discretion of the consortium to provide learners with a broad choice and opportunities to specialise or broaden their programme without duplication.

### Can NVQs be used as Additional or Specialist Learning?

At this stage only language NVQs are approved for ASL.

### **If a learner has achieved qualifications in year 11 which are approved as Additional or Specialist Learning, can they carry these forward to a Diploma in year 12?**

Yes. They can carry forward Additional and Specialist Learning qualifications as long as they were taken within the allowed timeframe and the qualifications are currently in the [Diploma catalogue](http://www.accreditedqualifications.org.uk/DiplomaCatalogueSelection.aspx) [<http://www.accreditedqualifications.org.uk/DiplomaCatalogueSelection.aspx>].

### **Which ASL should we choose?**

This is at the consortium's discretion, provided that the course(s) chosen are amongst those listed on the NDAQ website. It should be noted that, at Level 3, some universities are requesting specific ASL to assist with entry to certain courses, but that such demands are not an AQA-City & Guilds requirement.

### **What is the Diploma catalogue?**

The Diploma catalogue allows users to view the Principal Learning and Project qualifications available, as well as a full listing of the Functional Skills or Additional and Specialist Learning options relevant to the specific line of learning and level.

The Diploma catalogue enables centres to put together their Diploma offers, and learners are able to view combinations of qualifications that may be available as part of a Diploma package in their area. Please visit [www.ndaq.org.uk](http://www.ndaq.org.uk) for further details.

### **Where can I find more information on ASL?**

[www.diplomainfo.org.uk/additional-specialist-learning.asp](http://www.diplomainfo.org.uk/additional-specialist-learning.asp)

## **Work Experience**

### **What is the requirement for work experience as part of the Diploma?**

For all levels of the Diploma learners are required to undertake 10 days of work experience.

### **Does work experience have to be directly linked with the subject of the Diploma?**

Work experience linked to the subject of the Diploma is preferable, but not required.

### **How is work experience tracked/assessed?**

Work experience is not assessed, however centres are responsible for tracking work experience and reporting to the Diploma Aggregation Service (DAS) for each learner.

### **Do I need to arrange CRB checks?**

CRB checks will not be required for the majority of work experience placements, however in special circumstances the centre will be responsible for ensuring relevant checks are undertaken before the commencement of the placement.

### **If a teacher is involved in the delivery can he/she be used as part of employer involvement?**

Yes. See QCDA's case studies on Applied Learning:  
[www.qcda.gov.uk/libraryAssets/media/Applied\\_learning\\_case\\_studies.pdf](http://www.qcda.gov.uk/libraryAssets/media/Applied_learning_case_studies.pdf)

## **Where can I find more information on Work Experience?**

[www.diplomainfo.org.uk/diploma-work-experience.asp](http://www.diplomainfo.org.uk/diploma-work-experience.asp)

## **Projects**

### **Does the Project need to be related to the subject of the Diploma?**

The Project must be either related to the line of learning or allow for progression. This gives learners the flexibility to select a relevant and engaging Project subject, to maximise their achievement and development. However, a sector/subject-relevant Project can enhance and complement the Principal Learning content.

### **What kinds of Projects can learners undertake?**

The Project qualification assesses the process of planning, executing and evaluating a project brief. Learners need to show they can plan, deliver and present a piece of work. The outcome of the Project can be a written report, a photographic journal, a piece of art, a DVD or even computer software.

### **How does a learner select their Project?**

The Project allows learners to explore an area they are already studying, or extending their learning to include a broader subject area. Learners should be encouraged to select a topic that particularly interests them to enhance their engagement and learning outcome. The topic is to be selected in consultation with the tutor. Centres may choose to offer a list of Project titles related to their specialist expertise or Project briefs set by employers.

### **Can a learner start a Project at Level 1 and change to a higher level?**

It is possible for a learner to transfer into a higher level, however it becomes more difficult as the learner progresses through the Project brief. The Extended Project (level 3) has a significantly higher guided learning hours requirement and each level of the Project has different criteria for assessment.

### **Do the Projects have to be approved by a moderator?**

Project titles/subjects do not need to be approved by a moderator or Awarding Body.

### **How do tutors guide learners where the subject of the Project is outside their expertise?**

The assessment criteria for the Project focuses on the successful response to a Project brief, in terms of managing the Project, effective planning, selection and use of relevant resources, executing the planned outcomes and reviewing these outcomes. Tutors may call on other members of the consortium for advice and guidance, however level 1 and 2 Projects can be delivered by any tutor experienced in research-based assessment. The Extended Project requires that learners have access to specialist subject support during the Project which is likely to require a coordinated approach from the consortia.

### **Who looks after the project?**

Projects are separate to the Principal Learning and will not necessarily be run by the same subject teams as administer the Principal Learning requirements of the various Diplomas. Consortia should have a leader for the Project. The Project is administered from AQA's Manchester Office (0161 953 1180) by Charlotte Christie. For further information on projects check the AQA-City & Guilds Diploma website, under the Projects pages:

<http://www.diplomainfo.org.uk/diploma-projects.asp>

## **Delivery and Assessment**

### **What approval does my centre need to deliver Diplomas?**

Centres are required to submit an application to the DCSF as part of a consortia to pass through the gateway process. Following this approval centres should complete our expression of interest form to formalise your interest in our Diploma qualification(s), as well as ensure that we send you all relevant information and provide you with the support you need to succeed in your delivery.

### **Will I have to get centre approval to offer the Diploma even though I am already an AQA or a City & Guilds centre?**

Yes. All centres will have submitted an application form to the DCSF and passed through the Gateway process for consortia. Successful consortia will need to apply to individual Awarding Bodies for approval.

### **Can I get help making a Gateway application to offer Diplomas?**

Yes. Our Diploma Support Team are available to help. Email [diplomadvisors@aqa.org.uk](mailto:diplomadvisors@aqa.org.uk) if you would like to receive a visit from our team and someone will be in contact with you.

### **Is there training available to prepare for delivery and assessment?**

Yes. We offer teacher support events for Principal Learning, Functional Skills and Projects. Visit our events page to see when the next events are in your area [www.diplomainfo.org.uk/Events-Calendar.asp](http://www.diplomainfo.org.uk/Events-Calendar.asp).

### **How will Diplomas be assessed?**

Diplomas will be assessed using a combination of internal and external assessment. Internally assessed units will be moderated, then converted to a standard points scale and combined with the externally assessed scores to calculate the overall grade. The overall Diploma grade is calculated from the combined score of Principal Learning and the Project, however a learner must achieve a pass in all relevant Functional Skills levels and have successfully completed the work experience and ASL components.

### **How does moderation take place?**

Consortia are asked to complete an Expression of Interest form. In the autumn term, AQA-City & Guilds will appoint a moderator to each consortium which has indicated that it has entries for that academic year. The moderator will be the point of contact with the consortium's Domain Assessor throughout the year. The moderator may be contacted for advice and guidance and will also visit the consortium. In the autumn / early spring there will be the Stage 1 visit where assignment briefs and suggested tasks will be considered, along with the correct standard for marking. Stage 2 will take place in April / May and involves the moderator deciding whether the consortium's marking standard is correct, usually at a further visit, although this may be completed postally if agreed by both consortium and moderator.

For more information please refer to [Internal Assessment and Moderation Guidance for Centres](http://www.diplomainfo.org.uk/documents/PL_Int_Assess_Moderation_CentreGuide_V1_1_2.pdf) [\[http://www.diplomainfo.org.uk/documents/PL\\_Int\\_Assess\\_Moderation\\_CentreGuide\\_V1\\_1\\_2.pdf\]](http://www.diplomainfo.org.uk/documents/PL_Int_Assess_Moderation_CentreGuide_V1_1_2.pdf).

### **What work must consortia have ready for the moderator's Stage 2 visit?**

This visit takes place in April or May and involves the moderator re-marking the work of candidates

for units that have been entered. The units that are to be moderated at Stage 2 **must** be complete by **all** candidates at the Stage 2 visit. They cannot be redrafted after the visit. However, the units to be moderated will be agreed with the consortia well in advance of this visit.

### **Who appoints the Domain Assessor?**

Consortia appoint the Domain Assessor. AQA-City & Guilds will usually only deal with the Domain Assessor with regards to the organisation of Stage 1 and Stage 2 moderation visits and other moderation issues, so it is recommended that consortia ensure that the awarding body has the Domain Assessor's contact information as early as possible to facilitate communications.

### **What is the last date to allow for submissions of internal units for 2010?**

21 March 2010. After this date extra units can still be entered but there will be a late submission fee.

### **Will there be a different moderator for each level within each Line of Learning?**

In most cases the same moderator will cover each level within the line of learning, however on some occasions it may be necessary for an additional moderator to be involved.

### **What are the re-sit rules for Principal Learning/Projects?**

Learners can re-sit a unit as many times as necessary, with their best result counted towards the overall Diploma grade.

### **What is the deadline for final internally assessed marks to be with AQA-City & Guilds?**

The final date for marks for internally assessed units to be with AQA-City & Guilds is 31 May. By that date, however, all learner work which is to be certificated that year must have been marked, internally standardised and the standard of marking agreed with the moderator at Stage 2.

### **When will learners receive their results for their assignments from AQA-City & Guilds?**

For 2010 the Advanced Diploma results are available to learners on Thursday 19 August and Foundation/Higher Diploma results on Tuesday 24 August. The results are available to centres the day before for each level.

### **From where can we obtain possible assignments?**

The AQA-City & Guilds Diploma website ([www.diplomainfo.org.uk/SAM.asp](http://www.diplomainfo.org.uk/SAM.asp)) contains example assignments which consortia may use. Consortia may also develop their own assignments, provided that they meet the requirements of the specification. Consortia should also look to contextualise their assignments so as to ensure that the applied learning for each unit is as relevant as possible. Advice on setting tasks can be obtained from discussions with the consortium's moderator.

### **Can we devise our own assignments?**

Yes. Moderators will check any available assignments at the Stage 1 (advisory) visit. It is advisable that teachers forward any remaining assignments to the moderator to check all assessment criteria and the controlled conditions are covered and understood.

### **All assignments must be conducted under controlled conditions. What does this mean?**

Controlled assessment is a form of internal assessment where the control levels are set for each stage of the assessment process: task setting, task taking and task marking. Controlled conditions are set

to ensure that the learner's work is their own. It is **not** the same as examination conditions. Check the Principal Learning specification and JCQ controlled conditions document for further information:

[http://www.jcq.org.uk/attachments/published/1125/Instructions\\_for\\_conducting\\_controlled\\_assessments\\_2009\\_2010.pdf](http://www.jcq.org.uk/attachments/published/1125/Instructions_for_conducting_controlled_assessments_2009_2010.pdf)

**Will the learner's marks be affected if the assignment is not completed by using ICT?**

No. Please be reassured that we receive lots of hand written assignments (but submissions for the IT Diploma should normally be produced using appropriate software).

**Can the learners type up their work at home?**

No. They can collect research out of lessons but the assignment must be completed under controlled conditions to allow monitoring of the assessment hours and authenticity of learners' work.

**On the final submission work can tutors write on assignments?**

Yes.

**If an assignment is handed in and it has just been cut and pasted from the website can the teacher ask the learner to rewrite the assignment?**

This is plagiarism and the learner cannot submit, as their own, work that is copied and pasted. Learners should either rewrite these sections in their own words or accredit them to the source and then include their own work in the assignment as well. If a learner's assignment includes cut and pasted information that is not sourced, this part of the work should **not** be credited with any marks and the teacher should explain this on the Candidate Record Form. Plagiarism can result in learners being given a fail for the whole course.

**Can a learner submit the same or similar piece of work if it relates to another unit?**

The same evidence can be used so long as it does cover the relevant learning outcomes for each unit and the evidence is provided in each assignment, e.g. the learner should include copies of consultation sheets/videos etc. in each unit for which it is being used as evidence.

**Do we mark the practical as if the learners were achieving competency at NVQ?**

No. This qualification is not designed for competency but for the planning, doing and evaluation. Teachers must mark to the assessment grids provided in the Principal Learning specification for each unit.

**What feedback can teachers give to learners whilst they are completing their assignments?**

Whilst feedback may be provided to learners, centres **must** ensure that the work submitted for final assessment is the learner's own work. The nature of any guidance and the details of any feedback **must** be clearly recorded. The final work submitted **must** be solely that of the learner.

Any advice to individual learners over and above that given to the class as a whole should be recorded on documentation provided by the awarding body, eg the authentication form.

**How many times can a learner hand in their assignment for feedback?**

There is no limit to the number of times a learner hands in work; however teachers should be mindful of the guided learning hours.

### **Can assessments be marked as you go?**

The units are designed to be end tested. They should not be used like an NVQ throughout the course/ongoing assessment.

### **If a learner does not hand the work in on time, without good reason, can this affect their marks?**

AQA-City & Guilds do not get involved in internal school/college deadlines and a learner's marks should not be affected by the teacher missing an internal school/college deadline. However, the work must be complete in time for marks to be submitted to the moderator (by 31 May). Extension to deadlines can be requested via AQA's Processing department:

[mhigson@aqg.org.uk](mailto:mhigson@aqg.org.uk)

### **What is the timetable for examined units?**

External units are available twice a year – once in the Winter series and once in the Summer series. Dates of the examinations can be found at:

<http://web.aqa.org.uk/admin/timetable.php>

### **Is there a requirement for internal standardisation or does the role of the Domain Assessor cover this?**

Internal standardisation across teachers/teaching groups/units to ensure consistency of marking is required. The Domain Assessor will train all involved in marking the work. The Domain Assessor must sign a Centre Declaration Sheet to verify that internal standardisation has taken place. This must be submitted to the moderator along with the learners' work by 31<sup>st</sup> May. Centre Declaration Sheets are available at:

[http://web.aqa.org.uk/admin/p\\_course\\_crf\\_2010.php](http://web.aqa.org.uk/admin/p_course_crf_2010.php)

### **Are the Domain Assessors required to look at completed assignments?**

They should look at a sample of each unit to ensure the marking is accurate as part of the internal standardisation process.

### **Does a feedback sheet need to be completed for each assignment or only if there are comments/concerns/action areas for standardisation?**

A Candidate Record Form must be completed by the teacher for every learner for every unit. It must be signed by the teacher and learner to confirm the assignment is the learner's own work. The form should be attached to the front of the learner's assignment. Candidate Record Forms can be found at:

[http://web.aqa.org.uk/admin/crf\\_diploma\\_2010.php](http://web.aqa.org.uk/admin/crf_diploma_2010.php)

### **How do we record marks?**

Consortia must complete a Candidate Record Form for each learner for each unit for which they are entered. The marks awarded for that unit and a justification of the reasons for awarding those marks must be on the Candidate Record Form. Domain Assessors should also co-ordinate the Centre Mark Forms containing details of all the learners' marks, which need to be sent to AQA-City & Guilds and the moderator in the Spring term.

### **In what order should units be taught and entered?**

There is no set order for this. Similarly, learners do not need to have completed a particular Diploma level in order to be entered for the level above it.

### **Can a learner resit an internal unit?**

JCQ guidance states that learners who re-sit a controlled assessment (eg in June 2011, having previously submitted work for the unit/component in June 2010) may make another attempt at the task previously submitted, if that task is still appropriate to the year in which the assessment will be submitted. The work presented for assessment, carried out under informal or formal supervision, **must** be new; however, learners may re-use the previously carried out research.

### **Do the practitioners have to have a marking sheet for the moderator to show how marks have been allocated and a separate marking sheet for the learner?**

The Candidate Record Forms should be sufficiently completed by the teacher to make clear the justification of marks. Marking is intended to be a 'holistic' approach with the use of 'best fit'. We would not expect the assessor to write separate sheets for the moderator. It would, however, be useful for moderators if teachers would annotate learners' work with references to where the learning outcomes are achieved. For IT, Health and Beauty Studies, and Hospitality marking grids are provided and these should be used and attached to the work.

### **Is there any further guidance to help with internal assessment delivery?**

Your allocated moderator should be contacted with queries on internally assessed units. QCDA has recently published new materials to assist consortia in planning and reviewing Diploma internal assessment. The **Diploma internal assessment toolkit** summarises how the advice and guidance available from QCDA and other organisations fits together to support internal assessment delivery. It also features downloadable example documents that can be adapted to suit local needs. Two new case studies **Planning ahead at North Herts** and **Building on experience at Tamworth** have also been published on the QCDA website, and both focus on the experiences of consortia in delivering Diploma internal assessment.

### **Where can I find more information on Assessment?**

[www.diplomainfo.org.uk/diploma-assessment.asp](http://www.diplomainfo.org.uk/diploma-assessment.asp)

## **Administration**

### **Can centres enter the Diploma independently?**

No – only consortia may be entered for a Diploma and consortia must have passed through the DCSF Gateway process before their learners are allowed to be entered.

### **When should we advise AQA-City & Guilds that we will be offering the Diploma?**

It is imperative that an **indication to enter and an estimate of entries are returned to AQA as soon as possible at the start of the academic year** so that a moderator can be allocated and advisory visits arranged. You can express an interest to offer the Diplomas with us through our simple sign up process [www.diplomainfo.org.uk/Sign-up-process.asp](http://www.diplomainfo.org.uk/Sign-up-process.asp).

### **Who is responsible for entries for Diploma units?**

Usually entries for external units are made by the centre where the learner will sit the examination. Entries for internal units are made by the centre taking the lead role in the teaching and preparation of learners for these units.

## When should we make entries?

The January and June series have different entry deadlines. The deadline for January series is 21 October and for the June series it is 21 March. It is stressed that intention to enter should be made as early as possible to allow for moderator allocation. Consortia are to send entry and estimated entry details, especially for the January series, into AQA-City & Guilds as early as possible, so that pre-release examination information for learners where required can be released to centres for the appropriate dates. For information on how to make entries, centres should contact AQA's Entries department ([http://web.aqa.org.uk/admin/p\\_entries.php](http://web.aqa.org.uk/admin/p_entries.php)). Separate entries need to be made for each Principal Learning unit which is to be claimed in a series, along with the overall Diploma should a learner be claiming it.

## What are the Entry fees and other charges for Diplomas?

[www.diplomainfo.org.uk/Fees.asp](http://www.diplomainfo.org.uk/Fees.asp)

## If assignments intended to be entered for the second year of teaching are completed earlier than the target date can the moderation be completed earlier?

Yes but they will only be moderated once a year, ie by 31 May each year. The Domain Assessor would need to be aware of any changes to the date in order for internal standardisation to take place. The exams officer would also need to be informed to enter the units for the formal moderation process to take place.

## Who registers the learners for final submission to AQA-City & Guilds?

- It is usual for the entries for the external units to be made by the centre where the learner will sit the examination.
- It is usual for the entries for the internal units to be made by the centre taking the lead role in the teaching and preparation of learners for these units. A separate entry also needs to be made for the Registration (this should have been made by 21 October 2009). It can be automatically carried out by AQA once a unit entry is made, but could incur a late entry fee.
- This entry will generate 3-part Centre Mark Forms pre-printed with learners' details which can be completed following the stage 2 visit (see below).
- The above points were taken from the Entry Procedure Booklet - <http://store.aqa.org.uk/admin/library/ENTRYPROCCODES-DIP.PDF>

## What is the Diploma Aggregation Service?

The Diploma aggregation service:

- enables a home centre to open and access a learner account for each of its Diploma learners
- records and aggregates learners' achievements using the verified unique learner number (ULN)
- supplies the results data for the Diploma certificate and transcript to the Diploma awarding body so that it can make an award.

Information regarding the Diploma Aggregation Service can be found from the QCDA website <http://www.qcda.gov.uk/15894.aspx>

It may be useful to read the DAS factsheet produced by QCDA to gain an understanding of how and why the service operates [http://www.qcda.gov.uk/libraryAssets/media/Diploma\\_aggregation\\_service\\_factsheet\\_Feb\\_2009.pdf](http://www.qcda.gov.uk/libraryAssets/media/Diploma_aggregation_service_factsheet_Feb_2009.pdf)

Once registered with the DAS it can be accessed online through the following link

<https://www.diplomaaggregationservice.org/DAS/Pages/Login.aspx?ReturnUrl=%2fdas%2fDefault.aspx>

### **How do I register learners for an AQA-City & Guilds Diploma?**

All Diploma learners need to have a Unique Learner Number (ULN) available at from the [Learner Registration Service \(LRS\)](http://www.miap.gov.uk/lrs/) [http://www.miap.gov.uk/lrs/] which is then entered into the Diploma Aggregation Service (DAS) to create a learner account. Once this is complete you can select AQA-City & Guilds as the learner's Diploma Awarding Body, to register the learner for an AQA-City & Guilds Diploma.

### **How do I claim a Diploma?**

Using the Diploma Aggregation Service (DAS) you can either make an Intention to Claim (ITC) before the results are available or manually claim once all the component results have been issued.

### **Who can I contact for further entries information?**

Regardless of your centre's geographical location, you should deal with all entry matters via the **Entries Department in Manchester.**

Entries Department  
AQA  
Devas Street  
MANCHESTER  
M15 6EX

For entry enquiries, you should contact:

- Direct Line (0161) 455 5482
- Direct Fax (0161) 455 5408
- e-mail [entries@aqg.org.uk](mailto:entries@aqg.org.uk) (*for correspondence only*)
- Switchboard (0161) 953 1180