



**The impact of
Grading the Access to HE Diploma**

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Why was grading proposed?



Outcome of research in 2004 indicated action needed because:

Students' views

- recognition of achievement; fuller feedback

Progression data

- barriers in some areas and some institutions

Fair admissions in HE

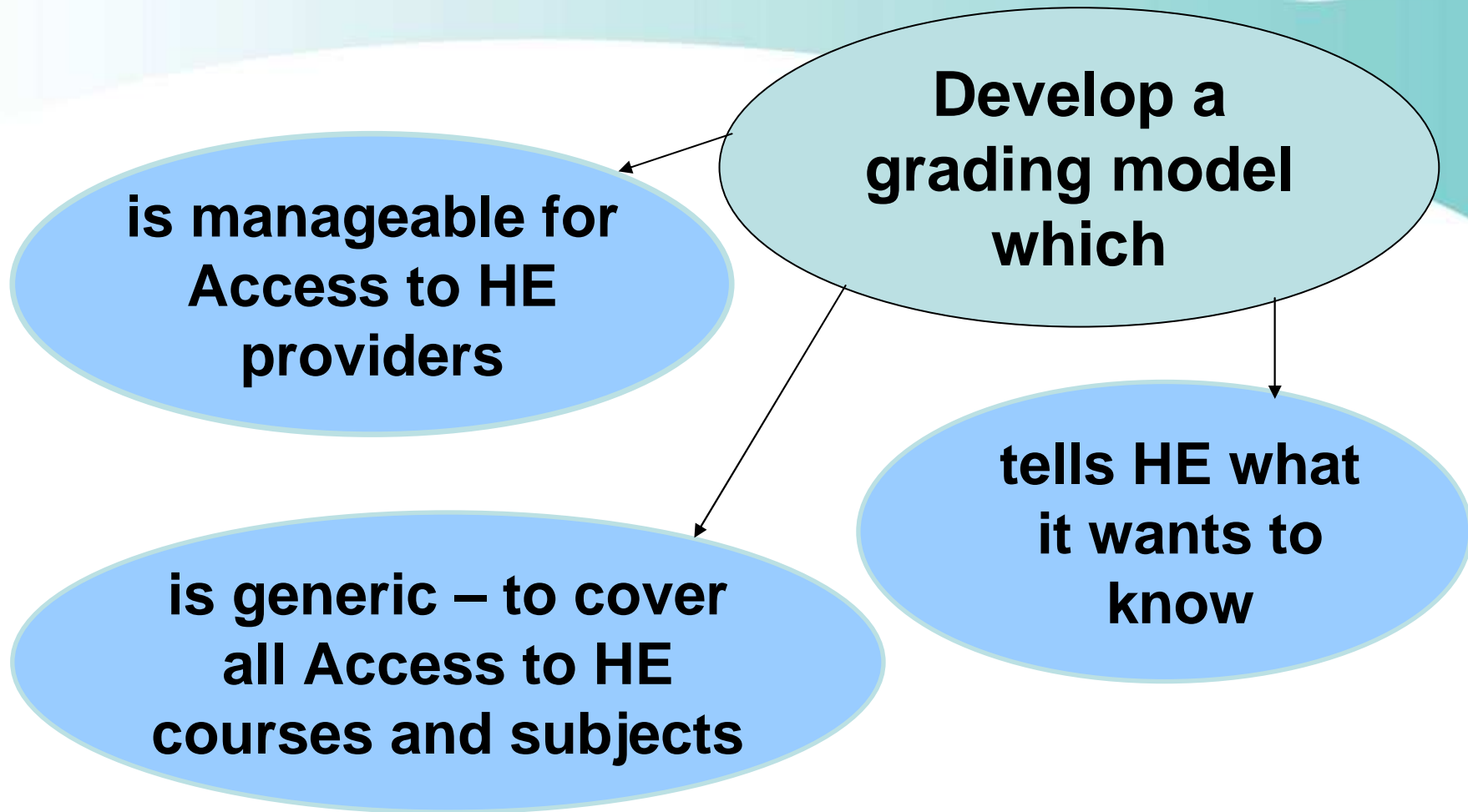
- need for transparency, equity and fairness

Credibility of the qualification

- erratic offers; credit inflation; 'informal' grades; unreliable information; questions about standards



The development process:



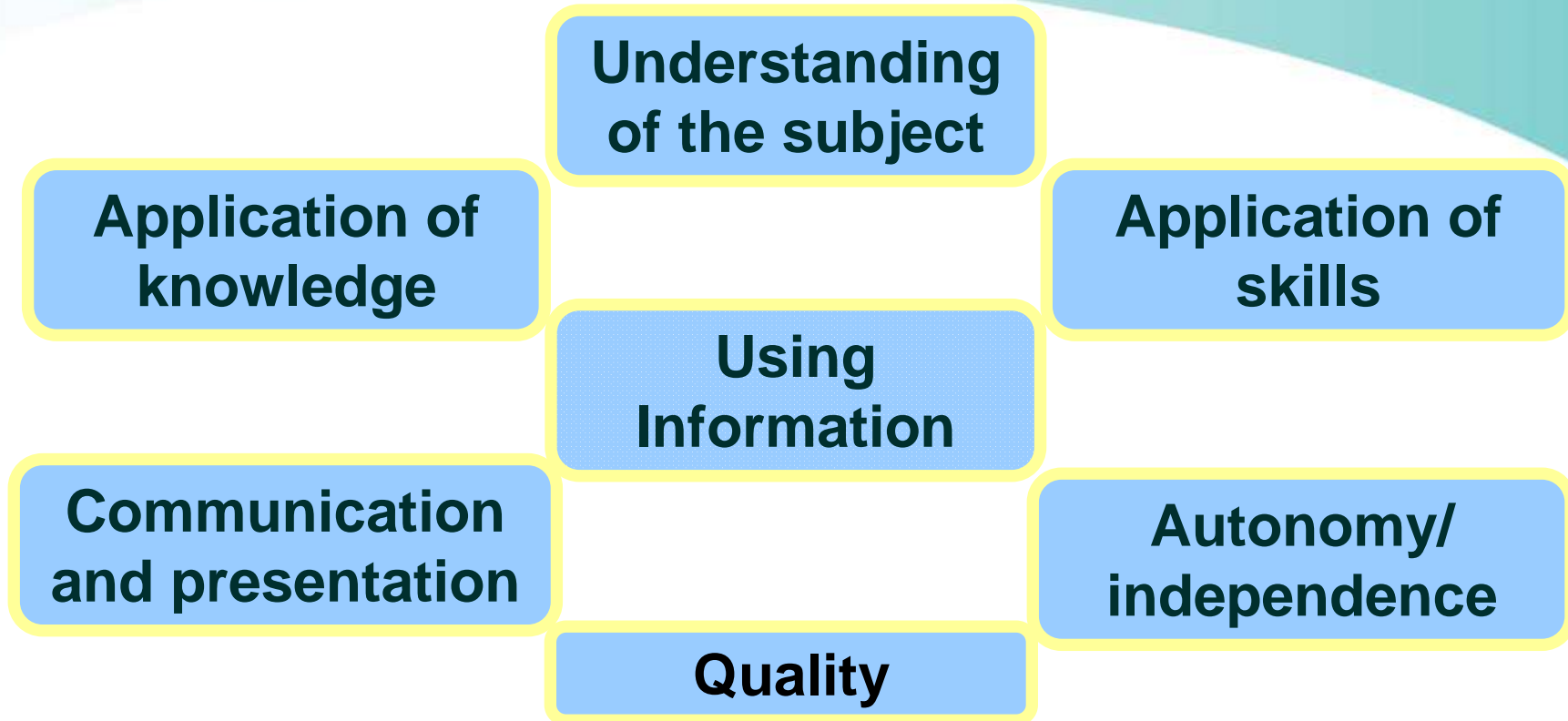
The Access to HE grading model



- All Access Diplomas graded from September 2009
- Unit grading
- Grades for units achieved at Level 3 up to maximum 60 credits
- no aggregate or single final grade for Diploma
- Pass/Merit/Distinction model:
 - Pass = achievement of the learning outcomes at L3
 - Merit and Distinction = higher level of performance from use of grade descriptors
- grades subject to moderation and standardisation
- Grade profile issued with Diploma certificate



Grade descriptors: Seven key areas



Grading requirements

- AVA assigns Grade Descriptors to units at point of approval
- Assignment brief for learners includes information on criteria to achieve merit and distinction
- Centres make decisions on grading at point of assessment
- Assignments graded, median of grades produces single grade for each unit
- Resubmission allowed, but no 'grade polishing'.
- Grade profiles will show:
 - grades for L3 units within Diploma up to 60 credits
 - L2 units (ungraded)
 - Additional achievement beyond 60 credits for the Diploma (ungraded)



Outcomes of OCN grading survey

41 Access tutors

112 Access students

12 Access centres



Survey Outcomes



- **Students welcome grading** 82% tutors
90% students
- **Grades motivate students** 89% tutors
86% students
- **Students positive about feedback** 83% tutors
78% students
- **Students understand grades** 80%



Survey Outcomes



But

- 58% students think it is difficult to achieve higher grades
- 48% students think grading is fair
- 51% tutors think students have found it easy to understand (62% students)
- 57% tutors have found it difficult to apply grades
- 67% tutors - Overall positive impact on students



Survey Outcomes



Impact on Access staff

- 67% needed additional resources for staff training
- 70% needed more resources for assessment
- 73% attended OCN training
- 89% held team meetings



Survey Outcomes



Impact on assessment

- 75% thought grading had an impact on assessment practice
- 83% thought it was a good opportunity to review assessment
- 77% did not need to make changes to assessments
- 86% thought assessment took longer
- 39% found it difficult to explain to students



Survey Outcomes

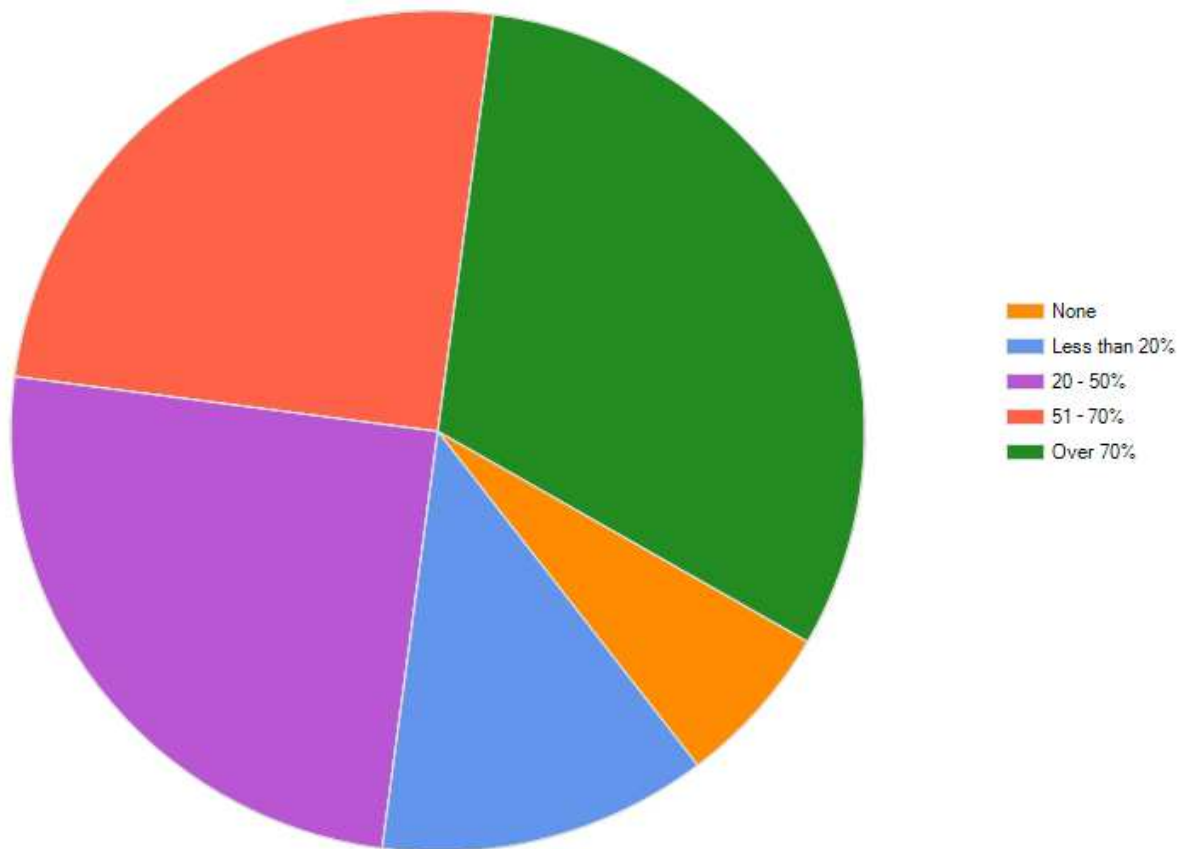
Impact on IV, Internal moderation

- 79% discussed grading with their moderator
- 97% provided graded samples for subject moderation
- 88% incorporated grading into IM
- 53% arranged additional IM to look at grades



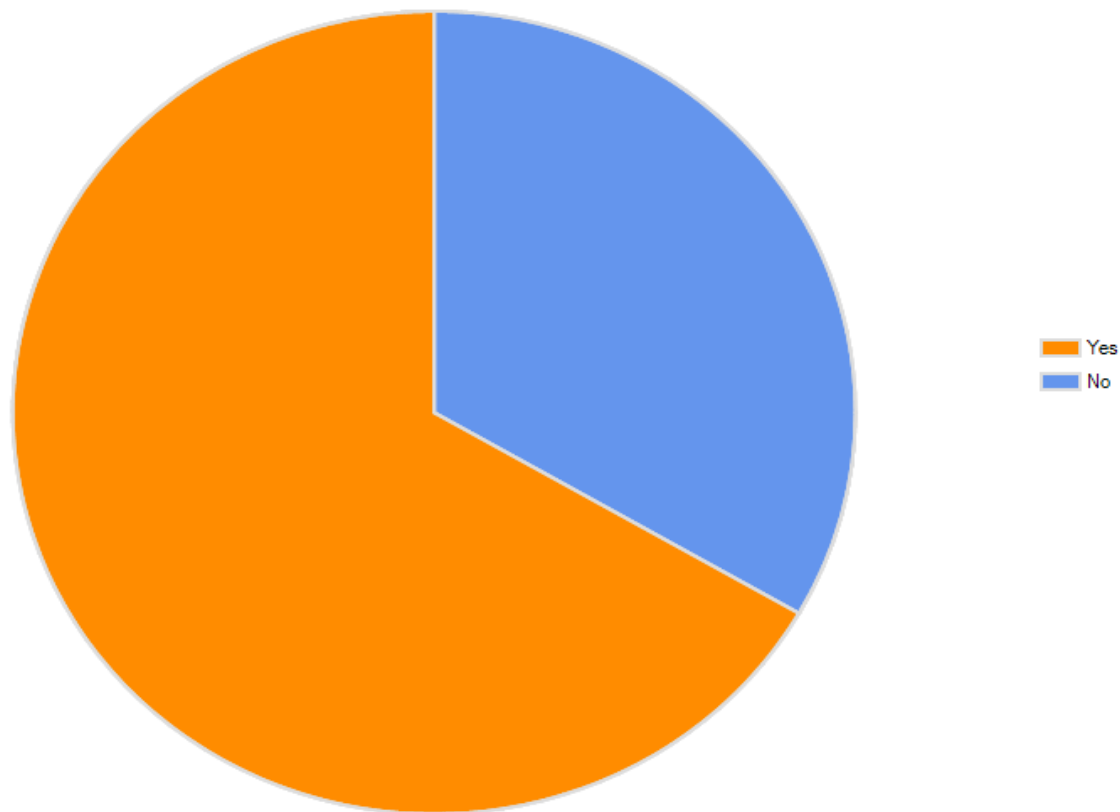
HE offers – pass / fail offers

What proportion of your Access cohort has received standard Pass/Fail offers for their principal intended HE destination?



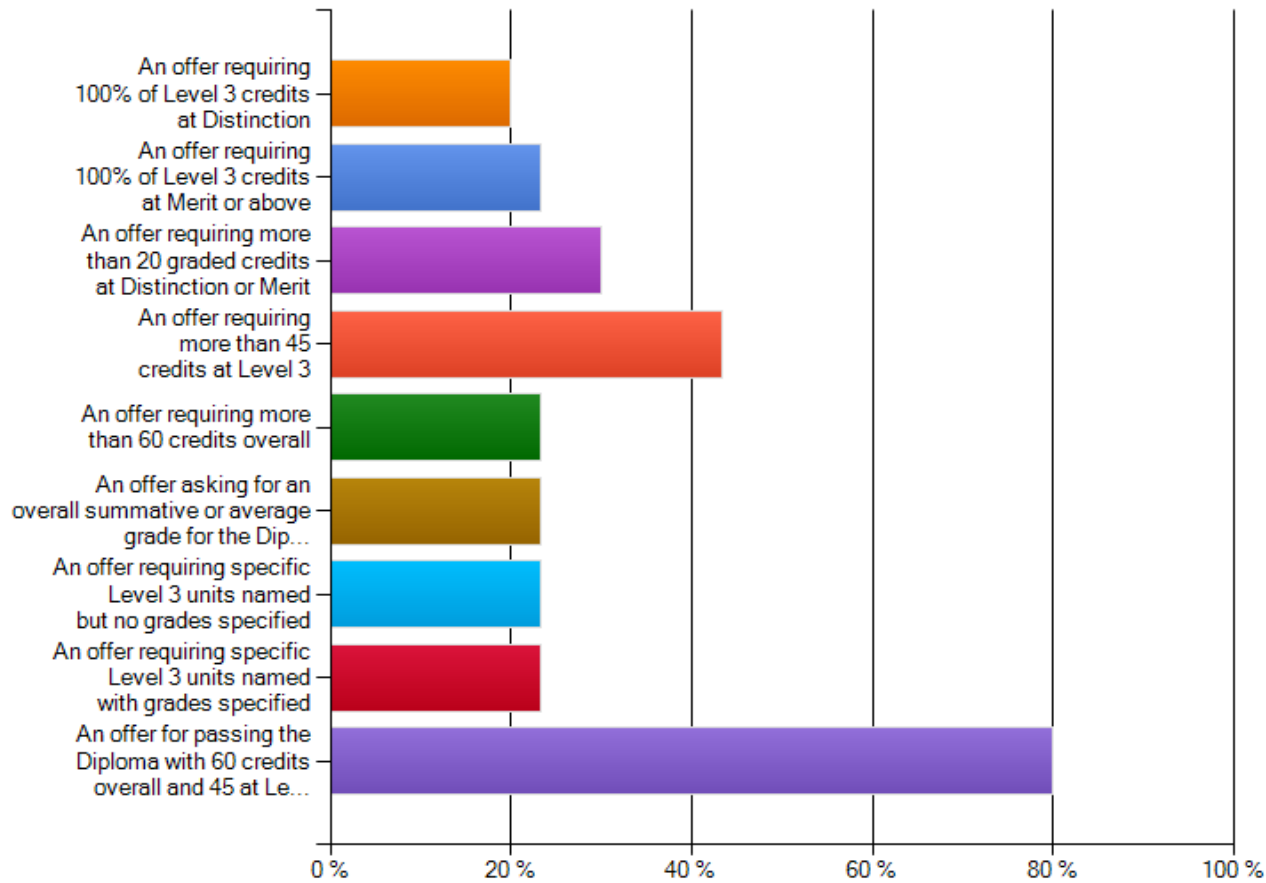
HE offers – graded offers

Have any of your Access students received graded offers for a place on a degree or other course in a higher education institution?



Types of offers

What types of offers have your Access students received



HE offers from selective HEIs

Has grading enabled your Access students to receive offers from selective degree courses where they were unlikely to obtain a place in the past?

