

## OCN EASTERN REGION

### GRADING THE ACCESS TO HE DIPLOMA - IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 2008-10

#### Part 1: Assigning grade descriptors to units 2008-09

It is clear that the implementation of the unit grading model will involve significant work for the AVA and Access providers in the region to ensure that grading of the units within the Access qualification can commence effectively in September 2009. The AVA aims to, as far as possible, reduce the direct burden on providers in respect of staff time and resources during 2008-09 with regard to assigning grade descriptors.

In order to complete the initial assignment of grade descriptors to existing units in the databank the AVA anticipates that preparatory and supporting activities will include:

- staff development with Centres, moderators and HEIs
- an effective communication strategy with Access coordinators and tutors, centre Principals and senior managers and HE admissions staff
- clear guidance for centres on the implementation of grading - including the process for assigning and approving grade descriptors, arriving at the final grade for units, internal moderation of grades and information for students e.g. assignment briefs, student handbooks and feedback on grading decisions.
- clear guidance on the implementation of revised policies relating to assessment and moderation
- clear guidance for moderators who will support centres in implementation of grading.
- substantial revisions to policies and guidance, particularly related to assessment regulations and internal and external moderation, contained in the OCN Eastern Region Access Quality Manual, which will require formal approval by the Access to HE Committee.

There will be a staged process of approving grade descriptors to include:

- a series of subject-based grading meetings of Access tutors, (between 22 January and 13 May 2008) led by subject moderators and supported by AVA staff – to recommend grade descriptors for all shared units in the databank
- centre moderators using the existing schedule of moderation visits in 2008-09 to support individual Centres e.g. to advise of grade descriptors, select appropriate content of grade descriptors, amend units where appropriate and revise assessment strategy and methods where necessary.
- centre moderators to review and initially approve centres' recommendations for assigning grade descriptors to any units used solely by an individual centre, using interim and final moderation visits in 2009 to complete this work
- AVA to review recommendations and formally approve assignment of grade descriptors for all units, amend / delete / replace any units which are inappropriate for grading and advise centres and moderators of any implications for centres' assessment strategies.
- centres to complete grading matrix for all Access Diploma courses, and AVA to ensure that all grade descriptors are used across all courses.



- Access to HE Committee to formally ratify grading decisions and grading matrices for all Access Diploma courses in July 2009

**Using the QAA Grading Implementation Handbook**

In order to be able to utilise centre moderator visits, complete staff development activities, revise the OCN Eastern Region Access Quality Manual and revise Access course validation processes (for courses validating in 2009) the AVA will require that some sections of the QAA implementation are available earlier than the current publication date.

Grading event / activity	Date	QAA Guidance needed
Centre and HEI staff development event	10 <sup>th</sup> December 2009	Section 1 – The final grade descriptors
Moderator staff development event	14 <sup>th</sup> January 2009	All of Section 2  Section 3 – Internal and external moderation
First Access Unit grading event – chemistry, biochemistry physics	22 January 2009	All of Section 2
Centre moderator interim visits  New Access course validations	March – May 2009	Section 3 – Arriving at final grades for units  Internal and external moderation  Section 4 – Assessment regulations
AVA confirmation of grades – for ratification by Access Committee in July 2009	June 2009	Section 4 – Confirmation of grades

**Current QAA guidance has been circulated to all centres and other stakeholders:**

- Grading the Access to Higher Education Diploma: progress towards implementation (revised June 2008) <http://www.accesstohe.ac.uk/home/publications>
- Access to HE grading implementation (2008-09) – communication between QAA and AVAs (Oct 08)
- Using the grade descriptors - Step-by-Step guide (Oct 08)
- Draft grade descriptors – version 2 (Oct 08)



**OCN Eastern Region**

**Access to HE Grading Implementation Plan: Actions and timescale**

CEO: Chief Executive

DSO: Development Support Officer

DOA: Director of Access to HE

DBD: Director of Business Development

ASO: Access to HE Support Officer

DoFO: Director of Finance and Operations

Action	Responsibility for action	Date by which action will be completed	
		2008-09	2009-10
Submission of OCN Eastern Region communication and implementation plan to QAA	DOA / CEO	28 November	
Submit draft plan to Access Committee for approval	DOA	Nov 08	
Circulate current QAA information, including draft grade descriptors, on grading to centres and moderators	ASO	Nov 08	
Communicate to Principals and senior managers of Access centres the implications of grading for staff and students	CEO	Dec 08	
Grading staff development event for centres and HEIs	DOA	10 <sup>th</sup> December 2008	
Access to HE e-newsletter to highlight grading information and timetable and give details of grading meetings and staff development events	DOA / DBD	Dec 08 March 09 June 09	Dec 10 March 10 June 10
Agree final details of process for assigning and approving grade descriptors	DOA /CEO	Jan 09	
Publish guidance for providers on approving grade descriptors for units	DOA	Jan 09	
Publish guidance for moderators on process for approving grade descriptors, implications for moderation visits during 08-09	DOA	Jan 09	
Provide briefing notes, reporting templates etc. for Access Unit grading meetings	DOA / ASO	Jan 09	
Staff development events for centre and subject moderators, to include process and timetable for assigning grade descriptors	DOA	14 <sup>th</sup> January 2009	Sept 10 Jan 10
Access unit grading event – Chemistry, Biochemistry, Physics (AUQR 4 & 5)	DOA / ASO	22 January 2009	
Access unit grading event – Psychology, Education, Teacher training (AUQR 6 & 14)	DOA / ASO	29 January 2009	
Access unit grading event – History, cultural studies, English literature, creative writing (AUQR 8 & 15)	DOA / ASO	5 February 2009	
Access unit grading event – Art and design (AUQR 17)	DOA / ASO	16 February 2009	
Access unit grading event – Biology, human biology, nursing and health studies (AUQR 3 & 7)	DOA / ASO	26 February 2009	
Access unit grading event – Government, politics, Law (AUQR 10)	DOA / ASO	12 March 2009	
Access unit grading event – IT and computing (AUQR 9)	DOA / ASO	18 March 2009	

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The **Diversity** of Learning

Circulate guidance to centres and moderators on final grades for units, record keeping, IM and external moderation	DOA / ASO	March 09	
Interim moderation visits to centres	DOA	March – April 09	
Provide update on progress against implementation plan to Access Committee	DOA	1 April 09 & 15 July 09	18 November 2010
Access unit grading event – Social work, social policy (AUQR 11)	DOA / ASO	24 April 2009	
Access unit grading event – Business, media and journalism (AUQR 12 & 16)	DOA / ASO	30 April 2009	
Access unit grading event – Sociology (AUQR 13)	DOA / ASO	13 May 2009	
Staff development event for centres and moderators to confirm details of grading processes for 2009-10	DOA / ASO	June 09	
Approve and circulate standard template for Access unit assignment brief and feedback sheet to include information on grade descriptors	DOA	June 09	
Complete assignment and approval of grade descriptors for all Access units Update programme details on OPUS Agree learner registration and qualification awarding processes with R&A team Update Access unit databank	DOA DOA / DSOs DOA/ DoFO ASO / DSOs	July 09	
Final moderation visits to centres	DOA	July 09	
Submit all approved recommendations for unit grading, including course grading matrices to Access Committee for ratification	DOA	15 July 2009	
Revise and circulate OCNER Internal Moderation Policy and Moderator Guidelines	DOA		August 09
Circulate final OCNER guidance on grading units	DOA		Sept 09
Revise and circulate OCNER Assessment Principles	DOA		Oct 09
Revise and circulate guidance to centres and subject moderators on requirements for subject moderation samples to be provided for 09-10	DOA		Dec 09
Revise and circulate OCN guidelines on the conduct of Access final assessment meetings to centres and moderators	DOA		April 10
Revise RAC forms to include grading information Revise Access certificate template and unit transcript template	DoFO R&A Team		April 10
Subject standardisation meetings to include impact of grading	DOA		May 2010
Quality Forum for Access centre moderators and tutors to discuss implementation of grading and outcomes of moderation	DOA		June 2010
All Access to HE Diploma units (L3) to be graded			July 2010

