

Part G: Providing information and record-keeping

1 Introduction

This document summarises the information that should be provided and records that should be kept by Access Validating Agencies (AVAs) and providers, in relation to grades given for the Access to HE Diploma. Some examples of ways in which provider records might be presented are included in Annex 1. The format for records is not prescribed, and these examples are provided for illustration only. Details of the grading system itself, and guidance on how grades are determined, are given in earlier parts of the implementation handbook.

2 Key responsibilities

Course providers will ensure that members of course teams keep records of a kind and in a manner that they and the AVA require. Access to HE providers should ensure that members of course teams have a common approach, within the context of any guidance that may be provided by the AVA, to:

- a providing students with general **information about assessment** on the course (for example, through a student handbook) and specific information about individual unit and assignment requirements, including information about grading (for example, through standard assignment briefing sheets)
- b providing students with **feedback on assessment** outcomes, including feedback relating to grades (for example, through a standard layout for feedback)
- c making and maintaining **records of assessment outcomes**, including records relating to grades and internal moderation/verification.

Providers will make records relating to grades available, as requested by the AVA for purposes relating to the AVA's role as awarding body including:

- moderation
- recommendations for the award of Access to HE Diplomas
- standardisation
- appeals.

AVAs will ensure that providers can provide such records as are necessary for the reliable award of Access to HE Diplomas with grades. The AVA will confirm that full and formal records are properly maintained by providers, and that records are clear, comprehensive and accessible, in order to ensure that the evidence on which its awards are made is complete and reliable.

AVAs may work with providers to develop common guidance or standard paperwork for providing information about assessment, assignment requirements, feedback and records of assessment outcomes.

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) will ensure that AVAs have procedures and systems in place to enable them to confirm, use and maintain reliable records.

3 Principles of good practice

a Information about assessment, including grading, should:

- **be clear and comprehensible** - general information about the approach to assessment on the course, including grading, and specific information about the requirements of individual units and assignments, should be provided in a language and style which is straightforward and unambiguous
- **be explicit and transparent** - any requirements relating to assessment (including grading), both in relation to the course as a whole and individual parts of the course, should be specified explicitly and directly: students should not have to interpret implicit requirements or guess the assessor's intention in order to be able to understand what is required of them
- **be sufficient and appropriate** - students should have enough information to allow them to respond appropriately to the task. Sufficiency should be considered in relation to the level and type of learning, the stage of the course and the particular assessment demands. As the Access to HE Diploma is a level 3 qualification, assessment information would not normally provide a detailed breakdown of required content, where knowledge of content is to be assessed, or a step-by-step and prescribed structure, where structure is to be assessed
- **support quality and consistency** - information about assessment should be followed through in feedback as part of the quality cycle, so that the relationship between the specified demands of the task, the student's response and assessment by the tutor can be tracked through the internal and external moderation systems.

b Feedback on assessment, including grading, should:

- **relate to the requirements of assessment** - students should be able to see how the feedback on their assessed work relates to the learning outcomes, assessment criteria and grade descriptors for the unit. While comment on each individual grade descriptor used for each assignment is not always necessary, a structured approach to feedback which identifies the particular features of the student's work that led to particular grades is good practice
- **support learning** - feedback can support learning directly, through identifying strengths displayed and specific areas for improvement, and indirectly through the impact that it can have on self-esteem and motivation. Feedback given to Access to HE students, particularly at the beginning of the course, should take account of the fact that their previous experience of assessment might have had a detrimental impact on their capacity for, and attitude to, learning. Grading is only one aspect of the assessment process, and grades are just part of the feedback given to students in response to assessed work
- **contribute to the student's continuing development** - feedback should attempt to indicate areas of the student's performance which demonstrate progress and development, and to provide the basis for further dialogue
- **be clear and explicit** - the language and expression of feedback should be clear and, where there are areas for improvement, the feedback should be explicit about how the improvement might be achieved
- **be prompt** - feedback should be provided as soon as possible after the student's work has been received and assessed.

- c **Records of assessment outcomes**, including all unit grades, should be kept by the tutor in accordance with requirements made by the provider and/or the AVA. In particular, tutor records should be:
- **reliable** - information about grades should be accurate and complete
 - **authentic** - records should specify when and by whom grading decisions were made
 - **accessible** - records about assessment outcomes, including grades, should be able to be located and retrieved. Good practice would suggest that records should be kept centrally
 - **secure** - student records should only be accessible by those who are entitled to see them
 - **sufficient** - records should clearly indicate the unit grades proposed by the tutor for achievement on each of the units in each student's programme of study and how those grades relate to assessed work
 - **auditable** - records should be able to be reviewed by moderators and others acting on the AVA's behalf to confirm the security of the grading process
 - **current** - records should be kept up-to-date and maintained, as a minimum, for the period that the student is studying on the Access to HE course and until such time as awards have been made by the AVA.

4 AVA record-keeping

As awarding bodies, AVAs are responsible for the accuracy and security of their records, including records relating to the award of grades. AVAs' policies and practices relating to records management and retention should be consistent with principles of good records management and current data protection legislation. AVAs' practices should ensure, in particular, that:

- records are held securely to prevent unauthorised access to them
- records are maintained and updated as necessary to ensure that they are accurate and current
- records can be accessed and transferred, as necessary, to other locations, systems or technologies, including for purposes of credit accumulation and transfer to other AVAs
- records are held for as long as they are required for purposes of making awards and to retain the capacity to provide duplicate certification over the period determined by AVA policy
- when records are deemed by an AVA's policy for retention to be no longer current, they are then securely destroyed.

Annex 1: The development of a grade profile

Example 1a) Unit assessed by single assignment: odd number of grade indicators

Unit title	
Grade descriptor	Grade
1 - Understanding of the subject	M
2 - Application of knowledge	
3 - Application of skills	
4 - Use of information	
5 - Communication and presentation	P
6 - Autonomy/Independence	
7 - Quality	M
Unit grade profile	PMM
Unit grade	Merit

Example 1b) Unit assessed by single assignment: even number of grade indicators, with two different mid-point grades

Unit title	
Grade descriptor	Grade
1 - Understanding of the subject	
2 - Application of knowledge	D
3 - Application of skills	
4 - Use of information	M
5 - Communication and presentation	M
6 - Autonomy/Independence	
7 - Quality	D
Unit grade profile	MMDD
Unit grade (noting Quality descriptor)	Distinction

Example 2a) Unit assessed by more than one assignment

Unit title		
Grade descriptor	Assignments	
	Ass. 1	Ass. 2
1 - Understanding of the subject		
2 - Application of knowledge	M	
3 - Application of skills		P
4 - Use of information		M
5 - Communication and presentation	P	P
6 - Autonomy/Independence		
7 - Quality	P	P
Unit grade profile	PPPPM	
Unit grade	Pass	

Example 2b) Unit assessed by more than one assignment (even number of grade indicators - mid-point grades the same)

Unit title		
Grade descriptor	Assignments	
	Ass. 1	Ass. 2
1 - Understanding of the subject	M	P
2 - Application of knowledge		
3 - Application of skills	P	P
4 - Use of information		
5 - Communication and presentation	P	M
6 - Autonomy/Independence		
7 - Quality	P	P
Unit grade profile	PPPPM	
Unit grade	Pass	

Access to HE unit profiles: tutor record

Student name:

Unit title	A		B	C	D			E	
	Ass. 1	Ass. 2	Ass. 1	Ass. 1	Ass. 1	Ass. 2	Ass. 3	Ass. 1	Ass. 2
Grade descriptor									
1 - Understanding of the subject	M		M	M	M	P		M	D
2 - Application of knowledge			P	P		M	D		
3 - Application of skills		P							
4 - Use of information		M		M			M		
5 - Communication and presentation	P	P	P	M	M		P	P	M
6 - Autonomy/Independence				M		P			
7 - Quality	P	P	P	M	M	M	M	M	M
Unit grade profile	PPPPMM		PPPM	PMMMMM	PPPPMMMMMM			PMMMM	
Unit grade	Pass		Pass	Merit	Merit			Merit	

Example 3 This example shows how a tutor could keep individual student records for the set of units which that tutor is responsible for assessing. It assumes the tutor was responsible for assessing five units, all of which were mandatory, with two being assessed by a single assignment (B and C); two being assessed by two assignments (A and E); and one being assessed by three assignments (D).

Access to HE unit grades for student group

Group name:

Student name	Choice from units C or D, and units E or F					
	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	Pass	Pass	Merit		Merit	Pass
2	Merit	Pass		Pass		Merit
3	Pass	Merit	Distinction			Distinction
4	Pass	Pass	Pass		Merit	Pass
5	Merit	Distinction		Distinction		Merit
6	Merit	Merit		Distinction	Distinction	Distinction
7	Pass	Merit	Merit		Merit	Distinction
8	Distinction	Merit	Distinction		Distinction	Merit

Example 4) This example shows how a tutor could keep a record of grades achieved by a student group for the set of units which that tutor is responsible for assessing. It assumes that there was some element of choice which allowed students either to complete Unit C or Unit D and either Unit E or Unit F. It also assumes that the unit grade profile is recorded on a student feedback sheet, and only the unit grade is carried forward and recorded here.

An extended version of such a record, which might be recorded on a spreadsheet, could be kept for the whole student group.



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Registered charity numbers 1062746 and SC037786