

Diploma Newsletter

The Diploma

Edition 1

Diploma News

Gateway Announcement

Congratulations to all the successful consortia planning to start Diploma programmes in 2009. In October, we will be launching the next five lines of learning: Environmental and Land-based Studies; Hair and Beauty Studies; Business, Administration and Finance; Manufacturing and Product Design and Hospitality. We will also re-launch the current five lines of learning. Please see our up and coming events below to see how you can get started on your planning now.

Specifications

Please be advised that we have posted the third draft of the specifications for the Principal Learning on the website:

- Construction and the Built Environment
- Creative and Media
- Engineering
- Society, Health and Development

These can be downloaded here: <http://developments.edexcel.org.uk/diplomas/draft-specifications/>

Why is version three still draft?

We continue to strive to maximise student success in the Principal Learning. We have responded to feedback from launch, implementation and focus-group meetings, and we are working in collaboration with QCA to clarify the marking grids.

What has changed?

Only the presentation of the marking grids has changed.

You will see there are now two parts to some marking grids in internally assessed units:

A grid - assesses everything except that which is in B

B grid - assesses a learner's performance in practical activities that are required be recorded as a witness testimony or observation record.

Please note that there are no changes to any of the assessment requirements, whether in the assessment objectives, the assessment criteria, or the expectations of the marking grids or the assessment activities.

We continue to respond to your observations regarding the Information Technology specification, and we are working with QCA to consider amendments that could address issues raised by IT practitioners.

As many of you are aware, we postponed the Information Technology implementation meetings initially scheduled for March and re-scheduled them for:

- London - 22nd Apr 08
- Newcastle - 29th Apr 08
- Manchester - 12th May 08

For a full list of events check the events section in this newsletter.

Please be assured that we are not changing the content of the specification. The aim is to provide accessible assessment.

We wish to take the opportunity to thank all our IT colleagues who have provided feedback and proposed solutions.

ASL

The fourth version of the Diploma Catalogue will be available during April. You will see a range of Specialist Learning from Edexcel for each of the first five lines of learning consisting of new BTEC Awards (60 hours), Certificates (120 hours) and Diplomas (180/360 hours) designed to enhance your students' experience of your consortium's Diploma delivery. However, not all lines of learning will have all sizes and all three levels available to them in the fourth version of the catalogue. This is the first phase of our provision being developed for Specialist Learning. Further qualifications, units and pathways will be added over the coming months.

Student Posters

Did you know we have a range of posters to promote Diplomas in your consortium? They explain what each of the first five lines of learning are about. There is also a generic Diploma poster. The posters can be personalised by adding the names of the members of staff that students need to see for advice and guidance regarding the Diploma. Watch out for the new version of the popular student guide including the next five lines of learning. Please call your local Edexcel Office to order your copies of the posters and the student guides.

Development of Next Phase

As we move into the next phase of Diploma delivery, we aim to keep you updated with developments. Currently all Awarding Bodies are waiting for feedback from QCA on the first submission of specifications for phase 2 subjects. QCA will grant accreditation on June 1st. Phase 3 subjects are currently with DDPs/ QCA to finalise the criteria for Awarding Bodies to start writing the next set of specifications. The fourth phase of Diploma development is currently at the consultation stage.

Projects

Have the rest of your teaching team considered using the Project or Extended Project to enhance and personalise learning with their students? There is an increasing amount of interest in this Diploma component as a standalone qualification. The Extended Project is being used to meet the stretch and challenge agenda for GCE students. It is being looked upon favourably by HE to demonstrate higher level skills such as critical thinking, analysis, synthesis and evaluation and is equivalent to half an A level in terms of UCAS points.

Diploma Aggregation Service

The Diploma aggregation service will launch in early September and will support the awarding of the Diploma through the collation and aggregation of results for each Diploma learner. The aggregation service brings together a Diploma student's individual results to enable an overall Diploma grade to be awarded. The implementation of the service is being led by QCA through the Minerva project.

To find out more about the Diploma aggregation service, staff in schools or colleges can speak with their National Assessment Agency support officer and view more information at www.naa.org.uk/14-19

Co-teachability

A QCA commissioned piece of work to explore this concept has shown that consortia should plan, where possible, to teach separate groups of students whose learning outcomes are defined as Foundation or Higher level from the point of enrolment to the programme. QCA also believes that planning for distinct Foundation or Higher level groups in a particular line offers several advantages:

- prior attainment can be analysed and the level of demand adjusted to suit learners
- motivation is likely to be boosted and maintained where learners see work as demanding, yet rewarding, when successes are achieved
- progression to higher levels of work, with minimum likelihood of non-completions due to frustration with work that is either 'too difficult' or 'too easy'
- Functional Skills can be matched neatly and, for some learners, may connect closely to their learning in English, mathematics and ICT in the statutory curriculum, thereby strengthening the general coherence of their learning
- Foundation level is seen as distinctive, not a failed Higher; for QCA it is also critical that the value of Foundation level is communicated and clearly shown.

There is also an opportunity to personalise learning and design and build a locally determined curriculum to meet the needs of learners, and QCA has developed examples to illustrate this.

Support from HE for Diplomas - Statements on UCAS website

Support from HE for Diplomas has been building, particularly following the announcement that the UCAS tariff awarded to the Advanced Diploma will be the same as that awarded for three and a half A levels.

All universities should have made high-level policy statements on the UCAS website regarding the acceptability of Diplomas by the end of the summer term (July 08). We expect a large majority of these to signal in principle, the acceptability of Diplomas. Institutions are required to follow these up with more detailed entry criteria for their courses by March 09.

Currently around 40 institutions (including 4 Russell Group and 5 1994 Group members) have statements on the website. We are currently focusing on increasing support from Russell Group and 1994 Group universities.

EVENTS

Planning for Assessment

These **FREE** full-day events are designed for colleagues delivering the Principal Learning for the first five Diploma titles. At the Principal Learning events, delegates will:

- examine the assessment requirements of the Principal Lines of Learning
- examine the key design features of the assessment
- explore opportunities to maximise attainment for students in both external and internal assessment
- plan for tracking attainment and implementing internal quality systems for both internal and external assessment.

Title	Location	Date	Code
Construction and the Built Environment	Manchester	Tue 08 Apr 08	7NTQ08/03
Creative and Media	Manchester	Wed 09 Apr 08	7NUQ03/03
Creative and Media	Manchester	Tue 22 Apr 08	7NUQ03/04
Creative and Media	Bristol	Thu 24 Apr 08	7NUQ03/05
Creative and Media	Manchester	Tue 6 May 08	7NUQ03/06
Creative and Media	London	Thu 8 May 08	7NQU03/07
Engineering	Manchester	Thu 10 Apr 08	7NTQ09/03
Engineering	London	Wed 23 Apr 08	7NTQ09/04
Information Technology	London	Tue 22 Apr 08	7NNQ04/01
Information Technology	Newcastle	Tue 29 Apr 08	7NNQ04/02
Information Technology	London	Tue 6 May 08	7NNQ04/04
Information Technology	Manchester	Mon 12 May 08	7NNQ04/03
Society, Health and Development	Newcastle	Fri 04 Apr 08	7NQQ11/02
Society, Health and Development	Manchester	Mon 14 Apr 08	7NQQ11/03
Society, Health and Development	London	Tue 22 Apr 08	7NQQ11/04
Society, Health and Development	Manchester	Thu 24 Apr 08	7NQQ11/05
Society, Health and Development	Bristol	Wed 30 Apr 08	7NQQ11/06
Society, Health and Development	Manchester	Wed 7 May 08	7NQQ11/07

Extended Project Launch Events

These full-day events will provide guidance on good practice models for implementing the Extended Project alongside both Diploma and GCE programmes. Sessions will include:

- the taught course basis for Extended Projects
- Project skills development activities
- reviewing Project proposals & the role of the Project supervisor
- an overview of the assessment criteria and the assessment evidence requirements

Title	Location	Date	Code
Extended Project	Manchester	Wed 11 April 08	7NJQ06/02
Extended Project	Birmingham	Wed 16 April 08	7NJQ06/03
Extended Project	Nottingham	Fri 18 April 08	7NJQ06/04
Extended Project	Bristol	Wed 23 April 08	7NJQ06/05
Extended Project	Winchester	Wed 30 April 08	7NJQ06/06
Extended Project	Plymouth	Thu 15 May 08	7NJQ06/07
Extended Project	Leeds	Tue 20 May 08	7NJQ06/08

Level 1 & 2 Project:

A series of launch events are scheduled for June. Details to follow.

Success with Projects:

A day to get to grips with delivering the Project and Extended Project not just within the Diploma but across the curriculum. Available in June: Dates TBC.

Building your Total Solution:

A one day workshop to support consortia with developing the linkages between the Edexcel Diploma components. Some example activities will include building your ASL provision, recording PLTS, managing Projects and Functional Skills advice. There will be an opportunity to meet the resource partners we are collaborating with. The outcome of the day is to enable consortia to provide students with a complete Diploma experience. If you are planning to choose Edexcel as your Awarding Body for Diplomas we will give you a 25% discount on Edexcel Diploma resources.

U-xplore/Trident/IFS: Are you planning the final elements to complete your Diploma solution? Take a look at some of our partners' services that can add to your Diploma students learning experience. By following this link: <http://developments.edexcel.org.uk/diplomas/sites/>

Assessment Associates: Are you or any of your team interested in assessing Diploma components for Edexcel? This is a great CPD activity to get to grips with the standards for the Diploma. It is a good opportunity to use this skill to inform how you teach and assess your Diploma students. And of course there is a financial reward! Follow this link to get more information and register your interest: <http://developments.edexcel.org.uk/diplomas/>

FUNCTIONAL SKILLS

Functional Skills Performance Points

The DCSF has confirmed the performance points allocated for Functional Skills qualifications during the pilot. These points are additional to any awarded for GCSEs or Diplomas. Please see attached information flyer.

What does this mean?

Briefly, each Functional Skill is equivalent to half a GCSE (short course) at Level 1 and Level 2. This is similar to Basic Skills (Adult Literacy and Numeracy). Level 2 discounts Level 1.

Level 2

- Each qualification is worth 23 points
- Each qualification contributes 10% towards threshold

(Short Course GCSE Grade B = 23 points)

Level 1

- Each qualification is worth 12.5 points
- Each qualification contributes 10% towards threshold

(Short Course GCSE Grade E = 14 points, F = 11 points)

Level 2 Examples:

- A candidate Pass in Functional Skills Mathematics or ICT or English gains 23 points at Level 2, is equivalent to half a GCSE grade B and contributes 10% towards the threshold.
- A candidate Pass in Functional Skills Mathematics, English and ICT gains 69 points at Level 2, is equivalent to a one and a half GCSEs grade B and contributes 30% towards the threshold.

Functional Skills Training Events

National Functional Skills Training Events

You are invited to attend the national Functional Skills subject-specific training events. These are scheduled from now until the end of April. The events will be led by Principal Examiners and provide guidance on our assessment as detailed on our website:

<http://developments.edexcel.org.uk/fs/training/>

Regional Functional Skills Training Events

Alternatively you can choose to attend the regional Functional Skills subject-specific training events which run later in May and June. These events will replicate the national events. Please return the flyer/booking form available from our website <http://developments.edexcel.org.uk/fs/regional/> to the Birmingham Regional Office.

Teaching & Learning Materials

FREE Resources from Edexcel

We have developed our own teaching and learning resources to support the Functional Skills pilot which you can access by visiting <http://developments.edexcel.org.uk/fs/lr/>

Access is no longer password protected so it is now even easier to obtain the materials. Simply click on your chosen subject and download the PDFs which are posted every month for English, maths and ICT.

The resources include:

- Teacher Notes - which help you deliver and assess Functional Skills plus provide support for the learner materials
- Student Materials - which focus on the learning and skills needed to achieve the Functional Skills standards

Visit the QIA's Excellence Gateway

Additional teaching and learning materials are available to support the delivery of Functional Skills qualifications in the following areas: Managing Delivery, Teaching and Learning Functional English, Teaching and Learning Functional Mathematics, and Teaching and Learning Functional ICT. These resources are available electronically by visiting QIA's Excellence Gateway:

<http://excellence.qia.org.uk/functionalskills> Hard copies are currently being distributed to all centres involved in the pilots and other relevant stakeholders.

Functional Skills and Apprenticeships

The Skills for Business Apprenticeship Approval Group has approved the limited use of Functional Skills qualifications within apprenticeship frameworks where this is supported by the relevant sector skills council (SSC) or sector body. This action will ensure that this important cohort is included in the overall pilot evaluation. Sector skills councils are required to submit an amendment to their framework to enable this to happen. It is important that centres with apprenticeship programmes that wish to use the Functional Skills qualifications establish whether this is supported by the relevant SSC or sector body, and whether the amendment submission process is underway.

Additional Support & Contacts

If you have a specific Functional Skills query, our **Ask the Expert** email service will put you in direct contact with subject experts who will help answer your question.

Subject Area	Ask the Expert Email Address
English	functionalskillsenglish@edexcelexperts.co.uk
ICT	functionalskillsict@edexcelexperts.co.uk
Maths	functionalskillsmaths@edexcelexperts.co.uk

The latest specifications are now available from the Functional Skills website:

<http://developments.edexcel.org.uk/fs/tgns/>

Please do not hesitate to contact your Curriculum Development Manager, if known to you. Alternatively, please call our team on 0121 616 2585 or email Birmingham@edexcel.org.uk or to contact the pilot, email Fspilot.recruitment@edexcel.org.uk

Useful Links:

The Edexcel Diploma Website: <http://developments.edexcel.org.uk/diplomas/>

Diploma Customer support phone number: 0844 576 0028

Diploma email address: Diplomas@edexcel.org.uk

Ask Edexcel: <http://edexcel--5571.custhelp.com/>

DCFS: <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/>

NAA: <http://www.naa.org.uk/>

QCA: <http://www.qca.org.uk/default.aspx>

Teacher net: <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/>