



THE DISTANCE LEARNING CENTRE
ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Student Handbook
2011-2012

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1. GENERAL INFORMATION

This handbook covers all the career/pathway choices shown on the website at <http://www.distancelearningcentre.com/courses.php>.

To make this handbook easier to navigate and up to date we are now putting relevant links to the web pages within the handbook all you have to do is click on the links.

1.1 What is the Distance Learning Centre?

http://www.distancelearningcentre.com/about_DLC.php

1.2 What is an Access to Higher Education Diploma?

<http://www.accesstohe.ac.uk/home/publications/caseStudies/studentguide.pdf>

This is a nationally recognised course which is accredited by **Open Awards** (<http://www.openawards.org.uk/>) who have recently changed their name from Open College North West Region (OCNNWR) Regional number QAA/0176/00180.

Open Awards is our awarding body and are quality controlled through **QAA** (<http://www.accesstohe.ac.uk/>) The standard is similar to A-Level, but unlike A-Level you do not receive specific single grade per subject. Instead you accumulate credits, which are individually graded. When you have gained 60 credits, of which at least 45 must be at Level 3 (A-Level standard), then you will be awarded the complete Diploma.

If you do not wish to take, or do not complete, the full course you can still be accredited for the Modules you do complete. The full course has been designed to take you approximately one year to study all of the Modules, although you can take longer if you wish.

Access Diplomas validated by Open Awards give you a qualification that is accepted by Higher Education Institutions (HEI's) throughout the country. These courses are designed to meet the requirements of the more mature learner rather than the traditional school leaver. Therefore, instead of taking A-Levels and GCSEs, students can accumulate credits that allow them to apply for a place in Higher Education. This course is accredited, which means that the Modules have met all the criteria necessary to show HEI's that you followed a course of study to the standard necessary to gain entry. Accreditation is therefore a guarantee that the quality of the product has met with QAA Standards.

This booklet provides complete details of the courses and the Modules being offered by the Distance learning Centre.

Access Diplomas offered by the DLC for people who would like to enter Higher Education to study social sciences, law, social work, health related courses including midwifery or nursing degrees, or enter teacher training*. The courses available are shown on the **web site** http://www.distancelearningcentre.com/about_DLC.php on the left hand side, under titles such as Access to Higher Education Nursing, Midwifery and Health Professions. This means that on completion of your study you will receive an Access Diploma with the title *Access to Higher Education Diploma (your pathway)* and you will have studied the modules which fit with your career choice.

*You will need to have GCSEs or equivalence (only available if you are doing an access diploma) at grade C or above in English, Maths and a Science, as well as an Access course and a **CRB**

http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Employment/Startinganewjob/DG_195809 check to gain entry onto a teaching degree.

1.3 How are the courses organised?

http://www.distancelearningcentre.com/a2he_structure.php

a. Course structure

The course comprises of specific pathways which are relevant to the degree you are aiming for, and depending on the pathway you choose, you will find that some of the Modules offered are compulsory. Each Module is split into a number of Units that include self-assessment questions (SAQ's) and activities. However, the Module is assessed by the completion of the Tutor Assessments (TAQ's).

b. What choice is available?

Which ever pathway you choose there are 4 compulsory Modules:

- (1) English,
- (2) Communications,
- (3) Mathematics,
- (4) Research Methods

The Communications and Research Methods Units are assessed at Level 3.

The English and Mathematics Units are assessed at Level 2, which are at the same level as a grade C at GCSE. The English and Mathematics **however are not GCSE equivalent.**

Therefore you will need to do a separate course if your university wants you to achieve **GCSE equivalence**. <http://www.distancelearningcentre.com/a2GCSEequivalence.php> . **The fees page** explains the costs. http://www.distancelearningcentre.com/new_fees.php

If you already have a GCSE at grade C or above gained less than 10 years ago, you can ask to be accredited for prior learning and may not have to complete these units. You will be able to take extra English units at Level 3 instead of Level 2 if you wish.

However, according to Open Awards rules of combination if you have Maths GCSE it can be counted against 6 level 2 credits in maths, if you have English GCSE it can be counted as 6 level 2 credits of English **but** if you have both maths and English they are counted as **9 level 2 credits not 12.**

It is important to note that, you will need to upload a copy of your examination certificates on to myDLC https://www.distancelearningcentre.com/user_register_type.php to prove to both the Centre and Open Awards that you have qualifications at this level. You will also have to take the certificates with you to prove that you have the GCSE's when you enrol at university.

Please also check whether the qualifications you hold exempt you from taking level 2 courses

http://www.distancelearningcentre.com/policies_and_procedures/Credit_Exemptions_for_L2_Modules_and_IT_L3.pdf

c. Personal Tutors <http://www.distancelearningcentre.com/studying.php>

Each student enrolling with the Centre is allocated a **personal tutor**

<http://www.distancelearningcentre.com/staffroom.php> who can be contacted both by phone, email and letter (times for telephoning are mutually arranged between both you and your tutor, and can be either weekly or at longer intervals depending upon the support you require). Your tutor will make initial e-mail contact once you have **completed** the **application and enrolment processes** <http://www.distancelearningcentre.com/apply.php> and **started** the induction process. **You tutor**

will make personal contact with you when your first course fee payment has been received by the DLC on your Course Start Date. It is your tutor's responsibility to help you with any course related problems you might have.

d. Course Materials http://www.distancelearningcentre.com/a2he_structure.php

The course materials are written by the DLC and are designed to meet all your needs to study at a level that is comparable to taking three A-Levels, although some specialist modules may require to purchase a specific text such as a simple statistics book. You may also find it an advantage to invest in one of the general psychology and biology texts that are available at most good book shops. Suggested titles will be given to you in the Modules and by your tutor.

In the course materials there are SAQs (Self-Assessment Questions) where you can test your knowledge, the answers are at the back of the units (please see the **example of a unit** http://www.distancelearningcentre.com/access/a2he_unitpart_example.pdf)

Finally, there are TAQs (Tutor-Assessed Questions), http://www.distancelearningcentre.com/a2he_assessment.php some of which are in the units and some of which can be downloaded when your tutor gives you the assessment code. The answers to TAQ's should be uploaded on to **myDLC** https://www.distancelearningcentre.com/user_register_type.php for your tutor to mark and comment upon. These are available on the Website via your log in account to myDLC. You will also need to send your tutor a hard copy of your work for marking; this will be retained by the centre for moderation so always keep a copy of your work.

You are required to complete both TAQs and also Tutor Observed Assessments http://www.distancelearningcentre.com/a2he_assessment.php (TOAs) as evidence of learning. These are used by the Centre and the External Moderators to test that you and only you, have completed the Module at a level of understanding that is compatible with the criteria laid out for the Open Awards at Level 2 or Level 3. If your work is of the accepted standard you will be recommended to be awarded the credits for that Module.

You will generally undertake TOA assessments with your tutor via a Skype link which is a free and downloadable programme <http://www.skype.com/intl/en-gb/features/allfeatures/video-call/> unless there are special circumstances which means that you are unable to use Skype due to disability or geographical problems, for example if you are an active member of the armed forces. To use Skype you will need to have access to a computer with a sound card and a webcam. <http://www.wisegeek.com/what-is-a-webcam.htm> These are cheap to buy and easy to install.

All recommendations have to be verified by the External Moderator who is employed by Open Awards.

All the assessments and materials are available by logging on to myDLC. It also keeps track of your payments and is a repository for all your student information.

Progressing from one subject specialist tutor to another

Once you have completed the modules associated with a specific tutor and s/he, has received your final assessment, being satisfied that there is a strong likelihood that you will pass it, you will be allocated a new tutor. Your present tutor will give you the contact details for your next tutor and the next code.

What happens if there are changes in my circumstances and I cannot complete the course according to my Individual learning Plan (ILP) but still want accreditation for what I have achieved? http://www.distancelearningcentre.com/fees_ua.php

2. THE COURSES

Access to Higher Education Diploma (Nursing, Midwifery and Health Professions)

Biomedical Science

<http://www.distancelearningcentre.com/a2biomedicalscience.php>

Health Professions

<http://www.distancelearningcentre.com/a2health.php>

Midwifery

<http://www.accesstomidwifery.co.uk/>

Nursing

<http://www.accesstonursing.co.uk/>

Paramedicine

<http://www.accesstoparamedicine.co.uk/>

Physiotherapy

<http://www.accesstophysiotherapy.co.uk/>

Access to Higher Education Diploma (Psychology)

Access to Psychology

<http://www.accesstopsychology.co.uk/>

Access to Higher Education Diploma (Teaching Science)

You must have English, Maths and a Science at GCSE grade C and above or GCSE equivalence before you finish this course or it will not be a valid entry to university to complete a Bachelor or Education

Secondary Teaching

<http://www.accesstoteaching.co.uk/>

Primary Teaching

<http://www.accesstoprimaryteaching.co.uk/>

Access to Higher Education Diploma (Social Work)

Access to Social work

<http://www.accesstosocialwork.co.uk/>

Access to Higher Education Diploma (Social Sciences)

Access to Social Science

<http://www.accesstosocialscience.co.uk/>

Access to Public & Uniformed Services

<http://www.distancelearningcentre.com/a2publicservices.php>

Access to Higher Education Diploma (Law)

Access to Law

<http://www.distancelearningcentre.com/a2law.php>

Access Unit Accreditation (Partial Diploma)

Unit Accreditation

<http://www.distancelearningcentre.com/a2unitaccreditation.php>

GCSE Equivalences

<http://www.accesstohe.ac.uk/home/publications/GCSEequiv/default.asp>

English, Maths and Science Equivalence

<http://www.distancelearningcentre.com/a2GCSEequivalence.php>

Short Courses

<http://www.distancelearningcentre.com/a2shortcourses.php>

3. ASSESSMENT OF THE COURSE

http://www.distancelearningcentre.com/a2he_assessment.php

Each optional Module will be assessed by means of pieces of written work and practical reports. You will receive recommendation for credit(s) for each Module when the written work has met the predefined criteria. The criterion is listed in the examples of the assessment sheets to be found later in the hand book. The module is not complete until you have submitted and passed your coursework and you can not be moved on to a new subject tutor until you have submitted your work. You and your tutor will individually negotiate the length of time allocated to each Module with reference to your Individual Learning Plan (ILP). Copies of ILPs can be found from your myDLC login page.

3.1 Help with materials and assessments, marking and the Grading Criteria



These can be in any colour but each page must be able to be opened separately

On completion of each assessment you MUST send your completed, signed assessment sheet with your work. No work will be accepted for final marking without this.

Assignments for marking must be sent by post to your tutor in a loose leaf folder. Each sheet must not be put into separate plastic pockets. For Level 3 work you are also required to upload a copy of your work to your myDLC account.

a. Help with your work

<p>Maths and English and IT at level 2 plus GCSE equivalence</p>	<p>It is expected that at this stage of the course, students may need a considerable amount of help from their tutor. It is therefore acceptable that each assessment may need to be worked on with tutorial help. Each assessment is therefore allowed two draft copies before final marking.</p> <p>Maths and English will be assessed at a pass mark only. Pass will be awarded as long as students have fulfilled all of the marking criteria, as shown in the tick sheet which accompanies the assessment.</p>
<p>All Level 3 work</p>	<p>When a student sends in an assignment it will be marked according to the assessment criteria for a pass. If it does, it will also be graded. The Grades are Pass Merit and Distinction</p> <p>If the work does not meet all the criteria, it will be given a referral. The work will not be graded at this point.</p> <p>Students will then have one chance to resubmit to achieve a pass. At this point the work will also be graded.</p> <p>Once the work has been graded students can not resubmit the work in order to achieve a higher grade.</p> <p>If the second submission still does not meet the criterion for a pass, then the work will be failed and another piece of work on a different topic which fits within the rules of combination can be submitted.</p> <p>For a pass mark, all criteria as identified in the assessment sheet must be met.</p>

Remember the grading criteria for Merit or Distinction expects you to show independent learning. If your tutor has had to give you lots of help to achieve the pass criterion the work will be unlikely to be graded at more than a pass.

Although grades are important in both in giving feedback to you about your performance and progress during the course, and providing information to others at the end of the course; as an indicator of your standard of performance. Grading is only one aspect of the assessment process, and grades are just part of the feedback we give to you. We therefore provide much more detailed feedback and comments on your strengths and the progress you have made throughout the

course as well as indicating specific areas for improvement, so that you can see where you went wrong and improve your grades in the future.

b. Extenuating Circumstances, Examinations and tutor observed assessments

http://www.distancelearningcentre.com/a2he_assessment.php

Up to date information on the rules for extenuating circumstances and information on the examinations is shown in the link above. However if your work is referred your tutor will give you a date for the resubmission of your work, if you are unable to comply with this date you must complete an extenuating circumstances form. A copy of this is found on the **policies page** <http://www.distancelearningcentre.com/policies.php>

c. Grading and Grade Descriptors

There are seven grade descriptors that are the basis of grading decisions made on Access to H.E. Courses. http://www.distancelearningcentre.com/access/a2he_grade_descriptors.pdf

In order to meet the purposes of a common grading system, grades awarded on all Access to H.E. Courses are:

- Fair and equitable
- Clear and transparent
- Reliable and valid
- Consistent

More information on grading is to be found on the **Access to H.E. web site** .
<http://www.accesstohe.ac.uk/home/publications/grading/consultation/default.asp>

The unit grades have no numerical equivalents. They are not converted from, or translated into, numerical marks.

Not all of the grade descriptors are used for every unit. An appropriate selection of descriptors as assigned to the unit when it is validated. The Distance Learning Centre has not therefore decided which descriptor to attach to each unit, all colleges who work with Open Awards use the same descriptors.

The decision about which descriptors should be assigned to the unit takes into account the aspects of performance which are relevant to the individual unit. In this way, the rules of combination that identify the particular set of units, which comprises each Diploma, will also through the overall balance of descriptors assigned to the specific units, reflect the broad types of performance that may be particularly valued or emphasised in the subject which is the focus of the diploma.

4. MODERATION AND STANDARDISATION

For up to date information of moderation dates please see DLC moderation
<http://www.distancelearningcentre.com/moderation.php>

- Grading decisions are subject to a process of internal verification and external moderation.
- There are common moderation procedures and assessment regulations, and a standard definition of the moderator's role which apply to all Access to H.E. Courses.
- Access Validating Agencies (AVAs) operate procedures for the standardisation of the

award of grades. In our case Open Awards.

- Requirements relating to the selection, appointment and training of Moderators are included in the AVA licensing criteria.

4.1 The Award of Grades

- The final grades for units which are recommended by the AVA are confirmed at the final award board conducted for each course.
- The grades achieved by a student are formally reported in grade profiles.
- The total number of grades reported in a student's grade profile depends on the number of units that make up a particular diploma.
- The individual grades awarded to a student indicate the standard performance on a range of units of different sizes, involving different types of learning achieved at different stages, as appropriate to the particular course. No overall or aggregate grade is awarded.
- Grade profiles are awarded by the AVAs at the same time as the Diploma and credit transcripts are awarded.
- Grades are not awarded for achievement that does not contribute to the Diploma. Any such additional achievement and its assessment does not form part of the qualification specifications for the Diploma, detailed in the QAA Recognition Scheme for Access to H.E.

This is important if you take more credits than is awarded via a Diploma, although these credits are available they cannot be graded and will incur an extra fee.

4.2 Further information

Full details of the Access to H.E. grading scheme, and all associated guidance documents for AVAs, course providers and HE admissions staff, are available on the Access to H.E. Website (www.accesstohe.ac.uk).

This information has been taken from the QAA Grading the Access to H.E. Diploma Implementation handbook (November 2008) part B.

Each Unit of assessment at level 3 is graded as a Distinction, Merit, pass or a referral.

If your work is referred you will be asked to re submit after you have received help from your tutor.

To give you more idea of how things are assessed, every assessment you complete will include the criterion your tutor and Open Awards will use to assess you. This is in the form of a Student Assessment Criteria Sheet so that you can mark off when you have covered the criterion. All your work is internally standardised and cross marked before going to the external moderator. The external moderator is employed by Open Awards.

Please make sure that you return your Student Assessment Criteria Sheet with your assignment and mark on where you have achieved the criteria you are going to be assessed on.

This is used by both the internal verifier and the external moderator.

4.3 Examples of Assessment Criteria

http://www.distancelearningcentre.com/a2he_assessment.php

4.4 Plagiarism

http://www.distancelearningcentre.com/a2he_assessment.php

IMPORTANT NOTE ON PLAGIARISM

All work must be your own work; this means that although you are allowed to directly quote other authors, quotes must be acknowledged. You must not take large chunks from books or the Internet and pass them off as your own words. If the Centre has reason to believe that the work you are submitting is not your own, then the Centre maintains the right to ask you to rewrite you assessment, take another module altogether and or sit extra written examinations on all the work you have studied on the course. Failure to take the examinations or to pass them will result in you being withdrawn from the programme (with no refund) and no credits for any previous modules taken will be awarded.

See referencing advice at the end of the Handbook.

Buying or getting someone else to do the work for you

If we find that you have either bought answers to your work on line/you have used another student's work as your own or, have asked someone else to do the work for you. You will be immediately removed from the course. You will not be reinstated and you will be bared from taking another course with the DLC. We will inform any university in which you have a provisional or unconditional place. You will also not be eligible for any refunds.

5. PROVISION OF A QUALITY PROGRAMME OF STUDY

The Distance Learning Centre aims to provide a quality service, which promotes equal access for all groups of students throughout their contact with the Centre. Students should therefore expect a quality service from both their tutor and the administration staff. In return the Centre expects that all students will abide by the conditions set down by the Centre.

5.1 Student entitlement policy

<http://www.distancelearningcentre.com/policies.php>

5.2 What To Do If You Have Any Problems

a. The Marking of material

If you have any problems understanding the way your assignment has been marked, you should in the first instance contact your tutor who will be pleased to explain the marking scheme to you (within one week of receiving the assessed work). All the tutors work from a common marking scheme so that the standard of marking will be consistent across markers and tutors. However, if an administrative error has been made (for example, in the completion or calculation of the unit grade profile), the error will be corrected.

If after discussions you are not satisfied with your negotiations then you should ask the Internal Verifier (IV) from the Centre to arbitrate for you. S/he will look at the work to decide whether the material meets the criteria set down for that Level. If the internal consideration concludes there is no case for re-grading (that is, the tutor's original decision is confirmed), the grade indicators are included in the unit grade profile, and the decision will be recorded. If the internal consideration concludes that there may be a case for regrading, the work is referred to the external moderator. In

these circumstances, the external moderator will need to consider the assessed work directly and satisfy her/himself that an error of judgement has been made in order to approve a change to the grade indicators. The making of any such changes will be formally recorded. No adjustment to tutor grades can be made without the written agreement of the external moderator. The external moderator's judgement is final.

b. Concerns, complaints and comments

Please see **policies** <http://www.distancelearningcentre.com/policies.php> on our website for information on how to access these procedures and other policies of interest.

6. REFERENCING ADVICE

At the DLC we expect all students to use the Harvard referencing system and to help you learn how to do this please follow the link.

<http://libweb.anglia.ac.uk/referencing/harvard.htm>

This advice comes from Anglia Ruskin University Library who have kindly agreed to let us use the resource.

There is a wealth of information on the Website and in the Library so please use it.

On the next page is part of the induction process.



Induction Activity Questions (answers to be given as part of induction activities)

1. What is the qualification/specific Diploma you are enrolling on with the DLC?
2. Who are Open Awards?
3. On your tour of the Website find out the role of QAA.
4. How many credits make up a full Access to HE Diploma?
5. How many credits can be at Level 2?
6. What Level 2 qualifications should you achieve to commence Level 3?
7. How will you complete Tutor Observed Assessments?
8. Who issues the certificates for your Diploma?
9. Produce a flow chart of the modules you are choosing.
10. What is an SAQ?
11. Where will you find your Module, Units and Assessment activities on the DLC Website?
How will you access these?
12. What books are recommended that you should purchase for your course?
13. How should your Assessment work be presented and what documentation do you need to send to your tutor?
14. Which Level of the Diploma work is graded?
15. What does the term 'grading criteria' mean?
16. What is the standard system of academic referencing used by the DLC?
17. Give examples of referencing from:
 - a) An academic text book
 - b) A website (Wikipedia is not acceptable)
 - c) Journals and newspapers
 - d) Audio visual material (do not use the examples from the Handbook – you will need to find your own)
18. What is plagiarism and what consequences will you face if you plagiarise?
19. How is contact made between you and your tutor?
20. What is the procedure for continuing to Level 3?
21. What are you looking forward to most about your learning?