DistanceLearningCentre.com

Student Handbook

Course: Access to Higher Education Diploma
Year: 2016-17
# Contents

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**Introduction**

This student handbook covers all Access to HE Diploma structures offered by DistanceLearningCentre.com and further information is available on our website at: [http://www.distancelearningcentre.com/courses.php](http://www.distancelearningcentre.com/courses.php)

This handbook is very detailed, though not exhaustive as there is much more information on the website and accessed through your learner account. Therefore, we would not suggest that you just read it and put it on one side. Please keep a copy on your desktop so that you can refer to it throughout your course. There is a lot of vital information contained within these pages, and although not a thrilling bed time read, you should find it useful to refer to throughout your course.

To make this handbook easier to use and consistently up to date there are relevant links to the web pages within the handbook and all you have to do is click on these links. However, if you do have any queries then please do contact your tutor or student services and they will be very happy to help in any way that they can.

The e-mail address of student services is: [studentservices@distancelearningcentre.com](mailto:studentservices@distancelearningcentre.com)

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**Things to do:**

There's lots of information in the Student Handbook, so answer the student answered questions (SAQ) on your SAQ answer sheet to see how well you've understood and remembered what you've read.

The SAQ answer sheet can be found when you are logged in to your account at:

- My Courses
- Materials and Assessments
- Materials
- Download your SAQ Answer Sheet here

When you have completed the questions in your own words upload them to my courses my ILP & SAQs and e-mail your tutor to tell them that you have done this.
1. **General Information**

**Ready, steady, go!**

In this section, we will explain what an Access to H.E. Diploma is and how you will be able to use it to help you gain access to the degree subject at a University of your choice.

1.1 **What is DistanceLearningCentre.com?**

**Follow Link:**

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

1.2 **What is an Access to Higher Education Diploma?**

**Keyword/s:**

| **AVA** | Abbreviation of Access Validating Agency, an organisation licensed by QAA to undertake the development, validation, monitoring and review of individual Access to HE Diploma courses and, accordingly, to award the Diploma (or, where appropriate, credit towards the Diploma). |
| **QAA** | The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education. QAA is responsible for the national recognition and regulation of Access to HE courses. QAA is also responsible for reviewing and reporting on standards and quality in UK higher education. |
| **Ascentis** | The DistanceLearningCentre.com’s AVA |
| **HEI** | Higher Education Institutions |
The Access to HE Diploma is a nationally recognised qualification which is accredited by Ascentis awarding organisation registered in England and Wales No. 6799564. Ascentis is our awarding body and is regulated by the Quality Assurance Agency. Ascentis was formerly the Open College of the North West (OCNW) and was founded in 1975. Ascentis was the first Open College to develop in the UK and operates a wide range of provision for post-16 students and has been recognised as an Access Validating Agency (AVA) by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) since 1990 and as a National Awarding Body since 2001.

The Access to HE Diploma is a nationally recognised level 3 qualification with common requirements relating to the description of student achievement. The Diploma is a credit-based, graded qualification and requirements relate to both the award of credit and to the award of grades. Details of the credit framework and requirements relating to the award of credit, along with the general specifications for the qualification, can be found in the QAA Publication: The Access to Higher Education Diploma Specification 2013.

Individual named Diplomas are identified by separate titles and are validated at local level by Access Validating Agencies (AVAs). Each Access to HE Diploma has its own approved set of Units of assessment, governed by rules of combination which are appropriate to the subject of the particular Diploma. The common grading requirements apply to all individual Access to HE Diplomas.

All Access to HE Diplomas have the following features:

- Consist of 60 credits (you cannot be registered on more than 60 credits)
- Include **15 ungraded** credits and **45 graded** credits (only Level 3 Units can be graded)
- Can include up to 6 credits at Level 2, all of which are ungraded
- 45 credits must be derived from Level 3 Units which are graded and concerned with academic subject content
- 15 credits are derived from ungraded Units at Level 2 or Level 3.

If you do not wish to study a full Access to HE Diploma or do not complete a full Access to HE Diploma course you can still be accredited for the Units of study you do complete and pass. You will receive an official transcript of results for the Units you complete and pass from Ascentis if you have paid the full Awarding Body Registration Fees and have requested a transcript from Exams. The Access to HE Diploma would need to be completed within a maximum period of five years owing to its period of validation. The DistanceLearningCentre.com Access to HE programme offers flexibility within this five-year time frame and you can choose a range of delivery modes from fast track (less than one academic year) to part time (more than one academic year and up to five years). Although if you do complete over a number of years, we cannot guarantee that the units within the diploma will not have changed during this period.

Access to HE Diplomas validated by Ascentis provides you with a Level 3 qualification that is recognised by Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) throughout the country.

The Access to HE Diplomas, Subject Sets (such as Biology, Psychology and Law) and Units (the parts of the subjects you will study) are designed to offer non-traditional students a good grounding in academic knowledge and study skills to prepare them for Higher Education study.

This handbook provides details of the Access to HE Diplomas and Units offered by the DistanceLearningCentre.com.

The Access to HE Diplomas offered by DistanceLearningCentre.com are for individuals who require a Level 3 qualification in order to apply to Higher Education Institutions (HEI) to study
social sciences, law, childhood studies, construction, business, sport, social work, health and social care, science, public services, health related courses including midwifery or nursing degrees, or to enter teacher training. The Access to HE Diplomas available are shown on the DistanceLearningCentre.com website on the left-hand side, under titles such as Biomedical Science, Nursing, Midwifery, Health Professions, Law, Business and Teaching etc. This means that on successful completion of 60 credits you will receive an Access to HE Diploma with the title Access to Higher Education Diploma (your pathway).

**Important point:**

You cannot undertake and complete more than 60 credits for an Access to HE Diploma.

**SAQ 1:**

How many credits is an Access to HE Diploma?

**SAQ 2:**

How many credits are ungraded, and how many are graded?

**Further resources:**

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


**NOTE:**

It is recommended that before you register for an Access to HE Diploma you should check the entry requirements of your chosen HEI and degree programme.

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1 You are required to have GCSEs at grade C or above in English, Maths and a Science, as well as an Access to HE Diploma course and a DBS check to gain entry onto a primary teaching degree.
1.3 Finding your way around your learner account

When you register with DistanceLearningCentre.com you will have chosen a user name and password. This allows you to log into your account where you will see the screen as shown in fig 1.

This is your account page and all the pages on the site are similar to this one. We are now going to go through each in turn, but do remember that as you continue throughout the course these pages will show you more and more information.

![Account Page Screenshot](image)

**Figure 1.** The screen shot shows you what you will see when you click on the “my account tab”

Whilst figure 2. explains how you access everything to do with your courses, including downloading all the course materials and assessments and where to upload all the various documents you will complete throughout the course. We will go into more details on the course later in this handbook.
Course: Access to Higher Education Diploma
Level: 3
Subject: Student Handbook

Figure 2. The courses Tab
The next set of tabs is your course tool kit where you will find information on the learner agreement, the current version of the handbook, how to apply to university through DistanceLearningCentre.com, TurnitinUK and plagiarism.

Figure 3. Tool Kit

The finance tabs gives you much the same information as you can gain from the account hub along with a copy of your course agreement form and the terms and conditions of payment. We would strongly advise that you read both these documents as they explain how we take the payments towards the cost of your course and the terms and conditions of sale you have agreed to by entering into a contract with DistanceLearningCentre.com.

The final tab you need to use is the DistanceLearningCentre.com library where you will find information on careers advice, study resources, help with study and I.T. skills these are links, pdfs etc. related to all the subjects we offer on the course. So, if you are not sure where to look to find information to answer your assessment questions this is a good place to start.
1.3.1 Social media etiquette

We actively encourage you to use social media in your studies and to buddy up with other students on the same course as yourself. Learning at a distance can be very isolating and therefore please use the opportunities DistanceLearningCentre.com gives you to help each other either on the forum or through the Facebook group. Also, do remember that by showing that you have helped other students you may win one of the Fab 5 awards.

The only things that we ask is for you not to give anyone else an unfair advantage on the course so please do not:

- give out codes to other students
- write out a TAQ on a public forum
- give anyone else your assessments

The reason why we ask you not to give your work to other students is this is actually helping other students to plagiarise which is a very serious offence in academic circles.

In a nutshell:

In this section, we first looked DistanceLearningCentre.com itself we then went on to learn about Access diplomas, by looking at QAA. QAA developed the Access to H.E. framework and monitors the AVA’s who certificate learners when they complete the course.

We also looked at what resources are available when you log on to your account.
2. **What makes up an Access Diploma?**

**Keyword/s:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject Set</th>
<th>This is the subjects you will study such as Biology, Business, English etc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Units</td>
<td>Within the subject sets are units such as Macromolecules in biology or Costing in business. The units are the curriculum and each unit has its own specification which tells the learning providers what they are supposed to teach.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandatory elements</td>
<td>The mandatory elements are those units which are the same in each diploma, and without completing these units a full diploma cannot be awarded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rules of combination</td>
<td>Ascentis put together a frame work for diplomas which fit with the rules and regulations issued by QAA. These state which units can be combined with which units and which cannot. The rules of combination have to be followed for a student to complete and be certificated for a full diploma.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Moderators (EM)</td>
<td>These are subject specialists employed by the AVA to monitor the standard of the marking by our tutors. Their job is to make sure that standards are maintained and that the grades recommended by the tutors are a true reflection of the standard of the work. The EM has the power to change grades both up and down.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ready, steady, go!

In this section, we will explore how Access to H.E. courses are organised. We will look at the course structure and the options within a course.
2.1 **Course Structure**

The Access to HE [Diploma courses](#) are comprised of Subject Sets and Units that are relevant to the degree you are aiming for. Each Access to HE Diploma is split into a number of Units that are taught through a series of learning materials (course material topics). The course material topics include Self Assessment Questions (SAQs) and activities. Each Unit is then formally assessed by the completion of the Tutor Assessed Questions (TAQs) which form a formal assessment.

Ascentis Access to HE Diplomas consist of mandatory Level 3 Subject Sets. The Subject Sets that can be included in any Diploma are given in the Rules of Combination. Students must complete a minimum of 2 Subject Sets and up to a maximum of 4.

### 2.1.1 Mandatory elements

A Subject Set has three mandatory elements:

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Introductory Unit <strong>3 credits (ungraded)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Research Unit focused on the planning process <strong>3 credits</strong></td>
<td>6 credits (graded)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Research Unit focused on the execution process <strong>3 credits</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Or</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A combined Research Unit <strong>6 credits</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Examined Unit <strong>6 credits (graded) for distance learning</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>this unit is assessed through course work and a 45 minute exam</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In any Access to HE Diploma students are required to complete a six credit research unit in at least one subject. In the other subjects a three credit research Unit can be selected.

In most Access to HE Diplomas students are required to be assessed in at least two examined Units by formal examination, however, there is the option to use an alternative type of assessment for a third or fourth Subject Set. The alternative assessment task is provided by Ascentis to ensure consistency of challenge with the examination.

In addition to the mandatory elements an Access to HE Diploma can be made up of a combination of the following (always ensuring rules of combination are met and that consideration is given to any requirement for a learner to have prior knowledge and skills in order to successfully study an optional Unit):

- Any Level 3 introductory Unit can be included in any Diploma
- Any Level 2 Unit can be included in any Diploma
- Any ungraded Level 3 Unit can be included in any Diploma
- Any optional Unit within a Diploma can be included even if the mandatory Subject Set has not been taken
2.1.1 What choice is available?

DistanceLearningCentre.com offers a wide variety of courses so it is always a good idea to discuss with your tutor your career aspirations to make sure that you have picked the right course for you. To see all our courses, follow this link:

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

From this page you can click on the link to each course and from there you can drill down to each aspect of the course. An example of the course structure of a diploma is shown by clicking this link.

You will find that whichever pathway or course you choose, there are two essential units:

- Study Skills
- Research

The Study Skills and Research Units are assessed at Level 3. Some pathways include English and Mathematics that are assessed at Level 2.

It may be a good idea to pick a pathway which includes level 2 if you are going to apply for a degree where the universities interview potential applicants such as health related courses or teaching where you need to pass and English and maths test before being offered a place. Our level 2 units are the same level as a GCSE grade C. However, the English and Mathematics units are not recognised as GCSE equivalences.

If your university requires you to achieve GCSEs or progression awards you will need to study a separate course (GCSEs). The fees page explains the costs if you would like to study a GCSE through DistanceLearningCentre.com.

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**NOTE:**

It is really important to contact Universities in writing when you want an important answer such as do I need extra GCSE’s.

Universities decide on their own admissions policies and therefore even universities in the same town may have different rules.

Universities can, and sometimes do, change their rules half way through an academic year and therefore get any important conversations from the university in writing so that you can prove what has been said later.
2.1.2 What happens if there are changes in my circumstances and I cannot complete the course, but still want accreditation for what I have achieved?

If you are unable to complete your Access to HE Diploma then you will still receive an official transcript of results from Ascentis for the Units and credits you have completed and passed, if you have paid the full Awarding Body Registration Fees and have requested a transcript from Exams.

Alternatively, you can request a DistanceLearningCentre.com certificate for the Units and credits you have completed and passed. A DistanceLearningCentre.com certificate is free of charge.

Please contact student services to request a DistanceLearningCentre.com certificate if you would like to receive one at: studentservices@distancelearningcentre.com

NOTE:

Please do note that you will still be required to pay the moderation fees for the official transcript from Ascentis. If you would like an official transcript please contact exams at: exams@distancelearningcentre.com

2.1.3 What happens if there are changes in my circumstances and I need a study break?

There are many reasons why you made need to have a break from your studies, your child may be ill or you may change jobs, the list is a long one. We understand that ‘life happens’ and therefore we have built into our systems the possibility of a study break.

If you need to put your course ‘On Hold’ then you should contact your tutor in the first instance and tell them what the problem is and generally how long you will need to take a break for. Your tutor will then be able to put your studies ‘On Hold’ for a minimum of 2 months and a maximum of 6 months. You will also need to provide your tutor with a date when you intend to return and a revised target completion date for when you aim to complete your course. The ‘On Hold’ option is not available if your course payments are not up to date.

In a nutshell:

In this section, we briefly looked at what makes up an access diploma and where to find the information on the website.
3. You and Your Tutor

Ready, steady, go!
In this section, we will discuss the role of the tutor in your studies and what to expect from a tutorial. We will discuss what you can send to your tutor if you need help. We will then go on to discuss your individual learning plan, target completion and moderation dates. We will also discuss the use of TurnitinUK and how you progress from one tutor to another. Finally, we will look at what to do if you have any problems.

3.1 Personal Tutors

Each learner enrolling with DistanceLearningCentre.com is allocated a personal tutor who can be contacted by telephone, Skype and email. 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 is a professional teacher and an expert in their subject who will be very happy to offer you whatever support you need.

You will be allocated your tutor once you have completed the application and enrolment processes. Your tutor will personally contact you when your first course fee payment has been received by DistanceLearningCentre.com on your Course Start Date.

Your personal tutor is there to be a pastoral and academic support during your Access to HE Diploma, and it is their responsibility to help you with any course related issues that you may encounter.

The course runs in a linear fashion so that when you have completed all the assessments for one subject set you will then generally moved to a new tutor who has the expertise in the next subject. It is very unusual for you to keep the same tutor throughout your course.

SAQ 3:

How and when will your tutor get in contact with you?
3.1.1 Tutorials

Many of you may not have had access to a tutorial system before and therefore may be unsure of what to expect. DistanceLearningCentre.com sees tutorials as a vehicle to allow you to discuss your work in greater detail and clarify your understanding, thereby ensuring that you are on the right lines with regards to your understanding of the materials, assessments and the grading criteria.

For a tutorial to be effective it is important that you are prepared. The best tutorials are interactive and require you to lead them. As such you may request a tutorial to discuss a theory or idea in more detail, you may want clarification on what you intend to write to ensure it is relevant to the grading criteria or indeed meets the expectations of the higher grading criteria, or perhaps you may want further information as to a grade you have been awarded.

A tutorial can be about whatever you would like to discuss but to ensure you get the most out of the tutorial process think about what you would like the focus of the tutorial to be and then when booking a tutorial with your tutor, outline what you would like to discuss so that they can also prepare for the tutorial.

Before the tutorial ensure you have any notes to hand so that you can use the time as effectively as possible. The idea of a tutorial is that it is focused on you and your needs so that you can get the most out of your course and the best grades you can.

3.1.2 What help can my tutor give me?

Your tutor is a qualified teacher with expertise in the subject they are tutoring you on. They are there to help you throughout your studies. However, it is likely that you will need more help at the start of your course than when you have been studying for some time. We have therefore taken this into account when designing the course, the table below explains this.
Course: **Access to Higher Education Diploma**
Level: 3
Subject: **Student Handbook**

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### Level 2 (ungraded)

**Diploma:** English, Mathematics (6 credits)

**Progression Awards:** English, Mathematics, Science (min 3 credits, max 45 credits)

It is expected that at this stage of the course you may need a considerable amount of help from your tutor. It is therefore acceptable that each assessment may need to be worked on with tutorial help. There are no strict limits on the number of submissions for assessments at Level 2.

Level twos in Maths, English and the Progression Awards will be assessed as **achieved** only.

Achieved will be awarded as long as you have fulfilled all of the assessment criteria.

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### Level 3 (ungraded)

**Study Skills and Subject Introductory Units (min 9 credits, max 15 credits)**

These are all assessed at Level 3 but are graded as **achieved** only.

However, you will be given detailed feedback that will help you to achieve Merit and Distinction grades in your graded Level 3 Units.

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### Level 3 (graded)

**Subject Graded Units, including Research and Examined Units (45 credits)**

When you submit an assessment to your tutor the assessment will be marked according to the assessment criteria for a Pass.

**If it achieves a Pass it will also be graded. The grades awarded are Pass, Merit and Distinction.**

**If the work does not meet all of the assessment criteria** you will be asked to resubmit. The work will not be graded at this point.

You will then have **1 further** chance to resubmit their assessment to achieve a grade for the Unit.

**Once the assessment has been graded you cannot resubmit your work in order to achieve a higher grade.**

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**Table 1 Supporting your learning**

Although grades are important when providing feedback to you about your performance and progress during the course, and for providing information to others at the end of the course (e.g. as an indicator of your standard of achievement) grading is only one aspect of the assessment process and grades are part of the feedback we give to you.

Your tutor will provide you with 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. This detailed feedback will allow you to focus on the areas of improvement and you should try to use it to improve your grades in future assessments.
3.1.3 Can I send my tutor a draft of my work?

If you struggle with any of the TAQs when completing your Unit assessments then you must contact your tutor to seek guidance. Guidance is provided by tutors in a number of ways:

- Detailed explanations via email
- Conversations via arranged telephone contact
- Tutorials via Skype

The focus of these conversations will be on what the TAQs mean and how you should tackle them. Your tutor cannot tell you what to write or make detailed corrections to your work to help you improve your grades.

If, however, you still struggle with the completion of assessment tasks/assessments then you can send your tutor via email a sample of an answer for a TAQ or assessment criterion so that your tutor can provide you with further guidance and help you get back onto the right track.

Your tutor is not allowed to give you information on how your assessment might have done if your tutor was marking it at this point or how to improve your work to gain a better grade. This is because helping you in this way is against the rules set out by QAA as it is seen to be ‘grade polishing’ and would give you an unfair advantage over fellow learners.

Please note, you CANNOT send to your tutor:

1. A draft of a complete Unit assessment.
2. Answers to a complete assessment criterion or TAQ.

If you do send more than the above amount of assessed work to your tutor (as highlighted in numbers 1 and 2 above) to check then he/she will return the work to you and request the allowable amount, and it is their responsibility to help you with any course related issues that you may encounter.

The course runs in a linear fashion so that when you have completed all the assessments for one subject set you will then generally moved to a new tutor who has the expertise in the next subject. It is very unusual for you to keep the same tutor all the way through your course.

Important point:

The grading criteria for a Merit or a Distinction expects you to show independent learning.

Using the ‘Stretch and Challenge’ and ‘Recommended Further Reading’ in the learning materials, as well as some of your own research, will help you to achieve this.

Asking your tutor for some help, support and guidance during your assessment will not mean that you cannot achieve Merits and Distinctions.

If your tutor feels you are asking for extensive help, they will warn you that this may impact on your grading before giving it. Therefore, you should always ask for help, support and guidance if and when you need it.
**3.1.4 How to Guides**

Many of our students have been out of education for a very long time so to help you with things you might have either forgotten or of course was never taught we provide ‘How to Guides’. These can be found when you log on to your account from the ‘my Courses’ tab. Then go to ‘Materials and Assessments’, choose ‘Materials’ and then click on ‘Study Skills’.

**Important point:**

To make sure that you are clear on how to quote, reference and paraphrase see:

- The Study Skills Guides:
  - How to Plan
  - How to Write an Essay

For IT help also see:

- How to use IT

**3.1.5 What is Plagiarism?**

Return to social media etiquette

Plagiarism is basically taking someone else’s work or ideas and passing it off as their own, this can be from another student, from the internet, books, videos in fact anything that is not written by you. Taking someone else’s work in academic sources is very serious and DistanceLearningCentre.com will always act if we find that you have been plagiarising someone else’s work. To help to eliminate plagiarism DistanceLearningCentre.com uses the service of TurnitinUK.

TurnitinUK has a huge data base of everything on the web and also our students work so that it can compare everything on the web plus work of past students to see if the work you produce is your own. Once you have uploaded your work into TurnitinUK it produces an originality report. This shows that it has checked your work and has highlighted any similarities to your work from information from our past students, the web, text books etc. Any area of your work that has similarities with another source is highlighted and colour coded. That source is named on the right-hand side, along with the percentage of your
submission that is from that source. It is very important that you also play your part in stopping plagiarism. You can do this by:

1. Not sharing your work with anyone else on the course
2. Not giving another student a password, as only tutors are allowed to do this
3. Not answering questions on social media by giving the actual answer to a TAQ.

We ask you to abide by these rules as there are consequences as shown in the case studies below:

**Example 1:**

I have always wanted to be a midwife but having had not so great results from school had to admit to myself it was never going to be, then I found out about Access. It was perfect, it fitted around my job, the kids and the husband. I found it hard at first I had been out of education for so long but with help from my tutor and the brilliant people on Facebook and the forum I was getting mainly distinctions. I felt really grateful for the help of other students so that when one of my online friends asked me for help with an essay I did not really not see any harm in helping and sent her a copy of my work. It had been marked at an overall Merit. She said it was really useful and gained distinctions. It turned out when I went for my Midwifery interview we had both applied to same university, she was accepted and I wasn’t. I was devastated as I had actually helped her to get a place which should have been mine.

**Example 2:**

It was hard I have to admit it but I gained my diploma and I am now a student nurse on placement. There are a number of members of staff at my placement who are being funded by the NHS to do the same course I did last year, and so because they are all so helpful, I gave them access to my work so that they can see what is expected on the course. It never dawned on me that they would just take my work and pass it off as their own but that is what happened. I thought that everyone had the same sort of integrity as me but I was wrong and could not believe it. One of them even copied my answer to the question on plagiarism!

DistanceLearningCentre.com caught the person because my work had been subsequently put through Turn it in (Turn it in only came in usage half way through my course) and they contacted me about it. The person had to leave the course and therefore the NHS trust had to be informed because they were funding the course for them.
Clever Cat says:

“Log on to your account and go to Toolkit, about plagiarism. There you will find the plagiarism policy and procedure. There is also a student guide to TurnitinUK which I found a must read to understand what it all means. After all, I am the Clever Cat. PS Make sure that you are on Turnitin UK and not the American site.”

Important point:

There is no set similarity percentage that is acceptable/unacceptable, as it’s the type or frequency of unoriginal text that is important. Some text will always come up as unoriginal, and this is to be expected (such as quotes, references, the assessment criteria or assessment information).

Important point:

If you follow the advice and guidance in the Study Skills: ‘How to Guides’ you will not plagiarise.

Further resources:

Student Guides: The Similarity Report

SAQ 6:

What is plagiarism?

SAQ 7:

How does TurnitinUK check for plagiarism?
SAQ 8:
What’s best to use in a piece of written work – a long quote, a short quote, or paraphrasing?

3.1.6 Your Individual Learning Plan (ILP)

When you start your course you will be asked to fill in your individual learning plan you will find these on the ‘my courses’ tab on the course materials menu. Pick the ILP that relates to the course and option you are studying. Your tutor will explain how to fill it in to meet your moderation and target completion date. You will need to keep this document updated so that you can see if you are meeting your targets to finish your course on time. You also need to upload a copy of your ILP to ‘my ILPs and SAQs’ on the ‘my courses’ tab.

SAQ 9:
Why is it essential to keep your ILP up to date?

3.1.7 Your Target Completion Date (TCD)

You will find your TCD on your ‘account hub’. This is really important as it does two things:

1. It helps to calculate your monthly payments
2. It tells you how much time you have left on the course and therefore from this you can work out how quickly you need to submit your assessments to finish your course on time.

When you start your course, you will have set the date when you would like to finish your studies, this will have given you your monthly payments. Obviously if you choose to study over a full year, then the monthly payments will be less than if you choose to study over 6 months. However, as you study at your own pace you do not have to keep to the deadline you set at the beginning of the course. Therefore, if you find that you are either working quicker or slower than you expected you can ask your tutor to change your target completion date to reflect this. If the date is still within the 12 months this will also change how much you will be asked to pay each month. This means on one hand, you will not get any nasty surprises if you finish sooner than you planned to do, and on the other it could cut the cost of payments considerably. So, do keep an eye on your TCD.

3.1.8 Moderation Dates

As you progress through your course and accumulate credits your tutor will set your moderation date. We do not do this immediately you start your course but only set in the date when we are sure that you are going to finish your diploma in time to meet a specific certification date.

We use this date to register you with the awarding body for the final awards board which happens before every certification. Therefore, keep an eye on your moderation date and if
you are definitely going to complete on time and there is no date on your account hub please contact your tutor or exams at exams@distancelearningcentre.com.

3.1.9 Progressing from one subject tutor to another

Once you have completed the Units 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 then be allocated a new tutor. Your present tutor will give you the contact details of your next tutor.

3.1.10 What do I do if I don’t get on with my tutor?

We all remember our favourite teacher at school and how they liked and understood us, at DistancelearningCentre.com we try to give you the best tutor experience that we can. However, we are all human and sometimes either the student or the tutor may feel that they are not getting the best out of the relationship. If you do feel that you would get on better with another tutor then you need to contact student services who will discuss your issues with you and if necessary move you to a new tutor. Just leave your name and telephone number with a brief description of what you want to talk about and a member of the team will get back to you.

3.1.11 Concerns, and comments

Please see policies in the Toolkit from your learner account on our website for information on how to access these procedures and other policies of interest.

In a nutshell:

In this section, we looked in a little more depth in what to expect from your tutor when studying with DistanceLearningCentre.com and what you need to do to get the most out of your studies. Probably one the most important points we covered was the tutorials and how important they are making the most of your course.
4. **A More In Depth Look at the Courses**

Ready, steady, go!
In this section, we will look at the courses in more detail. We will discover what the course materials are like and how they can help you achieve the grades you deserve in each of the assessments you complete. Finally, we will explain how the course is assessed.

**Keyword/s:**
- TAQ: Tutor Assessed Question
- TOA: Tutor Observed Question
- SAQ: Self Assessed Question
- Assessment Criteria (AC): ACs are used by your tutor to decide if you have passed an assessment. You must have achieved a pass for each AC in the assessment before you will be eligible for grading.
- Topics: Each unit is split up into topics, there may be more than one topic to every unit.

### 4.1 The Course Materials

The course materials or topics are authored by DistanceLearningCentre.com and are written to the criteria and specifications supplied by the awarding body. Therefore, they should be well-suited to what you need to know to cover all the information required to pass a Unit. Within the materials (or the topic's PDFs) there are lots of further reading and recommended resources. We would always expect research and reading beyond the materials for higher grades, and the recommended reading and resources are well suited to help you in this.

If you use the course materials only for background reading, and don't reference them directly in your work, then the reference should go in your Tutor Assessed Questions’ (TAQ which is the Unit assessment) bibliography.

If you reference the course materials directly in your work, then the reference should go in your TAQ’s reference list.

To add to this, some specialist Units may require you to purchase a specific textbook such as a simple statistics book. We would recommend that you also consider investing in one of the general textbooks in the subjects you have chosen. These are available at most good
bookshops or online. Suggested titles will be given to you in the Unit’s essential and recommended reading, and by your tutor. However, before you buy anything have a look in DistanceLearningCentre.com’s library to see if there are any free text books and resources you can use in your studies.

In the course materials there are SAQs (Self-Assessment Questions) so you can check your knowledge and understanding. The answers are at the back of the topics/or on a separate sheet (please see the example of a Topic) as we are working towards subject specific SAQ answer sheets so in some courses you will find individual ones on the materials page.

Once you have worked through the course materials and answered your SAQs you will need to:

1. Download the SAQ answer sheet from the materials page on the ‘my courses’ tab or in the separate SAQ answers sheet
2. Answer your SAQs in your own words for each topic
3. Mark your answers using the Answers to SAQs, (for some courses your tutor will need to give you a password for you to access these).
4. Log into your Learner Account and upload into ‘my ILPs and SAQs’
5. E-mail your tutor when you have done this.
6. Your tutor will check your answers and sends you the password for the assessments.

**SAQ 10:**

What do you do with your SAQ answers?

**Further resources:**

Full details of the Ascentis subject specifications showing all the assessment criteria and the indicative content can be found on:

- My courses
- Materials and assessments
- Access Diploma Materials
- Subject set unit Specifications which is at the at the top of the list under each subject set

### 4.2 Assessments

Each Unit will be assessed either by Tutor-Assessed Questions (TAQs) or Tutor-Observed Assessments (TOAs). These are used by DistanceLearningCentre.com and the EMs to assess that you, and only you, have completed the Unit at a level of understanding that is compatible with the **assessment criteria** (AC) laid out by Ascentis at Level 2 or Level 3.

When the submitted assessment work has met the ACs you will be recommended to be awarded the credits for that Unit. Each Unit is not complete until you have submitted and passed your assessment/coursework and you cannot be moved on to a new subject tutor until you have submitted your completed assessment/coursework.

**All recommendations have to be verified by the EM who is employed by Ascentis.**
You and your tutor will individually negotiate the length of time allocated to each Unit with reference to your course pathway and your tutor will assign you assessment deadlines. The deadlines to work from is generally **2 weeks for a three credit unit** and **4 weeks for a six credit unit**. However, if you have chosen to study your course in a shorter time frame than 12 months then the deadlines for your assessment will be reduced accordingly.

**SAQ 11:**

What do you need to do to Pass a Unit?

**4.2.1 Tutor Assessed Questions (TAQs)**

**TAQs** can be downloaded from ‘my courses’ when your tutor gives you the assessment password. The answers to the TAQ’s should be uploaded on to ‘my assessments’ on the ‘my courses’ tab for your tutor to mark and comment upon.

You will also need to email your tutor to inform them that you have uploaded your assessment; and in some instances, you may also be required to post your completed assessment. In the latter case the hard copy of your submitted assessment will be retained by DistanceLearningCentre.com for external moderation so always keep a copy of your assessment/work. If you are required to send your work to your tutor by post in a folder or plastic wallet. Please do not use a plastic wallet for each piece of paper as it is time consuming for both you and your tutor.

**SAQ 12:**

How do you submit your assessments (TAQs)?

**4.2.2 What do TAQs Assessments and Mark sheets look like?**

To give you an idea what an assessment, TAQ answers for a pass merit and distinction piece of work looks like, along with the tutor mark sheets showing you the help you receive when a piece of work has been marked we have put together some examples for you. These assessments a from a few years ago, from units we no longer use and assessment that are no longer live. They are however real assessments from real students who completed their Access Diplomas on a Health Pathway.

**Human Biology**

- Assessment
- Piece of work graded as pass
- Tutor Mark sheet
- Piece of work graded as merit
- Tutor Mark sheet
4.2.3 Tutor Observed Questions (TOQs) and Examinations

The examined units are assessed both by a 45 minute unseen examination on at least one of the assessment criterion for the unit and, by an internally marked assessment. The examination will be invigilated by your tutor using Skype. When you are given the assessment codes for the examined unit you will also have access to the examination guide for this unit which explains how to revise for your examination, the assessment criteria you will be examined on and how the exam is set up. The exam is made up of at least one short answer question and is graded along with the rest of the assessment for the examined unit.

4.2.4 What do I do if I think that I need an extension to my assessment deadline?

If you are unable to meet your deadline you must apply for a formal extension to the unit assessment deadline. This must be done on the working day (excluding weekends) that a unit is due to be assessed, at the very latest. To do this, you must contact your tutor by email requesting a formal extension for a unit assessment, and giving the reasons for the extension.

4.2.5 What do I do if I do not get my assessment in on time and haven’t asked for, or been granted an extension?

- If you are unable to meet your initial deadline or your Level 3 assessment does not meet the assessment criteria and your work is referred then your tutor will give you a date for the resubmission of your work
- If you are unable to comply with this date you must ask your tutor for an extension
- If you do not ask for an extension and your work is late then you will need to complete an extenuating circumstances form. A copy of this is found on the policies page
- If you do not ask for an extension, or you have not filled out an extenuating circumstances form, then the highest grade you can achieve at this point is a Pass
4.2.6 Grading

There are seven grade descriptors that are the basis of grading decisions on Access to HE Diplomas.

In order to meet the purposes of a common grading system, grades awarded on all Access to HE Diploma are:

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

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. Appropriate selections of grade descriptors are assigned to the Unit when it is validated. DistanceLearningCentre.com has therefore not decided which grade descriptors to attach to each Unit. All colleges who work with Ascentis use the same grade descriptors.

The decision about which grade descriptors should be assigned to the Unit takes into account the aspects of performance that are relevant to the individual Unit. In this way, the rules of combination that identify the particular set of Units, which comprises each Access to HE Diploma, will also through the overall balance of grade 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 Access to HE Diploma.

**Important point:**

There is a ‘How to Guide’ on Grading called ‘How to Understand Grading’. You will find this when you log on to your account from the my Courses tab. Then go to Materials and assessments, choose materials and then click on study skills.

**SAQ 13:**

How can you try to get Merits and Distinctions?

4.2.7 The official rules for the submission of work for formal assessment

1. As a provider of Access to HE Diplomas DistanceLearningCentre.com must, according to the QAA guidelines, operate a formal approach to the submission of learner’s work for assessment.

2. The DistanceLearningCentre.com approach will be consistent across all its Access HE Diplomas and all DistanceLearningCentre.com tutors will be implementing and acting in
accordance with this approach and the AVA’s regulations.

3. All tutors will provide details in writing to all learners of any particular requirements that relate to the submission of individual Unit assessments. These details will be found on the Unit assessment brief.

4. All tutors will set deadlines for all Unit assessments to be submitted for formal assessment based on a learner’s Individual Learning Plan (ILP).

5. The dates of issuance and deadline for each Unit assessment will be recorded on the learner’s DistanceLearningCentre.com account.

6. When the learner submits a Unit assessment to his/her tutor, the tutor will note the date the assessment was issued and the deadline date for the Unit assessment on the Unit assessment mark sheet from the notes section of the learner’s DistanceLearningCentre.com account.

7. All students must submit a “Turnitin” report along with their formal submissions.

8. There is a formal procedure for the application of an extension to a Unit assessment deadline this is: the day before (excluding weekends) the submission of a Unit assessment is due, if the learner determines that he/she cannot meet the set deadline the learner must contact their tutor via email requesting a formal extension for a Unit assessment and the reasons for the extension.

9. The tutor will consider the reasons for the extension request and will if he/she deems appropriate negotiate a new deadline date with the learner for the Unit assessment.

10. If the learner does not ask for an extension because extenuating circumstances have made it difficult to do so, then the learner must complete and submit an extenuating circumstances form.

11. Failure of the learner to submit an extenuating circumstances form will result in the learner attaining a pass grade as the highest possible grade for all grade descriptors assigned to the Unit assessment, and hence the learner will only attain an overall pass grade for the Unit assessment.

12. Once a learner has formally submitted his/her completed assessment neither the learner nor the tutor may at any later date declare it to be a draft assessment.

13. If the deadline date for a Unit assessment falls within a holiday period (whether this is an official DistanceLearningCentre.com closure or tutor annual leave) the learner is still expected to adhere to the issued Unit assessment deadline by uploading his/her completed work to their DistanceLearningCentre.com account on the agreed deadline date as well as emailing his/her tutor to inform them that they have uploaded the assessment and posting a hard copy of the assessment if this is required.

14. If the deadline date for a Unit assessment falls within a holiday period (whether this is an official DistanceLearningCentre.com closure or tutor annual leave) and the learner requires an extension to a Unit assessment deadline the learner is still expected to follow the procedure for requesting an official extension as described above in point 7. The only difference being that the tutor will respond to the Unit assessment extension request on the first day of their return from holiday if it is a DistanceLearningCentre.com closure, or if it is during tutor annual leave or illness, then the cover tutor will agree any extensions.
4.2.8 What happens if my work is a resubmission and I have to redo some of my work?

As already mentioned if your work does not fully meet all the assessment criteria then you can be asked to do further work to enable you to meet the assessment criteria not met in your first attempt. To explain how the system for resubmissions works and to identify what happens if any first resubmissions are also referred, we have put together a flow diagram below to explain the processes involved.

It is important to understand that as a matter of course you can only be allowed to resubmit your work once. If on the first resubmission your work meets all the assessment criteria then your work will be graded normally and you can still achieve either a pass, merit or distinction grades.

It is therefore imperative that before you attempt a first resubmission that you and your tutor have a tutorial where you can discuss the areas you need to improve on.

The rules that QAA have put in place for resubmission of learner work are very clear, and state that although your tutor can discuss with you and look at a draft with you of any parts of the assessment that has not yet achieved a pass grade, the resubmission process is not a mechanism to allow you to discuss the whole of the assessment and therefore with the aid of that advice to resubmit the whole assessment, thus achieving a better grade.

If after the first resubmission the work still does not meet all the assessment criteria and it therefore needs to be resubmitted again then the DistanceLearningCentre.com has to ask the awarding body’s permission to allow you a second resubmission. This is called the referrals process and is a formal process where we have to ask the awarding body if you will be allowed a second resubmission, the awarding body can refuse this permission and will only grant permission if there are robust documentable and provable reasons to allow a second resubmission.

The awarding body will want to know:

- any special/extenuating circumstances affecting the individual Learner with evidence
- the particular unit/s concerned
- details of the achievement in the original submissions and resubmissions for the unit/s (if applicable)
- the Learner's total achievement profile to date
- the recorded view of the centre internal moderator

Please be aware that the majority of applications to the awarding body for a second resubmission are rejected and referrals will not normally be considered where the total credit value of the units for which referrals have already been granted for that Learner is 15 or greater.

The types of reasons the awarding body take into consideration are:

- physical or mental illness
- sudden homelessness
- death of family member
- serious accidents
- on active service with the armed forces

The awarding body will also need to see any supporting documented evidence to prove your application.

They will not grant a second resubmission if you were:
• moving house,
• missed the deadline because of family issues,
• going on holiday
• missing a deadline because you did not ask for an extension
• English as a second language

If the awarding body denies your request, then you will be unable to complete the full access diploma but can be accredited for any units you have already passed.

If the awarding body grants your request then you will be able to resubmit your work for a second time, however it the highest grade you will be able to gain for the unit will be a pass.

A third resubmission is not allowed. This information is shown diagrammatically in Figure 4.

**SAQ 14:**

Does it matter if you have to resubmit a piece of work?

**SAQ 15:**

What is the difference between a referral and a resubmission?
Figure 4. The Resubmission Process
In a nutshell:

In this section we looked at the course materials and found that they are authored by DistanceLearningCentre.com specifically around the assessment criteria and indicative content supplied by the AVA. We discussed SAQs and how to answer and upload them.

We then went on to look at assessments and found that to pass an assessment you should make sure that you have met all the assessment criteria and that if all the assessment criteria are not met then your tutor will ask you to resubmit that part of your work which had not yet met the ACs.

Once you have met the assessment criteria on the first submission or the first resubmission you work will then be eligible for grading and the grade pass, merit or distinction will be applied. If you have been given a resubmission and when marked it still does not meet all the ACs then we can ask the AVA if you will be allowed to submit a second time. However, if the AVA does agree to grant you a second resubmission then the highest grade you can achieve is a pass.

We also found in this section that if you are unable to meet a deadline issued by your tutor then you will need to ask for a formal extension and we discussed how you will need to go about doing this.

Further resources:

Full details of the Access to HE grading scheme, all associated guidance documents for AVAs, course providers and HE admissions staff are available on the Access to HE Website (www.accesstohe.ac.uk).
5. **Does the marking of work vary across tutors?**

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**Ready, steady, go!**

In this section, we will explore how assessments are verified as being reliable, valid and consistent. How the AVA can change grades and how your work is certificated.

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**Keyword/s:**

- **Internal Verification (IV)**
  Internal verification is a quality assurance process by which DistanceLearningCentre.com regularly samples and evaluates consistency and fairness. An effective internal verification system ensures that assessment practices and decisions are regularly reviewed and evaluated to ensure the validity of the award of credit. If the IVs do not agree with a grading decision they have the power to change a grade up or down.

- **Standardisation**
  This is when all the tutors teaching a unit get together to discuss the awarding of grades to make sure that the marking is consistent across tutors. This is monitored both internally and externally.

- **External Verification (EV) undertaken by External Moderators (EM)**
  Ascentis employs a team of external quality assurance staff called External Moderators. The EMs are subject specialists who through regular visits undertake make sure DistanceLearningCentre.com’s awarding of grades is consistent across Access providers, assessments and diplomas.

- **Moderation**
  This is when the subject EMs visit the centre to check all the grades awarded up to a certain date are valid. At any moderation the EMs are able to change the grades up or down if they do not agree with the centres grading decisions.
**Final Awards Board (FAB)**

At the end of a cycle where all the students' work has been marked, internal and externally verified, and standardised, the FAB meets. At the meeting, the students' grades and any extenuating circumstances are discussed and a final decision is made to award certificates to those students who have completed their diploma.

**Certification**

The AVA takes all the grades awarded by the centre and generates certificates. The certificates are sent to the centre where they are checked by us and posted to you. This takes place twice a year in July/August and December/January. The length of time it takes for certification is set by the AVA.

**AVA**

Abbreviation of Access Validating Agency, an organisation licensed by QAA to undertake the development, validation, monitoring and review of individual Access to HE Diploma courses and, accordingly, to award the Diploma (or, where appropriate, credit towards the Diploma).

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**Clever Cat says:**

“For up to date information of moderation dates please see moderation and exam dates in my courses. You will need to be logged on to your account to see this. After all, I am the Clever Cat!”

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### 5.1 The Verification Process

It is really important that every student has the same chance of being awarded any particular grade no matter which tutor is marking it, and that there is evidence to prove this. Working with QAA and the Awarding Body, DistanceLearningCentre.com has a responsibility to ensuring that every grade awarded is fair, equitable and valid and that we have a robust quality assurance systems in place, to underpin the delivery of our provision.

#### 5.1.1 Internal verification

Internal verification involves two key processes both of which happen three times a year:

1. **verification**
2. **standardisation**

These are facilitated by Curriculum Leaders and involve all tutors. To maintain the integrity of the assessment process internal verification must scrutinise the assessment practices and assessment decisions of tutors.

Thus, throughout the year there are ‘windows of opportunity’ where a sample all marked students work is internally verified by a subject specialist other than the marker to make sure...
that the marking of a piece of work is valid. We usually conduct this exercise remotely as tutors work individually on this process rather than as a group.

Standardisation is where tutors get together as a team to discuss assessments in detail by using their experience to update and refine them.

### 5.1.2 External verification and moderation

External verification also happens three times a year where the EM for each subject will:

- Monitor DistanceLearningCentre.com’s compliance with the centre recognition agreement by reviewing course documentation, meeting managers, tutors, internal verifiers and administration staff
- Identify any staff development needs
- Ensure that all procedures are being complied with
- That the award of credit/qualifications is secure
- Report to Ascentis on all visits/meetings

In addition:

- There are common moderation procedures and assessment regulations, and a standard definition of the EM’s role which apply to all Access to HE Diplomas.
- Access Validating Agencies (AVAs) operate procedures for the standardisation of the award of grades.
- Requirements relating to the selection, appointment and training of EMs are included in the AVA licensing criteria.

### 5.1.3 The Final Awards Board and certification

The final grades for Units which are recommended by the AVA are confirmed after the final moderation conducted for each pathway at the FAB meeting where:

- The grades achieved by you are formally reported in grade profiles.
- Any eligible extenuating circumstances are discussed and if agreed to be valid are taken into account when awarding final grades
- The individual grades awarded to you 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.

Certification occurs at the same time for all Ascentis centres. As soon as DistanceLearningCentre.com receives the certificates they are checked to make sure that they reflect your attainment, if there are any misprints they are returned to Ascentis for reissue otherwise they are posted by first class, signed for post.
5.1.4 What do I do if I don’t agree with my marks?

If you have any problems understanding the way your assessment has been marked, you should in the first instance contact your tutor (within 5 working days of receiving the assessed work) who will be pleased to explain the marking scheme to you. All DistanceLearningCentre.com 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) who in the first instance is the Curriculum Leader from DistanceLearningCentre.com 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 IV 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 IV concludes that there may be a case for re-grading, the work will be reassessed. The making of any such changes will be formally recorded and given to the EM. No adjustment to tutor grades can be made without the involvement of the EM. The EM’s judgement is final.

SAQ 16: What do you do if you disagree with a grading decision?

Further resources:

1. Policies and Procedures
2. Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure

5.2 Cycle of internal and external verification activities

To help you understand the process of internal and external verification that happens throughout the year, we have put together two flow charts for you to use which will explain both what we and Ascentis does throughout the year. They also explain what you should do.

As you continue throughout the course and submit your assessments the marks you tutor awards the work is continually uploaded onto 'my grades and mark sheets'. These grades and mark sheets are used throughout the year by both internal and external verifiers to check the quality of the marking of your work. Throughout the year we also report your grades to Ascentis and when an external moderation process is complete those grades are set and cannot be changed.
Figure 5. Times of Internal and External Moderation

- **June**: External Moderation Activity and Ascentis Exam Board
  - All learner grades awarded so far are reported to Ascentis, these grades are then set.
  - Any learners who have completed their full diploma at this point are certificated via the Ascentis exam board.

- **July**: Results reported to universities via UCAS

- **August**: September Standardisation:
  - EMs and IVs make sure that all the tutors are marking at the same level using a different sample of units.

- **September**: Internal Verification:
  - Tutors cross mark each other's work to make sure that the correct grading decisions have been made.

- **October**: November External Moderation Activity and Ascentis Exam Board:
  - EMs check the internal verification systems plus a sample of learner work that has not been internally verified.
  - External moderation also means that all learner grades awarded so far are reported to Ascentis, these grades are then set and cannot be changed.
  - Any learners who have completed their full diploma at this point are certificated via the Ascentis exam board.

- **November**: December
- **December**: January
- **January**: February Internal Verification
- **February**: March External Moderation Activity
- **March**: April Standardisation
- **April**: May Internal Verification
- **May**: June
Figure 6. The Certification Process
In a nutshell:

In this final section we looked at the internal and external verification systems and how your work is moderated and finally certificated.

Let’s recap:

In the handbook, we looked at all the major areas of the course that you will need to know and understand. There is much more information on the website and on your learner account than we can detail here. However, we do hope that this document will help you find your way around your account and the website and help you on your way to gaining your Access Diploma.

Useful contacts

Student Services studentservices@distancelearningcentre.com
exams exams@distancelearningcentre.com
GCSE Administrator gcse@distancelearningcentre.com
Finance Department finance@distancelearningcentre.com
Technical Support technical@distancelearningcentre.com
Links

http://www.distancelearningcentre.com/
http://www.accesstohe.ac.uk/Pages/Default.aspx
https://www.ascentis.co.uk/
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Answers to SAQs

1. How many credits is an Access to HE Diploma?

   **Answer:** An Access to HE Diploma is 60 credits

2. How many credits are ungraded, and how many are graded?

   **Answer:** 15 credits are ungraded, 45 credits are graded

3. How and when will your tutor get in contact with you?

   **Answer:** My tutor will get in contact with me via email around my start date and we will arrange my first tutorial. This will probably be over the phone or Skype.

   I will continue to have weekly phone or Skype tutorials for as long as I want them. When I start my graded Level 3 Units my tutor will ask me if I would like to move to less frequent, but more in depth tutorials – whether or not I do this will be up to me, and I can change my mind at any time.

4. How can your tutor support you when you’re completing an assessment?

   **Answer:** My tutor can give me help, support and guidance by giving email support or having a tutorial on the TAQs. If I am still stuck, I can send my tutor a draft of part of a TAQ.

5. What help can’t you ask your tutor for when you’re completing an assessment?

   **Answer:** I can’t send my tutor a plan for a whole assessment, drafts of whole TAQs, or ask my tutor to give me an indication of the grading I could achieve. My tutor also can’t rewrite (or write!) any of my work.

6. What is plagiarism?

   **Answer:** Plagiarism is when you take somebody else’s work or ideas and pass it off as your own. As long as I reference any paraphrasing/theories/quotes etc, and don’t copy somebody else’s work, then I won’t have plagiarised.

7. How does TurnitinUK check for plagiarism?
Answer:

It checks its data base for any similar materials and also shows where this information comes from

8. What's best to use in a piece of written work – a long quote, a short quote, or paraphrasing?

Answer: All can be used in written work, but I should use paraphrasing and short quotes more frequently than long quotes (over 35 words). This is because paraphrasing shows good understanding, and short quotes can be used to spark my own ideas and arguments. Whereas long quotes rarely do this, and should therefore be used only when absolutely necessary.

I must not forget that quotes are included in the word limit!

9. Why is it essential to keep your ILP up to date?

Answer: It is essential to keep my ILP up to date because:
- this is my timetable for my Diploma
- it will help me to structure and plan my time
- it gives me my deadlines for each assessment

I will be able to see what I have left to do and how much time I have left to do it: this means I'll be less likely to miss my target completion date and moderation deadlines.

10. What do you do with your SAQ answers?

Answer: I write them on the SAQ answer sheet and then upload them to my Learner Account.

I then email my tutor to say they are complete and to request the Unit assessment password.

I should also check my ILP to see when my deadline is, and adjust it if I will need more time.

11. What do you need to do to Pass a Unit?

Answer: To Pass a Unit I must have met all of the assessment criteria that are on the assessment's front sheet.

12. How do you submit your assessments (TAQs)?

Answer: To submit my assessments I first need to make sure that all TAQs are on one document, and that it is titled the same as the
assessment Unit (e.g. Study Skills assessment). I also need to complete the front sheet and title it appropriately (e.g. Study Skills front sheet).

I then need to upload both my assessment and my front sheet to my Learner Account and also email them to my tutor for marking.

If my assessment needed to be handwritten, like Maths, then I'll photocopy/scan/photograph it (in case it gets lost in the mail) and post the assessment. Finally, I'll let my tutor know when I've done it.

I mustn't forget to ask for the next code if I haven't already got it so I can get on with the next Unit!

13. How can you try to get Merits and Distinctions?

**Answer:** I will be more likely to get Merits and Distinctions if I show I can work independently. In the learning materials I need to take advantage of all the extra help given for learners aiming for higher grades, such as 'Stretch and Challenge' and 'Further Recommended Reading'. I also need to make sure that I do some of my own research.

14. Does it matter if you have to resubmit a piece of work?

**Answer:** No! A resubmission is not a problem: my tutor will give me some guidance on how to achieve the criteria I have missed. It's just having another go and is nothing to worry about.

15. What is the difference between a referral and a resubmission and does it affect your grades?

A resubmission is when one or more of the ACs are not met and my tutor asks me to resubmit that part of my assessment again. This does not affect my grades. If however, I still have not met the criteria then the work goes through the referral process and DistanceLearningCentre.com has to ask the AVA is this is OK. If the AVA says yes then the work is capped at a pass. If the AVA does not agree to a further resubmission then I cannot complete a full diploma.

16. What do you do if you disagree with a grading decision?

**Answer:** If I disagree with a grading decision I can talk to my tutor about it. If I want the work to be marked by somebody else then that is fine, but any grading decision is then final.