Regulatory arrangements for component and Diploma awarding bodies

Recognition requirements and operating rules

Version 3 – Consultation version

Contents

Introduction

Ofqual

The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) regulates qualifications, examinations and assessments in England and vocational qualifications in Northern Ireland. It oversees the qualifications and examinations system to make sure that it is fair, provides value for money, and meets the needs of learners and employers. Ofqual has been set up to ensure that children, young people and adult learners get the results their work deserves, that standards are maintained, and that qualifications count now and in the future. Ofqual also makes sure that the qualifications available meet the needs of learners and employers.

Ofqual is responsible for setting and keeping under review the requirements that awarding organisations must meet to deliver Diplomas and their components appropriately, consistently and on time, and to ensure awarding organisations award grades that are appropriate and consistent. It also makes sure that awarding organisations meet those requirements. Ofqual recognises awarding organisations that meet its requirements to award Diplomas and constituent qualifications and accredit Diploma qualifications that meet its criteria.

Ofqual sets requirements to ensure that appropriate grades are awarded in principal learning and the project, and makes sure that these are met. Ofqual monitors risks to delivery and standards and, where appropriate, notifies those responsible and/or Government, even where those involved are not regulated by Ofqual. It gives priority to making sure that learners are treated fairly and receive appropriate grades. Ofqual monitors the value for money of the Diploma.

Ofqual wants to be assured that all learners have equal and appropriate access to all assessments and qualifications that will enable them to demonstrate their skills, abilities and knowledge. As a public body, Ofqual is bound by all the equalities legislation to promote fairness, equality and equity. To achieve a fully inclusive education system our aim is to ensure that all groups can fully participate in assessments and examinations by proactively ensuring that as many obstacles as possible are removed at the design stage of qualification criteria.

The Diploma qualification

The Diploma is a new composite qualification, aimed at 14- to 19-year-olds, that brings an innovative approach to learning. It enables learners to gain knowledge, understanding and hands-on experience of sectors that they are interested in, while putting new skills into practice. Employers and awarding organisations have teamed up with schools, colleges and universities to form Diploma development partnerships (DDPs) and are working together with the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency (QCDA) and Ofqual to take forward Diploma qualifications. Diplomas are offered at the following levels: Foundation (level 1), Higher (level 2) and Progression and Advanced (level 3). The first five Diploma lines of learning were made available for teaching from September 2008 and all 17 subject/sector areas will be introduced at Foundation, Higher and Advanced level by 2012.

The Diploma provides learners with real opportunities to practise their skills. It includes principal learning qualifications that provide opportunities for applied learning, which cover newly defined sector-related material and allow learners to develop and apply generic skills. In addition learners take the project qualification[1], which offers the chance to personalise and show breadth and independence of learning.

Functional skills in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) are also an integral part of the Diploma: learners are required to attain a specified level to be awarded a Diploma. Learners will have opportunities to develop and apply functional skills across the Diploma curriculum. Functional skills are also available as standalone qualifications.

Learners must also take qualifications to meet specified guided learning hour (GLH) requirements for additional and specialist learning for the Diploma. This gives learners the opportunity to personalise their learning. Many qualifications that are already being offered can contribute to additional and specialist learning.

The constituent qualifications that contribute to the Diploma, such as principal learning qualifications, functional skills and qualifications for additional and specialist learning, are awarded by component awarding bodies. Diploma awarding bodies

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[1] The foundation project qualification is offered at level 1. The higher project qualification is offered at level 2. The extended project qualification is offered at level 3. All references to the project encompass the foundation, higher and extended project qualifications.

award Diploma qualifications. Component and Diploma awarding bodies are recognised through a supplementary process.

Centres and centre consortia for the Diploma manage records of learners' results at centre level. The Diploma aggregation service holds records of learners' achievements that contribute to the Diploma, including constituent qualifications, attainment of Personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS) and completion of work experience. The Diploma aggregation service aggregates these achievements and works out automatically whether they are sufficient for a Diploma to be claimed through the service, so that Diploma awarding bodies can award the Diploma qualification.

About this document

The regulatory arrangements in this document consist of the recognition requirements (Part 1) and the operating rules (Part 2) for component and Diploma awarding bodies. There is also a glossary at the end of this document.

Component and Diploma awarding bodies must also comply with the *Criteria for accreditation of Foundation, Higher and Advanced Diploma qualifications version 2* (Ofqual, 2009). Principal learning and project component awarding bodies must also comply with the *GCSE, GCE, principal learning and project code of practice April 2010* which amplifies aspects of the operating rules[2]

Scope and purpose of the recognition requirements

All component awarding bodies and Diploma awarding bodies must be recognised as awarding organisations by Ofqual; the Department of Children, Education and Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS) in Wales; and the Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) in Northern Ireland. The recognition process is operated jointly by the three regulators. Ofqual's recognition requirements for those awarding organisations must also be met by component and Diploma awarding bodies.

The recognition requirements set out the rules that awarding organisations must meet to be recognised as being able to operate as component and/or Diploma awarding bodies, and be recognised as awarding organisations. All Diploma awarding bodies must also operate as component awarding bodies.

The recognition requirements apply according to the provision of the component awarding body and whether this includes principal learning, the project, and/or additional and specialist learning and functional skills. There are also recognition requirements specifically for Diploma awarding bodies. The requirements are set out in the following sections:

- recognition requirements for all component awarding bodies (including additional and specialist learning component awarding bodies and awarding organisations offering functional skills for the Diploma[3])

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[2] The operating rules indicate where the code of practice makes more detailed requirements that underpin the operating rules.

[3] Awarding organisations that only offer functional skills outside the Diploma do not need to be recognised as a component awarding body.

- additional recognition requirements specific to principal learning and project component awarding bodies
- additional recognition requirements specific to the recognition of additional and specialist learning and functional skills component awarding bodies
- recognition requirements for Diploma awarding bodies.

Scope and purpose of the operating rules

The purpose of the operating rules for component and Diploma awarding bodies is to set out the regulatory requirements for the operation of the Diploma qualification, principal learning, the project and the contribution of other constituent qualifications to the Diploma. The operating rules apply to component and Diploma awarding bodies, and include information on what component and Diploma awarding bodies require of centres to ensure the Diploma can operate effectively.

The operating rules cover specific requirements for the Diploma, principal learning and the project. Principal learning and project component awarding bodies must also comply with the *GCSE, GCE, principal learning and project code of practice April 2010*.

The operating rules also refer to requirements in relation to other constituent qualifications for the Diploma, such as qualifications that contribute to additional and specialist learning, so that the Diploma aggregation service can record and aggregate the results needed for the award of the Diploma qualification.

Existing regulatory arrangements remain in place for functional skills and for qualifications that contribute to additional and specialist learning. The operating rules only apply to those qualifications in terms of the requirement that results are included in the constituent qualification results that must be supplied to the Diploma aggregation service, for those learners with a Diploma learner account.

These operating rules establish the principles and describe the required regulatory outcomes for the Diploma. They do not set out the processes by which those aims are achieved. Further information on regulatory requirements for principal learning and project qualifications is available in the *GCSE, GCE, principal learning and project code of practice April 2010*. Details of the processes and requirements of the Diploma aggregation service are available from QCDA.

This approach provides component and Diploma awarding bodies with the flexibility to work to the principles and meet the required outcomes, without the majority of processes being prescribed. This approach also enables component and Diploma awarding bodies to determine the process that is most suitable for their own contexts.

These rules only include information over and above the principles and outcomes where it is helpful in securing comparability between awarding organisations' qualifications or in minimising the bureaucratic burden on centres.

The operating rules set out requirements for different types of component awarding bodies and for Diploma awarding bodies as shown below (requirements that are common to all component awarding bodies are repeated in the relevant sections):

- operating rules for additional and specialist learning component awarding bodies (including awarding organisations offering functional skills for the Diploma[4])
- operating rules for principal learning and project component awarding bodies (including relevant aspects of the rules for additional and specialist learning component awarding bodies)
- operating rules for Diploma awarding bodies.

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[4] Awarding organisations that only offer functional skills outside the Diploma do not need to be recognised as a component awarding body.

Regulatory aims for the Diploma

Ofqual works to secure qualifications, examinations and assessments that are valued and trusted by learners, users and the wider public. The overall purpose of regulating the Diploma is to develop, secure and maintain public confidence in the qualification. This means that the regulation of the Diploma is designed to meet the following aims:

Standards

The standard of the Diploma must be clearly and transparently established, and the standard of contributing qualifications must be maintained.

Comparability

There must be comparability between the qualifications offered by the different component awarding bodies at each level and line of learning.

Meeting the needs of learners

There must be flexibility and choice of provision, so that centres and consortia are able to meet learners' needs. Diploma awarding bodies and component awarding bodies must be able to meet market need, and, if they are entering and leaving the market, must ensure that learners' provision is not disrupted.

Diversity and equality

There must be fair and equal access to the Diploma and constituent qualifications for a diverse range of learners.

Value for money

The investment in the Diploma should provide value for money for government, awarding organisations, centres/consortia and learners.

The regulatory requirements for the Diploma

The regulatory requirements for the Diploma cover the regulation of overarching arrangements, and how the different constituent qualifications combine for the award of the Diploma, together with the regulation of principal learning and project qualifications.

The regulators monitor the performance of awarding organisations and evaluate their qualifications to make sure that the way awarding organisations operate is fair, consistent and follows their regulations.

The qualifications regulators may impose sanctions, where needed, to reinforce an awarding organisation's compliance with the relevant regulations and to protect the interests of users. The level of sanction imposed will depend on the nature of an awarding organisation's non-compliance, the risks posed to the quality of qualifications and the interests of users.

Further information is available in *Regulatory monitoring and reporting* (QCA[5], DELLS[6], CCEA[7], SQA[8], 2007).

The regulatory requirements consist of the following elements:

- regulatory aims for the Diploma that set out what the regulatory requirements for the Diploma are designed to achieve (see page 8).
- for awarding organisations: recognition requirements for component and Diploma awarding bodies which apply in addition to the requirements for recognising awarding organisations for regulated qualifications, 'Criteria for awarding bodies' procedures' published in *The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (QCA, ACCAC[9], CCEA, 2004). All component and Diploma awarding bodies must also be recognised as awarding organisations for regulated qualifications.
- for awarding organisations: operating rules for component and Diploma awarding bodies that set out the regulatory requirements for the operation of

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[5] Qualifications and Curriculum Authority was a predecessor to Ofqual and QCDA.

[6] DELLS (Department for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills) is now DCELLS (Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills)

[7] The Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment

[8] Scottish Qualifications Authority

[9] ACCAC (Awdurdod Cymwysterau, Cwricwlwm ac Asesu Cymru), the Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales, was a predecessor of DCELLS.

the Diploma. The operating rules should be read and complied with in conjunction with the recognition requirements for component and Diploma awarding bodies and relevant qualification codes of practice. In particular, principal learning and project component awarding bodies must comply with the operating rules along with the current *GCSE, GCE, principal learning and project code of practice April 2010.*

- for Diploma qualifications: *Criteria for accreditation of Foundation, Higher and Advanced Diploma qualifications version 2* – covering the relevant aspects of the 'Common criteria for all qualifications' published in *The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland 2004.*
- for each subject/sector area for the Diploma: criteria for the accreditation of lines of learning qualifications.

In addition to the regulatory requirements for the Diploma, there are Ofqual-agreed arrangements to support the operation of the Diploma with component and Diploma awarding bodies, covering key areas to help to ensure a consistent experience for centres in relation to these qualifications, for example, the timeline for Diploma awarding. The arrangements are established with principal learning and project component awarding bodies and Diploma awarding bodies and are kept under review. Information on the arrangements is communicated to component and Diploma awarding bodies and is provided on Ofqual's website: www.ofqual.gov.uk. Information on related regulatory publications for the Diploma is set out on pages 11-12 of this publication.

Diploma awarding bodies award and certificate whole Diploma qualifications for the lines of learning for which they are recognised, once the award has been aggregated by the Diploma Aggregation Service (DAS). Diploma awarding bodies provide information and guidance to centres on the lines of learning they award, through their websites, customer service teams and training. A Diploma awarding body has to offer and award one or more constituent qualifications that can contribute to the lines of learning for which it is recognised. Therefore, all Diploma awarding bodies are also recognised as component awarding bodies.

Principal learning and project component awarding bodies must comply with the *GCSE, GCE, principal learning and project code of practice April 2010*, in conjunction with this document. The code promotes quality, consistency, accuracy and fairness in assessment and awarding. It helps to maintain standards, both within and between awarding organisations and from year to year.

Regulatory publications for the Diploma

	Scope	Publications
Recognition	Component and Diploma awarding bodies	Criteria for awarding bodies published in *The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, 2004* Supplementary recognition criteria published in the *Regulatory arrangements for component and Diploma awarding bodies*
Accreditation	Diploma awarding bodies	Common criteria for all qualifications published in *The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, 2004* *Criteria for accreditation of Foundation, Higher and Advanced Diploma qualifications version 2* Criteria for accreditation of lines of learning qualifications
	Principal learning and project component awarding bodies	Common criteria for all qualifications published in *The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, 2004* *Criteria for accreditation of Foundation, Higher and Advanced Diploma qualifications version 2* Criteria for accreditation of lines of learning qualifications
	Additional and specialist and functional skills component awarding bodies	*Criteria for accreditation of Foundation, Higher and Advanced Diploma qualifications version 2* Criteria for accreditation of lines of learning qualifications Common criteria for all qualifications published in *The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, 2004* *Regulatory arrangements for the Qualifications*

		and Credit Framework
		For functional skills component awarding bodies, *Functional Skills qualifications criteria*
Operation	Diploma awarding bodies	*The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, 2004*
		Operating rules published in the *Regulatory arrangements for component and Diploma awarding bodies*
	Principal learning and project awarding bodies	*The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, 2004*
		GCSE, GCE, principal learning and project code of practice April 2010
		Operating rules published in the *Regulatory arrangements for component and Diploma awarding bodies*
	Additional and specialist learning and functional skills component awarding bodies	*The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, 2004*
		Relevant codes of practice as applicable
		Operating rules published in the *Regulatory arrangements for component and Diploma awarding bodies*

Summary of roles and responsibilities

This section summarises the key roles and responsibilities of component awarding bodies and Diploma awarding bodies, reflecting the obligations under the recognition requirements and the operating rules for those awarding organisations. There is also a summary of the roles of the Diploma aggregation service (DAS) and centres. However, these regulatory arrangements do not apply directly to the Diploma aggregation service or to centres.

Component awarding bodies

- Component awarding bodies are recognised as being able to offer and award constituent qualifications that contribute to Diploma qualifications. The Diploma catalogues show the constituent qualifications.[10]
- Component awarding bodies propose which of their qualifications they want the Diploma catalogues to include.
- Component awarding bodies supply Diploma learners' results to the Diploma aggregation service, referenced by the verified unique learner number (ULN).
- Component awarding bodies demonstrate their compatibility with the Diploma aggregation service to meet Ofqual's requirements for the awarding of constituent qualifications in the Diploma.

Diploma awarding bodies

- Diploma awarding bodies award and certificate whole Diploma qualifications for the lines of learning for which they are recognised when aggregated and supplied by the Diploma aggregation service.
- Diploma awarding bodies produce the Diploma transcript for award of the Diploma. The Diploma aggregation service supplies the data for the transcript.
- Diploma awarding bodies demonstrate their compatibility with the Diploma aggregation service to meet Ofqual's requirements for awarding Diploma qualifications.
- To operate as a Diploma awarding body, an awarding organisation has to offer and award one or more constituent qualifications that can contribute to the lines of learning for which they are recognised. Therefore, all Diploma awarding bodies must also be recognised as component awarding bodies.
- To be recognised as a Diploma awarding body for a line of learning, an awarding organisation has to operate at all levels of that line of learning. However, as a component awarding body, it will only have to offer a qualification at one level for that line of learning.

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[10] The Diploma catalogues provide information on all of the Diploma qualifications and the constituent qualifications for award of the Diplomas: www.accreditedqualifications.org.uk.

Diploma aggregation service

- The Diploma aggregation service is designed to enable the data sharing, results aggregation, grading and supporting functions required for the operation of the Diploma as a composite qualification.
- The Diploma aggregation service:

    a. enables the home centre[11] to open and access a learner account for each of its learners

    b. uses the ULN as the identifier for recording and aggregating learners' achievements

    c. supplies and aggregates the results data for the Diploma certificate and for the Diploma transcript to the Diploma awarding body so that it can make an award.

Centres

The following list is limited to those centres' roles and responsibilities that are relevant to the requirements set out in these regulatory arrangements.

- Home centres obtain verified unique learner numbers (ULNs) and open learner accounts with the Diploma aggregation service for all their Diploma learners. They also create a Diploma learner study plan for each Diploma learner.
- Home centres are responsible for ensuring the use of the verified ULN and up-to-date personal details for each learner across the centre consortium. They monitor the learner account to ensure the Diploma aggregation service holds the correct results.
- Home centres are responsible for notifying the Diploma aggregation service that a learner has met the requirements for personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS) and has completed their work experience.
- Home centres receive the trial grade for each of its learners who are eligible to be awarded a Diploma. The centre can submit an intention to claim which will automatically claim the Diploma on behalf of a learner as soon as a trial grade is calculated, or it may choose to claim the Diploma manually if it wants to review the trial grade before an award is made.

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[11] There is only one home centre for each learner. The home centre is where a learner is enrolled or registered. This centre has overall responsibility for each learner's Diploma and their learner account on the Diploma aggregations service (DAS).

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- The centre consortium must have a responsible person who ensures the standardisation of internal assessment for principal learning and project qualifications across their different assessors and assessment sites.

Part 1: Recognition requirements

Recognition requirements for all component awarding bodies[12]

	Expertise
The Diploma comprises principal, additional and specialist, and generic learning components including functional skills, as outlined in the *Criteria for accreditation of Foundation, Higher and Advanced Diploma qualifications version 2.* The recognition requirements for component and Diploma awarding bodies apply in addition to the recognition requirements that apply to all awarding organisations for regulated qualifications as published in *The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, 2004.*	1. Component awarding bodies must already be recognised by Ofqual, DCELLS and CCEA as awarding organisations for regulated qualifications. 2. Each constituent qualification submitted to Ofqual for accreditation for the Diploma must be within a component awarding body's existing plan of provision. If the proposed provision is outside the component awarding body's plan of provision, an extension to the plan of provision must be recognised before submission of the qualification for accreditation. 3. Component awarding bodies must have procedures in place to ensure that their staff and/or associates are competent in those aspects of the Diploma that make it distinct from their existing provision, or that they have access to appropriate training and guidance.

[12] Component awarding bodies include those awarding organisations that provide principal learning, the project, qualifications for additional and specialist learning, and functional skills offered for Diploma learners.

The Diploma catalogues provide information on all of the Diploma qualifications and the constituent qualifications for award of the Diplomas.	**Provision of constituent qualifications** 4. Component awarding bodies must apply to have one or more constituent qualifications for the Diploma included in a Diploma catalogue.

Existing requirements on enquiries and appeals and malpractice remain in place for constituent qualifications for additional and specialist learning.	**Corporate governance**
	
	5. Component awarding bodies working in a partnership to offer constituent qualifications for the Diploma with other awarding organisations must provide a written statement of each organisation's responsibilities, including the identification of a lead awarding organisation.
	
	6. If a partnership is being set up specifically for principal learning or the Diploma, it must meet awarding organisation recognition requirements[13] together with the recognition requirements for component awarding bodies. The partnership will be referenced as a new awarding organisation.
	
	Information and guidance
	
	7. When providing information and guidance on the Diploma, component awarding bodies must ensure that centres are:
	
	    a. provided with clear information on how the component awarding body's qualifications can contribute to the Diploma
	
	    b. advised that the Diploma catalogues provide information on all of the qualifications that can contribute to the Diploma.

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[13] Ofqual has developed a streamlined process for this purpose.

	Requirements for use of the Diploma aggregation service
The Diploma aggregation service is designed to enable the data sharing, results aggregation, grading and supporting functions required for the operation of the Diploma as a composite qualification. Further information is available at www.qcda.gov.uk/das	8. Component awarding bodies must notify the Diploma aggregation service of all the results of constituent qualifications in the Diploma catalogues for learners that have a verified and valid ULN and a learner account. 9. Component awarding bodies must meet requirements for the use of the Diploma aggregation service and must demonstrate their compatibility with the administrative system developed for Diploma awarding by the Diploma aggregation service. 10. Component awarding bodies must have formally agreed the commercial terms and obligations governing the provision of the Diploma aggregation service in order to open a Diploma aggregation service user account and use the system in live operation. **Unique learner numbers (ULNs)**
Centres should ensure that their Diploma learners have an open learner account as soon as they begin their Diploma programme of study. The verified ULN is a mandatory part of the learner account. The centre may open the account directly with the Diploma aggregation service.	11. Component awarding bodies must meet requirements for verification of ULNs for Diploma learners. **Withdrawal of a component awarding body** 12. If a component awarding body wishes to withdraw its services, it must negotiate a timescale with Ofqual for withdrawal, which, where appropriate, will allow for alternative arrangements to be made for centres and learners. The component awarding body must ensure that adequate notice is given to protect the interests of learners.

Additional recognition requirements for principal learning and project component awarding bodies

Component awarding bodies may offer principal learning qualifications at one or more levels for a line of learning.	**Provision of the principal learning component** 13. Component awarding bodies offering principal learning must provide the whole qualification for that level and line of learning. **Centre approval** 14. Component awarding bodies must have procedures in place for the approval of centres involved in principal learning.
The Diploma is graded. The principal learning and the project qualifications at levels 1, 2 and 3 must meet the overall grading requirements for the Diploma. Existing requirements on enquiries and appeals and malpractice remain in place for additional and specialist learning constituent qualifications. Awarding organisations should refer to *The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, 2004) and to the GCSE, GCE, principal learning and project code of practice.* (Ofqual, DCELLS, CCEA 2010)	**Grading** 15. Component awarding bodies offering principal learning and/or the project must have, or have access to, the expertise and administrative systems needed to meet the overall grading requirements of principal learning and project qualifications for the Diploma. **Enquiries and appeals** 16. Component awarding bodies must have procedures for enquiries and appeals that meet regulatory requirements for principal learning and the project. **Malpractice** 17. Component awarding bodies must have procedures for reporting on and dealing with instances of malpractice that meet regulatory requirements for principal learning and project qualifications.[14]

[14] For guidance, awarding organisations should refer to *Dealing with significant cases of suspected malpractice by those involved in the delivery of qualifications* (QCA DELLS, CCEA, SQA, 2006).

Additional recognition requirements for additional and specialist learning and functional skills component awarding bodies

Additional and specialist learning consists of regulated qualifications approved under Section 96 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000. The Diploma catalogues[15] list all constituent qualifications for the Diploma.	**Qualifications for additional and specialist learning**
	
	18. Awarding organisations wishing to make their appropriate existing regulated qualifications available for additional and specialist learning must:
	
	    a. be recognised as a component awarding body
	
	    b. propose their relevant existing constituent qualifications for additional and specialist learning, in accordance with the relevant additional and specialist learning policy, taking account of areas of duplication.
	
	Functional skills qualifications
	
	19. Awarding organisations must be recognised as a component awarding body in order to offer functional skills for the Diploma.[16]

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[15] For further details, see www.accreditedqualifications.org.uk.

[16] Awarding organisations that only offer functional skills outside the Diploma do not need to be recognised as component awarding bodies.

Recognition requirements for Diploma awarding bodies

	Expertise
The Diploma comprises principal, additional and specialist, and generic learning components, as outlined in *Criteria for accreditation of Foundation, Higher and Advanced Diploma qualifications version 2*.	1. Diploma awarding bodies must also meet the relevant regulatory criteria for component awarding bodies. They must offer at least one constituent qualification, as a component awarding body, for each of the Diploma lines of learning that they are recognised to award. 2. Diploma awarding bodies must be recognised at all levels of each line of learning for which they are awarding Diploma qualifications. **Recognition of all component awarding bodies' constituent qualifications** 3. Diploma awarding bodies must recognise all component awarding bodies' constituent qualifications that meet the requirements of one or more lines of learning, as published in the Diploma catalogues. **Corporate governance** 4. Diploma awarding bodies working in a partnership to offer the Diploma with other awarding organisations must provide a written statement of each organisation's responsibilities, including the identification of a lead awarding organisation. 5. If a partnership has been set up specifically for the Diploma, it must meet awarding organisation recognition requirements[17], together with the recognition requirements for component awarding bodies. The partnership will be referenced as a new awarding organisation.

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[17] Ofqual has developed a streamlined process for this purpose

	Requirements for use of the Diploma aggregation service for awarding Diploma qualifications

The Diploma aggregation service is designed to enable the data sharing, results aggregation, grading and supporting functions required for the operation of the Diploma as a composite qualification. Further information is available at www.qcda.gov.uk/das
 	
 Diploma awarding bodies award and certificate whole Diploma qualifications for the lines of learning for which they are recognised, once the award has been aggregated by the Diploma Aggregation Service (DAS). Diploma awarding bodies provide information and guidance to centres on the lines of learning they award through their websites, customer service teams and training.
	6. Diploma awarding bodies must demonstrate their compatibility with the Diploma aggregation service to award the Diploma qualification when the service has aggregated the learners' results.
	
	 7. Diploma awarding bodies must have formally agreed the commercial terms and obligations governing the provision of the Diploma aggregation service in order to open a Diploma aggregation service user account and use the system in live operation.
	
	 Provision of information and advice
	
	 8. Diploma awarding bodies must ensure that they have sufficient resources and effective arrangements to provide information and guidance to centres on the lines of learning for which they are recognised to award the Diploma, including on:
	
	     a. recording and awarding the Diploma qualification
	
	     b. complaints on quality of service in relation to the awarding of whole Diploma qualifications.[18]
	
	 9. When providing information and guidance for centres on the Diploma qualification, Diploma awarding bodies must advise centres that:
	
	     a. information on the full range of units and qualifications for the Diploma is available in the Diploma catalogues
	
	     b. the Diploma can be awarded against any of the permitted combinations of qualifications offered by different component awarding bodies, as shown in the Diploma catalogues.

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[18] Diploma awarding bodies are not involved in enquiries and appeals on other component awarding bodies' constituent qualifications.

	Certification of the Diploma and the Diploma transcript 10. Diploma awarding bodies must ensure that they have the necessary resources, procedures and arrangements to meet the requirements of the operating rules outlined in this document for certification of the Diploma and the issuing of the Diploma transcript with the Diploma certificate for each Diploma award.
Awarding organisations should refer to *Dealing with significant cases of suspected malpractice by those involved in the delivery of qualifications: Guidance for awarding bodies.*	**Malpractice** 11. Diploma awarding bodies must report to Ofqual any significant malpractice and maladministration that is relevant to the award of a Diploma qualification. 12. Diploma awarding bodies must have procedures for reporting on and dealing with instances of malpractice at Diploma level.
	Withdrawal of a Diploma awarding body 13. If a Diploma awarding body wishes to withdraw its services it must negotiate a timetable with Ofqual for withdrawal that will, where appropriate, allow for alternative arrangements to be made for centres and learners. The Diploma awarding body must ensure that adequate notice is given to protect the interests of learners.

Part 2: Operating rules

Operating rules for additional and specialist learning and functional skills component awarding bodies[19]

All of the qualifications that can contribute to the Diploma are referred to as constituent qualifications, and are contained in the Diploma catalogues. Centre consortia must ensure that their Diploma learners have an open learner account. The verified ULN is a mandatory part of the learner account. The home centre opens the learner account for each learner directly with the Diploma aggregation service.	**Section 1: Management of constituent qualification results** **Submission of all constituent qualification results[20]** *Additional and specialist learning and functional skills component awarding bodies* 1. Component awarding bodies must verify the learner details referenced by the ULN and post results only where the ULN has been verified. 2. Component awarding bodies must use the verified ULN to identify each learner with a learner account in the Diploma aggregation service. They must also use the verified ULN to record their results for constituent qualifications of the Diploma with the Diploma aggregation service. 3. Component awarding bodies are responsible for the accuracy and validity of the results data they submit to the Diploma aggregation service referenced by each verified ULN. 4. Component awarding bodies must submit constituent qualification results to the Diploma aggregation service within agreed timelines[21] and in appropriate formats.

[19] Awarding organisations that only offer functional skills outside the Diploma do not need to be recognised as component awarding bodies.

[20] 'Guidance on posting results to the Diploma aggregation service' sets out the detailed requirements of the Diploma aggregation service, and is available at www.qcda.gov.uk/das.

[21] The timelines for awarding are set out as part of the Ofqual-agreed arrangements for component and Diploma awarding bodies that underpin the regulation of the Diploma. Details of these arrangements are available on Ofqual's website: www.ofqual.gov.uk. They are agreed by Ofqual with component and Diploma awarding bodies and take into account the requirements of the Diploma aggregation service. Timelines for data supplied to the Diploma aggregation service must also be in accordance with the agreed service levels and commercial terms for the service.

	Prior achievement claims

The appropriate centre for each Diploma learner in a centre consortium should open the learner account as soon as they begin their Diploma programme of study. This centre will communicate with the Diploma aggregation service on behalf of the learner.
 	
If a qualification was achieved without a ULN, centres will need to obtain a verified ULN and open a learner account before contacting the relevant component awarding body to verify prior achievement.
 	
There are no proxies for principal learning, the project and functional skills in the Diploma.
 	
Once a learner account has been opened the Diploma aggregation service accepts all results data for principal learning and project qualifications, and for other qualifications from the Diploma catalogues.
	Additional and specialist learning component awarding bodies
	
	5. Component awarding bodies must verify the relevant prior achievement of Diploma learners for the constituent qualifications they offer to enable timely Diploma awards. Prior achievement applies if this achievement was obtained before a learner account was opened in the Diploma aggregation service. Qualifications achieved before 1 January 2005 cannot be considered as prior achievement.
	
	This verification is subject to one of the following requirements:
	
	      a. the qualification is a current or expired qualification in the Diploma catalogue
	
	or
	
	      b. if requested, the component awarding body proposes that the qualification is an equivalent of a qualification that exists in the current or previous versions of the Diploma catalogues.[22]

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[22] Once a qualification has been recognised against a current qualification in the Diploma catalogue, it will be added to the expired qualifications in the catalogue.

Operating rules for principal learning and project component awarding bodies

	Section 2: Approval of centres for principal learning
Where centre and qualification approval procedures already exist for qualifications that can contribute to additional and specialist learning, those procedures should remain unchanged.	*Principal learning component awarding bodies* 1. Component awarding bodies must have a centre declaration, or other information, to confirm that a centre is part of a recognised Gateway[23] consortium, in order to operate principal learning qualifications for Diploma learners.
An individual centre's choice of the constituent qualifications that contribute to a Diploma may be subject to the procedures of their Gateway centre consortium.	2. Component awarding bodies must require centres for principal learning to identify named points of accountability for the quality assurance and management of principal learning qualifications.[24]

Component awarding bodies' arrangements with centres are also referred to in Section 3 of the operating rules, 'Assessment of principal learning and the project'.	3. Component awarding bodies' arrangements with centres for principal learning should:
	
	    a. be underpinned by component awarding bodies' centre monitoring arrangements
	
	    b. not add unnecessarily to the Gateway process, or to existing centre and qualification approval procedures.

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[23] The Gateway process is operated by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and does not apply outside England.

[24] The named points of accountability may be the head of each centre.

This section reflects the requirements in the regulatory criteria on assessment in *The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, 2004.* The operating rules outline assessment requirements for principal learning and the project in conjunction with the *GCSE, GCE, principal learning and project code of practice April 2010, and the Criteria for accreditation of Foundation, Higher and Advanced Diploma qualifications version 2.* Assessment arrangements for qualifications that can contribute to additional and specialist learning are not specific to the Diploma.	**Section 3: Assessment of principal learning and the project** *The GCSE, GCE, principal learning and project code of practice (to be published in April 2010) makes more detailed requirements that underpin the operating rules on the assessment of principal learning and project. Principal learning and project component awarding bodies must comply with the code of practice, in conjunction with the operating rules.* **Principles of assessment** *Principal learning and project component awarding bodies* 1. Component awarding bodies must ensure that the assessment of principal learning and the project (at levels 1, 2 and 3) supports the following principles: a. assessment enables results that provide a valid measure of the required knowledge, skills and understanding defined by the qualification specification b. results generated provide a reliable measure of a learner's performance c. assessment generates results that meet the appropriate standards and provide comparability of standards between centres, awarding organisations and over time d. assessment minimises bias and must: (i) provide opportunities for a diverse range of learners to demonstrate their abilities to meet the full range of requirements (ii) be free from covert or overt discrimination (iii) ensure that the content uses appropriate subject matter and language for the target group e. to ensure manageability, the assessment

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system for principal learning and the project must:

    (i) use a level of resources within a centre/consortium that is consistent with the required quality of assessment

    (ii) use the minimum number of awarding organisation examiners/assessors and moderators/verifiers required to support reliable and timely marking and reduce the scope for inconsistency.

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Roles, responsibilities and resources

Principal learning and project component awarding bodies

2. Component awarding bodies must define roles and responsibilities for staff and define the separation of functions and points of accountability to ensure that assessment tasks, question papers and mark schemes are produced, tested and scrutinised effectively.

3. Component awarding bodies must have the necessary systems, procedures and resources in place to ensure that:

    a. assessment tasks, question papers and mark schemes can be produced to the required level of quality

    b. learner results can be generated and reported to the required level of accuracy

    c. the necessary numbers of awarding organisation assessors/examiners and moderators/verifiers are available to ensure consistent standards

    d. learner results can be managed effectively

    e. contingency plans can be operated in the event of systems failures, including any breach of security of assessment tasks, question papers and mark schemes

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Component awarding bodies should also refer to the *Regulatory principles for e-assessment* (QCA, DELLS, CCEA, SQA; 2007).	f. where applicable to the language in which the assessment is provided, consistency is guaranteed across the languages of English, Welsh and Irish (Gaeilge).

4. If providing e-assessment, component awarding bodies must make the necessary adjustments to systems, resources, training and guidance to accommodate that provision.

5. Component awarding bodies must ensure that they use assessors, examiners, moderators and verifiers who have suitable training and expertise.

6. Component awarding bodies must have performance management systems in place to monitor and evaluate assessors, examiners, moderators and verifiers.

Design and application of assessments

Principal learning and project component awarding bodies

7. Component awarding bodies must ensure that assessment tasks, question papers and mark schemes meet the learning outcomes and associated assessment criteria in the specification.

8. Component awarding bodies must require centres to have procedures to ensure that evidence provided by learners is relevant, can be authenticated and is sufficient to determine whether the learners meet the requirements of the qualification specifications.

9. Component awarding bodies must assess performance in each unit of principal learning and in the project against marking criteria in terms of marks.

10. Component awarding bodies must ensure that assessors' or examiners' marking does not enable the direct allocation of grades. Therefore, the marking criteria must not have a direct relationship with grading bands.

External assessment of principal learning

Principal learning component awarding bodies |

11. Component awarding bodies must ensure that their assessors and examiners for external assessment do not assess work from a centre in which they have a personal interest.

12. Component awarding bodies must ensure standardisation of external assessment, followed by sampling, to enable a full review of the range of performances and responses.

13. Component awarding bodies must ensure that learners' work and the associated marks are kept securely to allow for enquiries and appeals.

Internal assessment of principal learning and the project[25]

Principal learning and project component awarding bodies

14. Component awarding bodies must require centres to have effective and manageable administrative procedures and systems for internal assessment.[26]

15. Component awarding bodies must ensure centres have clear information on the parameters and the guidance necessary for the effective setting of assessment tasks, question papers and mark schemes.

16. Component awarding bodies must require that there are centre controls for internal assessment to take place under controlled conditions (including when the internal assessment takes place at a venue other than the

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[25] QCDA supports good practice in quality assuring internal assessment on principal learning and project qualifications. For further information, refer to www.qcda.gov.uk - *Delivering the Diploma – A guide to managing internal assessment.*

[26] Also refer to Section 2, 'Approval of centres for principal learning'.

	centre) to:
	a. enable the authentication of learners' work
	b. ensure reliable internal assessment.
	17. Component awarding bodies must require centres to standardise internal assessment across different assessors and assessment sites.
	18. Component awarding bodies must require centres to use moderation or verification to ensure that internal assessment meets defined standards.
	19. Component awarding bodies must communicate clearly to centres the procedures for the moderation/verification of internal assessment.
	20. Component awarding bodies must require sampling of internally assessed work that enables moderation/verification of a centre's internal assessment.
	21. Component awarding bodies must ensure that the assessment decisions of their moderators/verifiers are standardised.
	22. Component awarding bodies must ensure there is a sufficient number of moderators/verifiers according to the number and distribution of centres and learners and the nature of assessment requirements.
	23. Component awarding bodies must require that moderators/verifiers do not deal with work from a centre in which they have a personal interest.
	24. Component awarding bodies must instruct centres to support learner choice in selecting topics for the project.

	Section 4: Awarding of principal learning and the project
Also refer to the relevant sections of the *Criteria for accreditation of*	*The GCSE, GCE, principal learning and project code of practice (to be published in April 2010) makes more detailed requirements that underpin the operating rules on the awarding*

Foundation, Higher and Advanced Diploma qualifications version 2.	*of principal learning and project. Principal learning and project component awarding bodies must comply with the code of practice, in conjunction with the operating rules.* *Principal learning and project component awarding bodies*
The marks for principal learning units and for the project will be converted into points and reported as grades. The aggregation of these points will produce a score for principal learning and for the project. These scores will be combined and converted into an overall Diploma grade. After initial periods of awarding, as each line of learning is introduced, it may be possible for principal learning and the project to be awarded more frequently.	1. Component awarding bodies must support the procedures for ensuring awarding and grading standards are set appropriately. 2. Component awarding bodies must only award their level 1 and level 2 principal learning qualifications once during the first year they are offered (summer). 3. Component awarding bodies must not award their level 3 principal learning qualifications during the first year they are offered and must only award these qualifications once in the second year (summer). 4. For an initial period, component awarding bodies must award principal learning units and project qualifications no more than twice a year (summer and winter), to enable awarding and grading standards to be established. Ofqual will determine this initial period for awarding.
The same grading scales apply to the grading of principal learning, the project and the overall Diploma.	5. Component awarding bodies are responsible for providing a standardised score and grade for a learner's principal learning units, principal learning qualification and project qualification. 6. Component awarding bodies must aggregate individuals' principal learning unit results to produce an overall standardised grade for the principal learning qualification.[27] 7. Component awarding bodies must not pre-publish grade boundaries for principal learning units or project qualifications.

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[27] The units for principal learning qualifications must all be taken with the same component awarding body and must be at the same level as the overall Diploma.

8. Component awarding bodies must use common, Ofqual-agreed procedures for awarding and grading principal learning and the project.[28] These procedures will be discrete from marking and will include:

> a. professional judgement, using evidence of performance and informed by technical and statistical data

> b. production of unit grade boundaries and unit grades that component awarding bodies will report.

9. Component awarding bodies must provide guidance to enable centres to understand the grading scales used for the award of principal learning and the project.

10. Component awarding bodies must have procedures in place to consider aegrotat awards for principal learning on the basis of partial achievement. It is the responsibility of the component awarding body to provide the Diploma aggregation service with the weighted points for the unit to which the aegrotat applies.

11. Component awarding bodies must award and report on principal learning and the project according to the following grading scales:

> a. A*, A and B for graded results and U for unclassified results at level 1

> b. A*, A, B and C for graded results and U for unclassified results at level 2

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[28] The timelines for awarding are set out as part of the Ofqual-agreed arrangements for component and Diploma awarding bodies that underpin the regulation of the Diploma. Details of these arrangements are available on Ofqual's website, www.ofqual.gov.uk. They are agreed by Ofqual with component and Diploma awarding bodies and take into account the requirements of the Diploma aggregation service. Timelines for data supplied to the Diploma aggregation service must also be in accordance with the agreed service levels and commercial terms for the service.

	c. A*, A, B, C, D and E for graded results and U for unclassified results at level 3.

	Section 5: Management of constituent qualification results
All the qualifications that can contribute to the Diploma are referred to as constituent qualifications, and are contained in the Diploma catalogue. The home centre for each Diploma learner in the centre consortium should ensure that their Diploma learners have an open learner account in the Diploma aggregation service and should open the learner account as soon as they begin their Diploma programme. This centre communicates with the Diploma aggregation service on behalf of the learner. The verified ULN is a mandatory part of the learner account.	**Submission of all constituent qualification results** *Principal learning and project component awarding bodies* 1. Component awarding bodies must use the verified ULN to identify each learner with a learner account in the Diploma aggregation service, and to record their results for constituent qualifications of the Diploma with the Diploma aggregation service.[29] 2. Component awarding bodies must verify the learner details referenced by the ULN and post results only where the ULN has been verified. 3. Component awarding bodies are responsible for the accuracy and validity of the results and grade data they submit to the Diploma aggregation service referenced by each verified ULN. 4. Component awarding bodies must submit results for principal learning units and qualifications and for project qualifications (with their associated weighted points) to the Diploma aggregation service, including unclassified results and absences. 5. Component awarding bodies must submit constituent results to the Diploma aggregation service within agreed timelines[30] and in appropriate formats.

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[29] 'Guidance on posting results to the Diploma aggregation service' sets out the detailed requirements of the Diploma aggregation service, and is available at www.qcda.gov.uk/das.

[30] The timelines for awarding are set out as part of the Ofqual-agreed arrangements for component and Diploma awarding bodies that underpin the regulation of the Diploma. Details of these arrangements are available on Ofqual's website: www.ofqual.gov.uk. They are agreed by Ofqual with component and Diploma awarding bodies and take into account the requirements of the Diploma aggregation service. Timelines for data supplied to the Diploma aggregation service must also be in accordance with the agreed service levels and commercial terms for the service.

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If a qualification was achieved without a ULN, centres will need to obtain a verified ULN and open a learner account before contacting the relevant component awarding body to verify prior achievement.

There are no proxies for principal learning, the project and functional skills in the Diploma.

Once a learner account has been opened the Diploma aggregation service accepts all results data for principal learning and project qualifications, and for other qualifications from the Diploma catalogues.

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Prior achievement claims

Principal learning and project component awarding bodies

7. Component awarding bodies must verify the relevant prior achievement of Diploma learners for the constituent qualifications they offer to enable timely Diploma awards. Prior achievement applies if this achievement was obtained before a learner account was opened in the Diploma aggregation service. Qualifications achieved before 1 January 2005 cannot be considered as prior achievement.

This verification is subject to the learner having a verified ULN for submission to the learner account, and one of the following requirements:

    a. the qualification is a current or expired qualification in the Diploma catalogue

    or

    b. if requested, the component awarding organisation proposes that the qualification is an equivalent of a qualification that exists is in the current or previous versions of the Diploma catalogues.[31]

Resits

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[31] Once a qualification has been recognised against a current qualification in the Diploma catalogue, it will be added to the expired qualifications in the catalogue.

	Principal learning component awarding bodies 8. Component awarding bodies must permit resits of principal learning units to enable learners to improve their grades for principal learning and the overall Diploma.[32] 9. Component awarding bodies must re-issue the principal learning qualification certificate if a unit resit improves the grade awarded for the principal learning qualification.[33]

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[32] Learners can resit principal learning units to improve their overall principal learning grade before or after the principal learning qualification has been awarded.

[33] Diploma awarding bodies must re-issue the Diploma transcript and certificate to reflect an improved grade for the Diploma. The grade can be improved before or after the Diploma has been awarded.

Operating rules for Diploma awarding bodies

	Section 6: Awarding of the Diploma

All levels of the Diploma are graded. The Diploma aggregation service calculates the grade for the whole Diploma by aggregating the unit scores for principal learning and for the project. Also refer to the relevant sections of the *Criteria for accreditation of Diploma qualifications version 2.*
 	
Arrangements will be put in place to ensure that the Diploma aggregation service is managed to safeguard the use of the service over time, and to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to awarding organisations' use of the service.
 	
Centres will be able to access a trial grade for each learner who has completed the necessary achievements for the Diploma. Centres can review the trial grade before claiming award of the Diploma, or set an intention to claim with the Diploma aggregation
	Diploma awarding bodies
	
	1. Diploma awarding bodies must have a clear understanding of the awarding process by which the grades for principal learning units and the project are converted to points. These points are added together to derive a Diploma score, which is converted into a Diploma grade using published thresholds.
	
	2. Diploma awarding bodies must award and report on Diploma grading according to the following grading scales:
	
	    a. A*, A and B for graded results at Foundation level and U for unclassified results
	
	    b. A*, A, B and C for graded results at Higher level and U for unclassified results
	
	    c. A*, A, B, C, D and E for graded results at Advanced level and for progression Diplomas and U for unclassified results.
	
	3. Diploma awarding bodies must award the overall Diploma grade based on the combined scores obtained for principal learning and the project from the Diploma aggregation service. Diploma awarding bodies must only award the Diploma on the basis of claims accepted by the Diploma aggregation service. These claims must meet the following requirements:
	
	    a. achievement at pass or above of the combined results of principal learning and the project[34]

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[34] The units for principal learning qualifications must all be taken with the same component awarding body and must be at the same level as the overall Diploma. The project must be at the same level or one level above the level of the Diploma.

service.
 	
The minimum required amounts of GLH for additional and specialist learning are:
 	
120 GLH at Foundation (level 1);
 	
180 GLH at Higher (level 2); and
 	
360 GLH at Advanced (level 3).
	b. achievement of qualifications from the Diploma catalogue for additional and specialist learning that:
	
	    (i) are at the same level or are at level 2 or level 3 for the Foundation Diploma
	    (ii) are at the same level or one level above the level of the Higher or Advanced Diploma
	    (iii) meet the minimum required amounts of GLH
	
	c. achievement of functional skills in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) required at:
	
	    (i) level 1 or above for the Foundation Diploma
	    (ii) level 2 for the Higher Diploma
	    (iii) level 2 for award of the Advanced Diploma or the Progression Diploma
	
	d. confirmation that requirements for personal, learning and thinking skills have been met
	
	e. completion of work experience.
	
	4. Diploma awarding bodies must assist centres in understanding the grading scales and requirements for the award of the Diploma.

	Section 7: Management of Diploma results
	Diploma awarding bodies
	1. Diploma awarding bodies must not disclose constituent qualification results received for the Diploma award claim before the respective issue dates for the results of those qualifications.
	2. Diploma awarding bodies must submit all Diploma results to the Diploma aggregation service according to agreed timelines.[35]
	3. Diploma awarding bodies must reissue a Diploma result if the Diploma aggregation service has reaggregated constituent results and there is a change to the Diploma grade.

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[35]The timelines for awarding are set out as part of the Ofqual-agreed arrangements for component and Diploma awarding bodies that underpin the regulation of the Diploma. Details of these arrangements are available on Ofqual's website: www.ofqual.gov.uk. They are agreed by Ofqual with component and Diploma awarding bodies and take into account the requirements of the Diploma aggregation service. Timelines for data supplied to the Diploma aggregation service must also be in accordance with the agreed service levels and commercial terms for the service. Please also refer to 'Guidance on posting results to the Diploma aggregation service' available at www.qcda.gov.uk/das

	Section 8: Certification of the Diploma and the Diploma transcript
	Diploma awarding bodies
When making the award, the Diploma awarding body must only print the Diploma transcript on the basis of a claim by a centre on behalf of a learner.	1. Following an agreed period after the issue of results to allow for relevant enquiries and appeals for constituent qualifications, Diploma awarding bodies must print and issue the Diploma transcript with the Diploma certificate once a Diploma claim has been made and the Diploma aggregation service has made available the necessary results data.
Centres are responsible for the delivery and recording in the Diploma aggregation service of personal, learning and thinking skills, and of work experience. These will be quality assured by inspection regimes.	**Diploma transcript** *Diploma awarding bodies* 2. As a minimum, the Diploma transcript must meet the following information requirements for which the Diploma aggregation service will provide data. The Diploma transcript must include: a. learner details: ULN, learner's given name and family name, as provided b. Diploma details: Diploma awarding body name, Diploma line of learning, level and final grade (must not include the score) c. principal learning: component awarding body name (must not include the logo), qualification name and level, overall principal learning grade, date of award and credit value (where available), unit name and grade (must not include the score) for each unit d. personal, learning and thinking skills: confirmation that personal, learning and thinking skills requirements have been met; and a list of the six skills e. project: component awarding body name (must not include the logo), qualification name, level and grade (must not include the score), date of award

and credit value (where available)

f. functional skills: component awarding body name(s) (must not include the logo), qualification name, level and type, grade (must not include the score) for English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT), date of award and credit value (where available)

g. additional and specialist learning: component awarding body name(s) (must not include the logo), qualification name(s) level(s) and type(s), grade (where applicable; must not include the score), date of award and credit value (where available)

h. work experience: completion.

3. The Diploma transcript must also:

a. clearly state that the Diploma transcript is only valid when issued with the Diploma certificate

b. be designed and produced as a secure document.

4. If an improved grade for principal learning and/or the project changes the overall grade of the Diploma, the Diploma transcript must be reissued to reflect the improved grade.

The current certification requirements for accredited qualifications are published in *The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, 2004.*

Certification of the Diploma

5. The Diploma certificate must include the learner's ULN.

6. The Diploma certificate must be re-issued if the overall grade for the Diploma is improved.

Annex 1: Draft pricing principles for component & Diploma awarding bodies

Evidence from work on qualification pricing shows that the main factor affecting a centre's choice of awarding organisation is the suitability of the qualification rather than its price. The pricing of constituent qualifications in the Diploma catalogue will impact on the cost of the whole Diploma. The Diploma qualification is a significant new qualification and the principal learning within it is a new industry-led programme of study. Therefore, the initial pricing of both the Diploma and principal learning will have a significant impact on the take-up of these qualifications.	These pricing principles form a framework within which awarding organisations can participate in the operation of the Diploma, while ensuring that the prices charged are reasonable. **Educational benefit** 1. Choice for the Diploma should mainly be based on what centres perceive to be of the best educational benefit for their learners, and this should not be significantly compromised by considerations of price. **Transparency of pricing** 2. Markets work more efficiently when participants have the information they need to make informed decisions. The fees charged by Diploma awarding bodies for the award and certification of the Diploma, and by component awarding bodies for principal learning and the project, must be transparent. Centres must be able to see what they are paying for, including additional products and services, and be able to make comparisons between competing providers. **Notice period for the implementation of fees** 3. Centres should have access to timely information about the nature, content and price of qualifications. Pricing of principal learning, the award and certification of the Diploma and any relevant additional products and services that impact on the cost of the whole Diploma should be publicised appropriately in advance of when the fee is due to be paid, so that centres can plan their budgets. **Value for money** 4. The fees relating to the award of the Diploma, including for Diploma certificates and transcripts, and for all components of the Diploma, must represent value for money.

GLOSSARY

access arrangements

Arrangements that are approved in advance of an examination or assessment to allow attainment to be demonstrated by learners who have a permanent or a long-term disability; learning difficulty; temporary disability, illness, indisposition or medical condition; or a special educational need, including where the learner's first language is not English, Welsh or Irish (Gaeilge).

accreditation

The process through which the regulators confirm that a qualification and the associated specification conform to the relevant regulatory criteria.

additional and specialist learning (ASL)

Qualifications that learners choose to include in their Diploma that are complementary or specialised in character. Additional and specialist learning must provide high-quality breadth and/or depth of curriculum experience, without duplication of principal learning, and be based on a solid evidence-base of progression opportunities for learners who want to progress into immediate employment with training, or full-time further and/or higher education.

Advanced Diploma

The Advanced Diploma, a level 3 qualification, provides the basis for progression to higher and further education, and to employment with training. It requires 1,080 guided learning hours (GLH), and is equivalent, in terms of UCAS points, to three and one-half A levels. The Advanced Diploma includes principal learning that is sector- and subject-related. It requires level 2 functional skills in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT), and provides the essential personal, learning and thinking skills needed to progress in education, training and employment. An Advanced Diploma can be completed as a two-year full-time programme. The Advanced Diploma components are, for each line of learning, as follows:

- principal learning (set at 540 GLH, of which a minimum of 270 GLH must be applied learning)

- generic learning (set at 180 GLH)

- additional and specialist learning (set at 360 GLH as a minimum).

aegrotat award

An award made on the basis of partial achievement to a learner who is unable, through temporary illness, injury or indisposition, to complete all the usual assessment requirements.

aggregation

The adding together of attainment across the components and units of a qualification to arrive at a measure of achievement for the qualification as a whole. Aggregation may require a weighting of each element according to the intended contribution to the whole Diploma.

appeal

A process through which an awarding body/organisation may be challenged on the outcome of an enquiry about results or, where appropriate, other procedural decisions affecting a centre or individual learners.

AS/A level

See GCE AS/A level.

assessment

The process of making judgements about the extent to which a learner's work meets the assessment criteria for a qualification, a unit or part of a unit.

assessment centre

Any centre in a consortium hosting an internal or external assessment for Diploma learners.

assessor

The person who makes a judgement on a learner's work.

authentication

Confirmation that work has been produced by the learner who is putting it forward for assessment, and that it has been produced under the required conditions.

awarding

The process through which learners' results and/or grades are determined on the basis of available evidence.

Awarding body/awarding organisation

An organisation that awards qualifications. To be eligible to award regulated qualifications, awarding bodies/organisations must meet the requirements of and be

recognised by the qualifications regulators. For the Diploma, there are two types of awarding bodies/organisations: component awarding bodies and Diploma awarding bodies.

centre approval

A process through which an awarding organisation recognises or confirms that a centre can offer particular qualifications.

Centre consortium

A group of centres and other organisations (including employers and training providers) working together locally to offer a Diploma line of learning. Each consortium is approved through the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) Diploma Gateway process.

certificate

The final record of attainment in a unit or qualification issued by an awarding organisation.

comparability

The extent to which results obtained in different assessments, for example in different units, between awarding organisations or over time, represent equivalent attainment.

component awarding body (CAB)

An awarding organisation offering constituent qualifications for the Diploma, which may include principal learning, foundation, higher and extended project, functional skills and/or additional and specialist learning qualifications.

components of the Diploma

Diplomas are made up of constituent qualifications that are organised in terms of the following three components:

- principal learning

- generic learning

- additional and specialist learning.

composite qualification

A qualification consisting of a number of constituent accredited qualifications.

constituent qualifications

Qualifications that make up the different components of the Diploma.

Diploma

A composite qualification for 14- to 19-year-olds in England, the Diploma is being introduced between 2008 and 2012 and will ultimately be available in 17 lines of learning at levels 1 (Foundation), 2 (Higher) and 3 (Advanced). All Diplomas share a common structure made up of three components: principal learning; generic learning; and additional and specialist learning, with the exception of the Progression Diploma.

Diploma aggregation service

The Diploma aggregation service supports the awarding of the Diploma to the learner. It must be used, by centres and component and Diploma awarding bodies involved in the delivery of the Diploma, to share data and record a learner's progress towards a Diploma award. As well as recording constituent qualification results and other achievements (personal, learning and thinking skills; and work experience) against each learner, the service aggregates these results and applies rules of combination to determine whether the whole Diploma can be awarded and produces a trial grade.

Diploma awarding body (DAB)

An awarding organisation that awards the overall Diploma qualification, and issues a transcript and certificate.

Diploma catalogues

The catalogues of the constituent qualifications, and the valid combinations of those qualifications, which can be used for the achievement of the Diploma.

Diploma development partnership (DDP)

This is a partnership between employers, higher education and other sector/line of learning experts (with an interest/stake in the sector or subject) and education representatives (with professional, educational or qualification-design expertise). DDPs are brought together through sector skills councils (SSCs) and are led by the most appropriate SSC. DDPs are responsible for developing the line of learning statement.

Diploma transcript

A report of the qualifications that make up a learner's Diploma programme. It lists the learners' grades for each qualification in their Diploma, and records work experience and personal, learning and thinking skills.

extended project

A level 3 qualification involving a single piece of work that requires a high degree of planning, preparation, research and independent working. Learners will explore in depth a topic based on their own interests and aspirations. The extended project may be completed alongside A levels or as part of an Advanced or Progression Diploma.

external assessment

A form of assessment in which question papers, assignments and tasks are set by the awarding organisation, taken under specified conditions (including details of supervision and duration) and marked by the awarding organisation.

Foundation Diploma

The Foundation Diploma is achieved at level 1, and supports progression to level 2, particularly within key stage 4. It requires 600 guided learning hours (GLH), and is equivalent, in terms of average length of study, to five GCSEs. The Foundation Diploma includes learning related to a specific sector or subject, and includes a project to allow individuals to plan and organise their own learning. It includes functional skills in English, mathematics and ICT at level 1, and provides the essential personal, learning and thinking skills needed to progress in education and training. The Diploma can be taken in one year if taken on its own, or in two years if taken at the same time as the key stage 4 national curriculum programme of study. The Foundation Diploma components are, for each line of learning, as follows:

- principal learning (set at 240 GLH, of which a minimum of 120 GLH must be applied learning)

- generic learning (set at 240 GLH)

- additional and specialist learning (set at 120 GLH minimum)

functional skills

These are the core elements of English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT), which provide the essential knowledge, skills and understanding needed to operate confidently, effectively and independently in life and at work. Functional skills relate to Diplomas and apprenticeships. They are also available as standalone qualifications.

Gateway

The quality assurance process run by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), through which a local partnership of learning providers (a centre consortium) applies for approval to offer Diploma qualifications in a line of learning.

GCE AS/A level

GCE stands for General Certificate of Education. An A level is normally taken as a two-year course progressing from either GCSE or an equivalent qualification. It comprises the advanced subsidiary (AS) and A2 components. Both AS and A level qualifications sit at level 3 in the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The AS is a standalone qualification and is valued as half a full A level qualification (assessed at the standard expected for a learner halfway through an A level course). The A2 is the second half of a full A level qualification (assessed at the standard expected for a learner at the end of a full A level course). Both are worth 50 per cent of the full A level qualification. AS levels are graded A–E; A levels are graded A*–E.

GCSE

GCSE stands for General Certificate of Secondary Education. GCSE qualifications are generally taken as a two-year course by learners aged 14 to 16. GCSEs sit within the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. GCSEs are graded A* to G: grades D to G are at level 1 and grades A* to C are at level 2 in the NQF.

GCSE assessment involves external assessment, including controlled assessments for most qualifications. GCSEs can be linear or unitised, and are offered in a variety of subjects, including English, mathematics, ICT and science, which are compulsory within state schools at key stage 4 in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

generic learning

Generic learning enables learners to develop and apply the skills and knowledge necessary for learning, employment and personal development. The generic learning component of the Diploma is made up of the following constituent parts:

- functional skills

- personal, learning and thinking skills

- a project

- work experience.

grade

A point on a scale of performance used to differentiate achievement within a qualification (for example A*, A, B, C, D, E).

guided learning hours (GLH)

Guided learning hours are a measure of the time that a typical learner will require in direct guidance – from a teacher, tutor or other identified guidance provider – to

complete their programme of learning successfully. The guidance must be related to the programme that the learner is taking, and can include time in lectures, classes, tutorials, one-to-one meetings, workshops or assessment sessions. The guidance may be delivered through virtual means, such as online, or through video and teleconferencing. If the guidance is in the form of supervised study, then the supervising person must be available to provide support for the specific subject. Guided learning does not include marking assessments when the learner is not present; work experience when an assessor or centre/employer learning provider is not present; or custodial supervision.

Higher Diploma

The Higher Diploma provides the basis for progression to further education, an apprenticeship or employment. It is a level 2 qualification and supports progression to level 3. It requires 800 guided learning hours (GLH), and is equivalent, in terms of average length of study, to seven GCSEs. The Higher Diploma includes principal learning related to a specific sector or subject, and includes a project to allow individuals to plan and organise their own learning. It includes functional skills in English, mathematics and ICT at level 2, and provides the essential personal, learning and thinking skills needed to progress in education, training and employment. The Diploma can be taken in one or two years, if taken on its own, or in two years if taken at the same time as the key stage 4 national curriculum programme of study. The Higher Diploma components are, for each line of learning, as follows:

- principal learning (set at 420 GLH, of which a minimum of 210 GLH must be applied learning)

- generic learning (set at 200 GLH)

- additional and specialist learning (set at 180 GLH minimum).

home centre

This is a centre where a learner is registered or enrolled, and which undertakes transactions on the Diploma aggregation service for a particular learner. Each learner may only have one home centre; the home centre takes responsibility for a learner and has overall responsibility for his or her Diploma programme.

intention to claim

A mechanism by which a learner can state his or her intention to claim a Diploma once the final constituent qualification results have been received.

internal assessment

Comprises assessment tasks, where learners' evidence is assessed in the centre against criteria provided by the awarding body and subjected to external moderation. The assessment tasks may be set internally at the centre or provided by the awarding organisation.

internal standardisation

Consists of processes carried out by centres in relation to internally assessed work. This ensures consistency within each line of learning in relation to the setting of tasks, conduct of tasks and marking of learners' assessment evidence. Internal standardisation thereby ensures that all learners are judged against the same standards regardless of which teaching group they are in or which assessor marks their work.

learner account

This will indicate participation on a Diploma programme and act as the repository for results data for an individual learner, recording line of learning and level. It will be managed and monitored by a centre on behalf of a learner or a DAB on behalf of a centre. Learners will not have direct access to their learner accounts.

Learner Registration Service (LRS)

The LRS is an internet-based service capable of providing a unique learner number (ULN) for every person in education and training in the UK. This will allow people to build a lifelong record of their learning participation and achievements, which they can access and share if they choose.

lines of learning

The broad subject areas that each Diploma will cover are as follows:

- First teaching September 2008
    - construction and the built environment (CBE)
    - creative and media (C&M)
    - engineering (ENG)
    - information technology (IT)
    - society, health and development (SHD)

- First teaching September 2009
    - business, administration and finance (BAF)
    - environmental and land-based studies (ELB)
    - hair and beauty studies (H&B)
    - hospitality (HOS)
    - manufacturing and product design (MPD)

- First teaching September 2010
    - public services (PO)
    - retail business (RBT)
    - sport and active leisure (SAL)
    - travel and tourism (T &T)

- First teaching September 2011
    - Humanities and social sciences (HSS)
    - Languages and international communications (LIC)
    - Science (level 1 and 2) (SCI)

- First teaching September 2012
    - Science (level 3) (SCI)

The line of learning titles are subject to change.

line of learning criteria

A regulatory document that defines the knowledge, skills and understanding relevant to a line of learning at levels 1, 2 and 3 that must be contained as part of the principal learning component within the Diploma qualification. Awarding organisations must meet the requirements laid out in the line of learning criteria in addition to the *Criteria for accreditation of Foundation, Higher and Advanced Diploma qualifications version 2.*

Managing Information Across Partners (MIAP)

The MIAP programme will streamline the collection, handling and sharing of information on learning and achievement for education and training organisations. The Learning and Skills Council is delivering MIAP on behalf of partners across the education sector. Further information can be found at www.miap.gov.uk.

moderation

The process through which internal assessment is monitored to ensure that it meets required standards and adjustments to results are made, where required, to compensate for any differences in standards that are encountered.

national database of accreditation qualifications (NDAQ)

This is a website that contains details of all qualifications that are accredited by the qualification regulators in England (Ofqual), Wales (DCELLS) and Northern Ireland (CCEA). More information can be found on NDAQ at www.accreditedqualifications.org.uk.

personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS)

The framework of skills that will equip all young people for successful employment and lifelong learning. PLTS require learners to be:

- independent enquirers

- creative thinkers

- reflective learners

- team workers

- self-managers

- effective participators.

plan of provision

The plan proposed by awarding organisations defining the level, types and subject/ sector of qualifications they intend to submit for accreditation.

principal learning

This is the mandatory learning part of the Diploma. Principal learning is sector- and subject-related and predominantly applied in character. It includes a minimum of 50 per cent applied learning and consists of knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes that support progress through the line of learning into the sectors and subjects concerned. Opportunities to develop and apply generic skills are also integrated into principal learning.

prior achievement

The Diploma qualification allows for the inclusion of constituent qualifications that have been achieved by a learner after 1 January 2005, if they are in the Diploma catalogue or in a previous version of the Diploma catalogue.

programme of study

The statutory elements of the national curriculum that all learners at key stage 4 must cover while at school or college.

project

A level 1 or 2 qualification involving a single piece of work that requires a high degree of planning, preparation, research and independent working. Learners explore in depth a topic based on their own interests and aspirations. The project is completed as part of a Foundation or Higher Diploma. An extended project is completed as part of the Advanced or Progression Diploma.

qualification criteria

The document *Criteria for accreditation of Foundation, Higher and Advanced Diploma qualifications version 2* alongside the criteria for each line of learning, sets out the knowledge, understanding, skills and assessment objectives common to all Diplomas at Foundation, Higher and Advanced levels. These criteria provide the framework within which awarding organisations create the detail of the components or constituent qualifications.

qualification specification

A detailed document that defines the purpose, content, structure and assessment arrangements for a qualification.

qualifications regulators

Statutory organisations that are required to establish national standards for qualifications and ensure consistent compliance with them. The qualifications regulators for England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland are, respectively: Office of the Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual); the Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS); the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA); and the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA).

reasonable adjustments

Steps taken to ensure disabled people are not placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with non-disabled people, 'substantial' being more than minor or trivial. A reasonable adjustment will generally lead to an access arrangement being made for the learner.

recognition

The recognition of Diploma awarding bodies and component awarding bodies in England, in addition to their recognition as awarding organisations for regulated qualifications.

sector

In relation to the Diploma, the term sector refers to an employer-led line of learning in a specific area of work, such as construction or engineering.

special consideration

A process that allows candidates who suffer from temporary illness, injury or indisposition at the time of an assessment to demonstrate the achievement they are capable of.

standardisation

A process to ensure that the assessment criteria for a qualification or unit are applied consistently by assessors, moderators and verifiers.

trial grade

Centres will be able to obtain a trial grade for each learner who has completed the necessary achievements for the Diploma, before claiming the award of the Diploma through the Diploma awarding body and the Diploma aggregation service. The trial grade is verified by the Diploma awarding body that will award the Diploma.

unique learner number (ULN)

A personal 10-digit number allocated to a learner by the Managing Information Across Partners (MIAP) Learner registration service (LRS). The ULN remains with the learner throughout their life so that all their future learning experiences, exam results and qualifications will be linked together. All Diploma learners must have a ULN.

unit

The smallest part of a qualification that can be certified.

unit grade

The grade awarded for each unit. This applies to the principal learning qualification.

verification

A process of moderation that includes local checking of assessment processes and decisions.

work experience

Work experience is a placement with an employer in which a young person carries out a task – or range of tasks – and duties in much the same way as an employee, with the emphasis on learning from the experience. Work experience provides opportunities for learning about the skills and personal qualities, careers, roles and structures that exist within a workplace or organisation.

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