

Welcome.

The Access e-newsletter is an email publication designed for Access tutors, Quality Managers, Moderators and HE admissions tutors to update you on matters related to Access and the OCN's role as an Access Validating Agency (AVA).

If you would like to find out more about our Access Diploma courses or pre-Access courses please contact us.



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The Winter 2009 bulletin includes:

- Get ready for Grading!
- Access moderation and quality updates.
- News from the Learning and Skills Council.

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Get ready for Grading!

From September 2009 the Access Diploma will be a graded qualification. All Diplomas awarded from July 2009 will include a grade profile listing the grades achieved for units completed on the course.

During 2009, OCN Eastern Region will be working to ensure a smooth transition to the graded Diploma. The OCN is committed to minimising the burden on providers and will be working with moderators to guide and support Access centres and universities.

Access Grading Briefing meeting December 10th 2008

Many thanks to the Access tutors and HE admissions tutors who attended the first grading

briefing meeting on 10th December. The slides from this event are available [here](#)

Key features

- Grades will be awarded for units achieved at Level 3 which contribute to the Diploma
- Level 2 units will not be graded
- Grades are pass, merit or distinction
- There is no aggregate or overall grade for the Diploma
- All Level 3 units will include the grade descriptors to be used for that unit, in addition to learning outcomes and assessment criteria
- Grades will be included in moderation and standardisation activity from September 2009

Changes to Access unit databank

Between January and May 2009, the OCN will be making sure that all Level 3 Access units are ready to be graded. We will be assigning grade descriptors to the units at a series of subject-based unit grading meetings, which will involve subject tutors from all our Access centres and Access subject moderators.

Grading events for Access units

22 January - Physics, Chemistry & Biochemistry, Colchester United Football Club

29 January - Psychology, Teaching, Education, South East Essex College

5 February - History, Cultural Studies, English & Creative Writing, Colchester United Football Club

26 February – Nursing, Health Studies, Biology & Human Biology, South East Essex College

A full calendar of unit grading meetings for all subjects is on the [OCN Eastern Region website](#). To find out more about grading meetings, or to confirm your attendance at the next event please contact Lara.edwards@ocner.org.uk

Grading Guidance

Parts A – E of the QAA Grading Implementation handbook are now available from the [QAA website](#).

- Part A Introduction, purposes and principles
- Part B Key features
- Part C The 7 grade descriptors
- Part D Identifying and approving grade descriptors for units
- Part E Using grade descriptors in assessment

Grading information can also be downloaded from the [OCN Eastern Region website](#).

Access Quality and Moderation updates

Many thanks to all moderators who attended the moderator training event on 26th September 2008.

New Access Quality Reviewer role

Sue Hartga has been appointed as part-time Access Quality Reviewer, with effect from 14th January. This role represents an additional quality resource for Access within the OCN, and will closely support the OCN with the implementation of the graded Access Diploma in particular.

As a result of a re-allocation of duties, some Centres will be notified that their Quality Reviewer has changed. The OCN can assure Centres that the level of service provided by their Quality Reviewer will remain unaltered following the re-organisation, however please contact the OCN should you have any queries.

Subject Moderation

Centres are reminded that, for Access courses commencing in September 2008, samples for subject moderation are due at the OCN no later than **13 February 2009**. The complete moderation timetable can be downloaded [here](#)

Please note that where the late submission of samples necessitates additional subject moderation work, centres will incur a charge.

Please feel free to send your samples to the OCN soon as they are ready. Guidance on selecting work samples, and details of what should be included can be found [here](#)

Centre Moderation visits

Access centre moderators should note that reports from initial moderation visits (ACM3) are due at the OCN by **23 January 2009**.

Interim visits should be completed and reports submitted by 22 May 2009

Access courses commencing January / February

For courses that commenced in 2008, final assessment meetings must be arranged before the end of February 2009. If they have not already done so, Centres should arrange a date with their Access Centre moderator and notify the OCN as soon as possible.

For courses commencing in 2009, initial moderator visits must be completed and reports submitted to the OCN by 3 April 2009.

Moderator Vacancies

OCN Eastern Region currently has vacancies for both Centre and Subject Moderators. A copy of the [job description](#) can be downloaded from the bottom of the Access Documents page on our website.

If you are interested in applying, please contact [Lara Edwards](#) for an application form.

News from the Learning and Skills Council

Learning Aims Database

We have been informed by the LSC that due to staff workloads there have been delays in assigning LAD codes to Access to HE courses. They will be working through the reports sent to them by QAA since October, as soon as they are able. They apologise for the inconvenience this will cause but have reassured us that all codes will be allocated in due course.

Latest policy and funding guidance

Please find below the latest additions to the Learning and Skills Council website which will be of interest to Access centres:

[LSC Funding Principles, Rules and Regulations 2008-09](#)

Paragraphs 192-203 relate specifically to Access to HE, but the following key messages should be noted:

192. The LSC recognises the importance of Access to Higher Education provision as a critical part of the DIUS, HEFCE and LSC Joint Progression Strategy, which is concerned with widening progression into HE for underrepresented learners.

193. In addition, the LSC strategy for HE has made a commitment to support the delivery of the widening participation agenda across higher education. A key component of this strategy is to identify and support appropriate progression routes in HE. In the context of the balance and mix of provision, LSC partnership teams should be aware that Access to HE provision is identified within the HE strategy as a critical and important component of progression and it remains the expectation that this provision, which is regulated by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) for Higher Education, should be secured and consolidated.

194. The LSC therefore considers it important to ensure that, through appropriate planning, sufficient funding is made available to prevent a decline in this provision and support the range of opportunities that it offers. This may include support for new Access to HE courses to meet identified need, and/or to replace courses that have outlived their usefulness.

195. The QAA-regulated Access to HE qualification was accepted as a full Level 3 qualification in the Labour Force Survey in autumn 2004. It is therefore to be considered full Level 3 priority provision in strategic discussions with providers for planning and funding purposes. It is also a qualification eligible for fee remission within the 19–25 first full Level 3 entitlement.

*[East of England Regional Commissioning Statement 2009-10](#)
[LSC National Statement of Priorities 2009-10](#)
[Further Education Demand-led Funding Policy 2008/09](#)*

OCN Eastern Region Access Centres

Adult Community College Learning Essex, Aylesbury College, Barking College, Barnet College, Barnfield College, Braintree College, Chelmsford College, City College Norwich, Colchester Institute, Harlow College, Havering College, Hertford Regional College, Newham College, Norfolk Adult Education Service, North Herts College, Oaklands College, Redbridge College, South East Essex College, SEEVIC College, South Essex Partnership NHS Trust, Suffolk New College, Southgate College, Thurrock and Basildon College, Waltham Forest College, West Herts College.

Validated Access Diploma courses include:

Accountancy, Art and design, Biological science, Business studies, Combined studies, Computing engineering, Counselling, Creative writing, Forensic science, Health and care professions, Humanities and social science, IT, Journalism, Law, Media, Mental Health studies, Nursing and midwifery, Radiography, Science, Social work, Social science, Sports science, Teaching.



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