

# **Regulatory arrangements for component and Diploma awarding bodies**

Recognition criteria and  
operating rules

Version 2

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Office of the Qualifications and Examinations  
Regulator

Spring Place  
Coventry Business Park  
Herald Avenue  
Coventry CV5 6UB

Telephone 0300 303 3344

Textphone 0300 303 3345

Helpline 0300 303 3346

[www.ofqual.gov.uk](http://www.ofqual.gov.uk)

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# Introduction

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## Ofqual

Ofqual, the Office of the Qualifications and Examinations Regulator, is the new regulator of qualifications, exams and tests in England. It oversees the qualifications and examinations system to make sure that it is fair, provides value for money and meets the needs of learners and employers. Ofqual has been set up to ensure that children, young people and adult learners get the results their work deserves, that standards are maintained and that qualifications count now and in the future. Ofqual also makes sure that the qualifications available meet the needs of learners and employers.

## The Diploma qualification

The Diploma is a new composite qualification aimed at 14- to 19-year-olds that brings an innovative approach to learning. It will enable students to gain knowledge, understanding and hands-on experience of sectors that they are interested in, while putting new skills into practice. Employers and awarding bodies have teamed up with schools, colleges and universities to form Diploma development partnerships (DDPs) and are working together with the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) and Ofqual to take forward Diploma qualifications. Diplomas are offered at the following levels: Foundation (level 1), Higher (level 2) and Progression and Advanced (level 3). Diplomas begin to be available from September 2008 and will be offered in all 17 subject/sector areas from 2011.

The Diploma provides learners with real opportunities to practise their skills. It includes principal learning qualifications that provide opportunities for applied learning, which cover newly defined sector-related material and allow learners to develop and apply generic skills. In addition learners take the project qualification<sup>1</sup>, which offers the chance to personalise and show breadth and independence of learning.

Functional skills in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) are also an integral part of the Diploma: learners are required to attain a specified level to be awarded a Diploma. Learners will have opportunities to develop and apply functional skills across the Diploma curriculum. Functional skills are also available as stand-alone qualifications.

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1. The foundation project qualification is offered at level 1. The higher project qualification is offered at level 2. The extended project qualification is offered at level 3. All references to the project encompass the foundation, higher and extended project qualifications.

Learners must also take qualifications to meet specified guided learning hour (GLH) requirements for additional and specialist learning for the Diploma. This gives learners the opportunity to personalise their learning. Many qualifications that are already being offered can contribute to additional and specialist learning.

Diploma awarding bodies award Diploma qualifications. The constituent qualifications that contribute to the Diploma, such as principal learning qualifications, functional skills and qualifications for additional and specialist learning, are awarded by component awarding bodies. Component and Diploma awarding bodies are recognised through a supplementary process.

Centres and centre consortia for the Diploma will manage records of learners' results at centre level. The Diploma aggregation service will enable the gathering and storing of the results data that contributes to a learner's Diploma. The service will also provide an aggregation function to enable a Diploma awarding body to award a Diploma.

### About this document

The regulatory arrangements in this document consist of the recognition criteria (Part 1) and the operating rules (Part 2) for component and Diploma awarding bodies. There is also a glossary at the end of this document.

Awarding bodies should also refer to the *Criteria for accreditation of Diploma qualifications at levels 1, 2 and 3* (QCA, 2007).

### Scope and purpose of the recognition criteria

All component awarding bodies and Diploma awarding bodies must be recognised as awarding bodies by Ofqual; the Department of Children, Education and Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS) in Wales; and the Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) in Northern Ireland. The recognition process is operated together by the three regulators. The requirements of Ofqual's recognition criteria for those awarding bodies must also be met by component and Diploma awarding bodies.

The recognition criteria set out the requirements that awarding bodies need to meet to be recognised to operate as Diploma and/or component awarding bodies, in addition to their recognition as awarding bodies. All Diploma awarding bodies must also operate as component awarding bodies.

The recognition criteria apply according to the provision of the component awarding body and whether this includes principal learning, the project, and/or additional and specialist learning and functional skills. There are also recognition

criteria specifically for Diploma awarding bodies. The criteria are set out in the following sections:

- recognition criteria for all component awarding bodies (including additional and specialist learning component awarding bodies and component awarding bodies offering functional skills)
- additional recognition criteria specific to principal learning and project component awarding bodies
- additional recognition criteria specific to the recognition of additional and specialist learning component awarding bodies
- recognition criteria for Diploma awarding bodies.

### Scope and purpose of the operating rules

The purpose of the operating rules for component and Diploma awarding bodies is to set out the regulatory requirements for the operation of the Diploma qualification, principal learning, the project and the contribution of other constituent qualifications to the Diploma. The operating rules apply to component and Diploma awarding bodies, and include information on what awarding bodies require of centres to ensure the Diploma can operate effectively.

The operating rules cover specific requirements for the Diploma, principal learning and the project. They also refer to requirements in relation to constituent qualifications for the Diploma, such as qualifications that contribute to additional and specialist learning, so that the Diploma aggregation service can record and aggregate the results needed for the award of the Diploma qualification. The operating rules do not include specific codes of practice for other constituent qualifications in the Diploma, but do refer to requirements in relation to constituent qualifications for the Diploma.

Existing regulatory arrangements remain in place for functional skills and for qualifications that contribute to additional and specialist learning. The operating rules only apply to those qualifications in terms of the requirement that results are included in the constituent qualification results that must be supplied to the Diploma aggregation service, for those learners with a Diploma learner account.

These operating rules establish the principles and describe the required regulatory outcomes for the Diploma. They do not set out the processes by which those aims are achieved, as do specific codes of practice such as those for NVQs, GCSEs and A levels and AS qualifications.

This approach provides awarding bodies with the flexibility to work to the

principles and meet the required outcomes, without the majority of processes being prescribed. This approach also enables awarding bodies to determine the process that is most suitable for their own contexts.

These rules only include information over and above the principles and outcomes where it is helpful in securing comparability between awarding bodies' qualifications or in minimising the bureaucratic burden on centres.

The operating rules set out requirements for different types of component awarding bodies and for Diploma awarding bodies as shown below (requirements that are common to all component awarding bodies are repeated in the relevant sections):

- operating rules for additional and specialist learning component awarding bodies (including component awarding bodies offering functional skills)
- operating rules for principal learning and project component awarding bodies (includes relevant aspects of the rules for additional and specialist learning component awarding bodies)
- operating rules for Diploma awarding bodies.

## Regulatory aims for the Diploma

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The overall purpose of regulating the Diploma is to develop, secure and maintain public confidence in the new qualification. It is only through public confidence that learners and their sponsors can be confident that the qualification will be accepted and of real use in learner progression. This means that the regulation of the Diploma must be designed to meet the following aims:

### **Standards**

The standard of the Diploma must be clearly and transparently established, and the standard of contributing qualifications must be maintained.

### **Comparability**

There must be comparability between the qualifications offered by the different component awarding bodies at each level and line of learning.

### **Meeting the needs of learners**

There must be flexibility and choice of provision so that centres and consortia are able to meet learners' needs. Diploma awarding bodies and component awarding bodies must be able to meet market need, and, if they are entering and leaving the market, must ensure that learners' provision is not disrupted.

### **Diversity and equality**

There must be fair and equal access to the Diploma and constituent qualifications for a diverse range of learners.

### **Value for money**

The investment in the Diploma should provide value for money for government, awarding bodies, centres/consortia and learners.

## The regulatory framework for the Diploma

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The regulatory framework for the Diploma covers the regulation of overarching arrangements, and how the different constituent qualifications combine for the award of the Diploma, together with the regulation of principal learning and project qualifications.

The regulators monitor the performance of awarding bodies and evaluate their qualifications to make sure the way awarding bodies operate is fair, consistent and follows their regulations. If Ofqual, DCELLS or CCEA identify that an awarding body is not complying with the relevant regulations, they will apply a 'condition of accreditation' to the awarding body to rectify non-compliance.

The qualifications regulators may impose sanctions where they are needed to encourage an awarding body's compliance with the relevant regulations and to protect the interests of users. The level of sanction imposed will depend on the nature of an awarding body's non-compliance, the risks posed to the quality of qualifications and the interests of users.

Further information is available in *Regulatory monitoring and reporting* (QCA, DELLS<sup>2</sup>, CCEA, SQA<sup>3</sup>, 2007).

The regulatory framework consists of the following elements:

- regulatory aims for the Diploma that set out what the regulatory framework for the Diploma is designed to achieve (see page 6)
- for awarding bodies: recognition criteria for component and Diploma awarding bodies. These criteria apply in addition to the criteria for recognising awarding bodies for accredited qualifications, 'Criteria for awarding bodies' procedures' published in *The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (QCA, ACCAC<sup>4</sup>, CCEA, 2004). All component and Diploma awarding bodies must also be recognised as awarding bodies for accredited qualifications

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2. DELLS (Department for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills) is now DCELLS (Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills)

3. Scottish Qualifications Authority

4. ACCAC (Awdurdod Cymwysterau, Cwricwlwm ac Asesu Cymru), the Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales, was a predecessor of DCELLS.

- for awarding bodies: operating rules for component and Diploma awarding bodies that set out the regulatory requirements for the operation of the Diploma. The operating rules should be read and complied with in conjunction with the recognition criteria for component and Diploma awarding bodies
- for Diploma qualifications: criteria for the accreditation of Diploma qualifications at level 1 (Foundation), level 2 (Higher) and level 3 (Advanced and Progression) – covering the relevant aspects of the ‘Common criteria for all qualifications’ published in *The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*.
- for each subject/sector area for the Diploma: criteria for the accreditation of lines of learning qualifications

### Supporting arrangements

In addition to the regulatory framework for the Diploma, there are Ofqual-agreed arrangements to support the operation of the Diploma with component and Diploma awarding bodies. For example, there are Ofqual-agreed arrangements for the awarding and grading of principal learning and the project. These arrangements also cover other key areas to help to ensure a consistent experience for centres in relation to these qualifications. The arrangements will be kept under review with principal learning and project component awarding bodies and with Diploma awarding bodies. Information on the arrangements is provided on Ofqual’s website.

Diploma awarding bodies provide information and guidance to centres on the lines of learning they offer. They may also take a role in guiding centres to help ensure valid Diploma programmes of study, and may support centres in monitoring learners’ progress once an intention to claim the Diploma award has been submitted.

## Regulatory publications for the Diploma

	Scope	Publications	
Recognition of awarding bodies	Component & Diploma awarding bodies	Criteria for awarding body procedures published in <i>The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland 2004</i>	Supplementary recognition criteria in the <i>Regulatory arrangements for component and Diploma awarding bodies</i>
Accreditation of the Diploma and constituent qualifications	Diploma qualifications	Criteria for the accreditation of Diploma qualifications levels 1, 2 and 3  Criteria for the accreditation of lines of learning qualifications	
	Principal learning & project qualifications		
	Additional and specialist learning qualifications		Common criteria for all qualifications published in <i>The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, 2004</i>
The operation of the Diploma	Diploma qualifications	Operating rules  (published in the <i>Regulatory arrangements for component and Diploma awarding bodies</i> )	
	Principal learning & project qualifications		
	Additional and specialist learning qualifications		Relevant Codes of practice as applicable  <i>NVQ Code of Practice, 2006</i>  <i>GCSE, GCE, GNVQ, AEA Code of practice, 2008</i>

## Summary of roles and responsibilities

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This section summarises the key roles and responsibilities of component awarding bodies and Diploma awarding bodies, reflecting the requirements of the recognition criteria and the operating rules for those awarding bodies. There is also a summary of the roles of the Diploma aggregation service and centres. However, these regulatory arrangements do not apply directly to the Diploma aggregation service or to centres.

### Component awarding bodies

- Component awarding bodies are recognised to offer and award constituent qualifications that contribute to Diploma qualifications. The Diploma catalogue shows the constituent qualifications.<sup>5</sup>
- Component awarding bodies propose which of their qualifications they want the Diploma catalogue to include.
- Component awarding bodies supply Diploma learners' results to the Diploma aggregation service, referenced by the verified unique learner number (ULN).
- Component awarding bodies demonstrate their compatibility with the Diploma aggregation service to meet Ofqual's requirements for the awarding of constituent qualifications in the Diploma.

### Diploma awarding bodies

- Diploma awarding bodies award and certificate whole Diploma qualifications for the lines of learning for which they are recognised.
- Diploma awarding bodies produce the Diploma transcript for award of the Diploma according to information and design requirements provided separately by Ofqual, as agreed with QCA. The Diploma aggregation service supplies the data for the transcript.
- Diploma awarding bodies demonstrate their compatibility with the Diploma aggregation service to meet Ofqual's requirements for awarding Diploma qualifications.
- To operate as a Diploma awarding body, an awarding body has to offer and award one or more constituent qualifications that can contribute to the lines of learning for which they are recognised. Therefore all Diploma awarding bodies must also be recognised as component awarding bodies.

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5. The Diploma catalogue provides information on all of the Diploma qualifications and the constituent qualifications for award of the Diplomas [www.accreditedqualifications.org.uk](http://www.accreditedqualifications.org.uk).

- To be recognised as a Diploma awarding body, for a line of learning, the awarding body will have to operate at all levels of that line of learning. However, as a component awarding body, it will only have to offer a qualification at one level for that line of learning.

### Diploma aggregation service

- The Diploma aggregation service is designed to enable the data sharing, results aggregation, grading and supporting functions required for the operation of the Diploma as a composite qualification.
- The Diploma aggregation service:
  - enables the home centre to open and access a learner account for each of its learners
  - uses the ULN as the identifier for recording and aggregating learners' achievements
  - supplies the results data for the Diploma certificate and for the Diploma transcript to the Diploma awarding body so that it can make an award.

### Centres

The following list is limited to those centres' roles and responsibilities that are relevant to the requirements set out in these regulatory arrangements.

- Home centres<sup>6</sup> open a learner account with the Diploma aggregation service for each of their Diploma learners as early as possible in the learner's programme of study. Home centres can open the account directly with the Diploma aggregation service or with a third-party organisation such as a Diploma awarding body (where it offers this service).
- Home centres are responsible for ensuring the use of the correct ULN and up-to-date personal details for a learner across the consortium. They monitor the learner account to ensure the Diploma aggregation service holds the correct results.
- The home centre receives the trial grade for each of its learners that are eligible to be awarded a Diploma. The centre can submit an intention to claim unless it wants to review the trial grade before an award is made.
- Home centres are responsible for notifying the Diploma aggregation service that a learner has met the requirements for personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS).

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6. There is only one home centre for each learner. The home centre is where a learner is enrolled and it has overall responsibility for their Diploma programme. It is the centre that undertakes transactions on the Diploma aggregation service for a particular learner. It may also be operating as an assessment centre.

- Home centres are responsible for notifying the Diploma aggregation service of a learner's completion of work experience.
- Assessment centres<sup>7</sup> ensure the standardisation of internal assessment for principal learning and project qualifications across their different assessors and assessment sites.<sup>8</sup>

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7. An assessment centre hosts an internal or external assessment for Diploma learners. It can also be a home centre.

8. The National Assessment Agency (NAA) supports good practice in quality assuring internal assessment on principal learning and project qualifications. Please refer to [www.naa.org.uk](http://www.naa.org.uk) and *Delivering the Diploma – A guide to managing internal assessment* (QCA, 2008).

## Part 1: Recognition criteria

### Recognition criteria for all component awarding bodies<sup>9</sup>

#### Expertise

The Diploma comprises principal, additional and specialist, and generic learning components including functional skills, as outlined in the *Criteria for accreditation of Diploma qualifications at levels 1, 2 and 3 (QCA, 2007)*.

The recognition criteria for component and Diploma awarding bodies apply in addition to the recognition criteria that apply to all awarding bodies for accredited qualifications as published in *The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*.

- 1 Component awarding bodies must already be recognised by Ofqual, DCELLS and CCEA as awarding bodies for accredited qualifications.
- 2 Each constituent qualification submitted to Ofqual for accreditation for the Diploma must be within a component awarding body's existing plan of provision. If the proposed provision is outside the component awarding body's plan of provision, an extension to the plan of provision must be recognised before submission of the qualification for accreditation.
- 3 Component awarding bodies must have procedures in place to ensure that their staff and/or associates are competent in those aspects of the Diploma that make it distinct from their existing provision, or that they have access to appropriate training and guidance.

#### Provision of constituent qualifications

The Diploma catalogue provides information on all of the Diploma qualifications and the constituent qualifications for award of the Diplomas.

- 4 Component awarding bodies must apply to have one or more constituent qualifications for the Diploma included in the Diploma catalogue.

9. Component awarding bodies include those awarding bodies providing principal learning, the project, functional skills and qualifications for additional and specialist learning.

Existing requirements on enquiries and appeals and malpractice remain in place for constituent qualifications for additional and specialist learning.

### Corporate governance

- 5 Component awarding bodies working in a partnership to offer constituent qualifications for the Diploma with other awarding bodies must provide a written statement of each organisation's responsibilities, including the identification of a lead awarding body.
- 6 If a partnership is being set up specifically for principal learning or the Diploma, it must meet awarding body recognition requirements<sup>10</sup> together with the recognition criteria for component awarding bodies. The partnership will be referenced as a new awarding body.

### Information and guidance

- 7 When providing information and guidance on the Diploma, component awarding bodies must ensure that centres:
  - a are provided with clear information on how the component awarding body's qualifications can contribute to the Diploma
  - b are advised that the Diploma catalogue provides information on all of the qualifications that can contribute to the Diploma.

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10. Ofqual has developed a streamlined process for this purpose.

### Requirements for the Diploma aggregation service

- The Diploma aggregation service is designed to enable the data sharing, results aggregation, grading and supporting functions required for the operation of the Diploma as a composite qualification. Further information is available at [www.qca.org.uk/das](http://www.qca.org.uk/das).
- 8 Component awarding bodies must notify the Diploma aggregation service of all the results of constituent qualifications in the Diploma catalogue for learners that have a ULN and a learner account.
  - 9 Component awarding bodies must meet requirements for the use of the Diploma aggregation service and must demonstrate their compatibility with the administrative system developed for Diploma awarding by the Diploma aggregation service.
  - 10 Component awarding bodies must have formally agreed the commercial terms and obligations governing the provision of the Diploma aggregation service in order to open a Diploma aggregation service user account and use the system in live operation.

### Unique learner numbers (ULNs)

- Centres should ensure that their Diploma learners have an open learner account. The ULN is a mandatory part of the learner account. The centre may open the account directly with the Diploma aggregation service or via a third party organisation such as a Diploma awarding body (where it offers this service).
- 11 Component awarding bodies must meet requirements for verification of ULNs for Diploma learners.

### **Withdrawal of a component awarding body**

- 12 If a component awarding body wishes to withdraw its services and remove its qualifications from the Diploma catalogue, it must negotiate a timescale with Ofqual for withdrawal that will allow, where appropriate, for alternative arrangements to be made. The component awarding body must ensure that adequate notice is given to protect the interests of learners.

## Additional recognition criteria for principal learning and project component awarding bodies

### Provision of the principal learning component

- Component awarding bodies may offer principal learning qualifications at one or more levels for a line of learning.
- 13 Component awarding bodies offering principal learning must provide the whole qualification for that level and line of learning.

### Grading

- The Diploma will be graded. The principal learning and the project qualifications at levels 1, 2 and 3 must meet the overall grading requirements for the Diploma.
- 14 Component awarding bodies offering principal learning and/or the project must have, or have access to, the expertise and administrative systems needed to meet the overall grading requirements of principal learning and project qualifications for the Diploma.

### Centre approval

- 15 Component awarding bodies must have procedures in place for the approval of centres involved in principal learning.

### Enquiries and appeals

- Existing requirements on enquiries and appeals and malpractice remain in place for constituent qualifications for additional and specialist learning.
- 16 Component awarding bodies must have procedures for enquiries and appeals by centres in relation to principal learning and the project.

### Malpractice

- Awarding bodies should refer to Dealing with significant cases of suspected malpractice by those involved in the delivery of qualifications: Guidance for awarding bodies (QCA DELLS, CCEA, SQA, 2006).
- 17 Component awarding bodies must have procedures for reporting on and dealing with instances of malpractice in principal learning and project qualifications.

### Certification

Existing certification requirements apply to qualifications that contribute to additional and specialist learning, as published in *The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*.

18 Principal learning and project component awarding bodies must meet any requirements for certification of those qualifications published separately by Ofqual.

## Additional recognition criteria for additional and specialist learning component awarding bodies

### Qualifications for additional and specialist learning

- Additional and specialist learning consists of accredited qualifications approved under Section 96 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000. The Diploma catalogue<sup>11</sup> lists all constituent qualifications for the Diploma.
- 19 Awarding bodies wishing to make their appropriate existing accredited qualifications available for additional and specialist learning must:
- a be recognised as a component awarding body
  - b propose their relevant existing constituent qualifications for inclusion in the Diploma catalogue in accordance with the relevant lines of learning criteria and additional and specialist learning policy, taking account of areas of duplication.

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11. For further details, see [www.accreditedqualifications.org.uk](http://www.accreditedqualifications.org.uk).

## Recognition criteria for Diploma awarding bodies

### Expertise

The Diploma comprises principal, additional and specialist, and generic learning components, as outlined in the *Criteria for accreditation of Diploma qualifications at levels 1, 2 and 3*.

As a component awarding body, they may only be offering constituent qualifications at one level for a particular line of learning.

- 1 Diploma awarding bodies must also meet the relevant regulatory criteria for component awarding bodies. They must offer at least one constituent qualification, as a component awarding body, for each of the Diploma lines of learning that they are recognised to award.
- 2 Diploma awarding bodies must be recognised at all levels of each line of learning for which they are awarding Diploma qualifications.

### Recognition of all component awarding bodies' constituent qualifications

- 3 Diploma awarding bodies must recognise all component awarding bodies' constituent qualifications that meet the requirements of one or more lines of learning, as published in the Diploma catalogue.

### Corporate governance

- 4 Diploma awarding bodies working in a partnership to offer the Diploma with other awarding bodies must provide a written statement of each organisation's responsibilities, including the identification of a lead awarding body.
- 5 If a partnership has been set up specifically for the Diploma, it must meet awarding body recognition requirements<sup>12</sup>, together with the recognition criteria for component awarding bodies. It will be referenced as a new awarding body.

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12. Ofqual has developed a streamlined process for this purpose.

### Diploma aggregation service requirements for awarding Diploma qualifications

- The Diploma aggregation service is designed to enable the data sharing, results aggregation, grading and supporting functions required for the operation of the Diploma as a composite qualification. Further information is available at [www.qca.org.uk/das](http://www.qca.org.uk/das).
- 6 Diploma awarding bodies must demonstrate their compatibility with the administrative system developed for Diploma awarding by the Diploma aggregation service.
  - 7 Diploma awarding bodies must have formally agreed the commercial terms and obligations governing the provision of the Diploma aggregation service in order to open a Diploma aggregation service user account and use the system in live operation.

### Provision of information and advice

- 8 Diploma awarding bodies must ensure that they have sufficient resources and effective arrangements to provide information and guidance to centres on the lines of learning for which they are recognised to award the Diploma, including on:
  - a the recording and award of the Diploma qualification
  - b complaints on quality of service in relation to the award of whole Diploma qualifications.<sup>13</sup>
- 9 When providing information and guidance for centres on the Diploma qualification, Diploma awarding bodies must advise centres that:
  - a information on the full range of units and qualifications for the Diploma is available in the Diploma catalogue
  - b the Diploma can be awarded against any of the permitted combinations of qualifications offered by different component awarding bodies, as shown in the Diploma catalogue.

13. Diploma awarding bodies are not involved in enquiries and appeals on other component awarding bodies' constituent qualifications. If a result changes due to an enquiry or appeal on a constituent qualification, arrangements need to be determined for the re-issue of an overall Diploma result.

### **Certification of the Diploma and the Diploma transcript**

- 10 Diploma awarding bodies must ensure that they have the necessary resources, procedures and arrangements to meet the requirements of the operating rules outlined in this document for certification of the Diploma and the issuing of the Diploma transcript for each learner with the Diploma certificate.

### **Malpractice**

Awarding bodies should refer to *Dealing with significant cases of suspected malpractice by those involved in the delivery of qualifications: Guidance for awarding bodies.*

- 11 Diploma awarding bodies must report to Ofqual any significant malpractice and maladministration that is relevant to the award of a Diploma qualification.
- 12 Diploma awarding bodies must have procedures for reporting on and dealing with instances of malpractice at Diploma level.

### **Withdrawal of a Diploma awarding body**

- 13 If a Diploma awarding body wishes to withdraw its services and remove its qualifications from the Diploma catalogue it must negotiate a timetable with Ofqual for withdrawal that will allow, where appropriate, for alternative arrangements to be made. The Diploma awarding body must ensure that adequate notice is given to protect the interests of learners.

## Part 2: Operating rules

### Operating rules for additional and specialist learning component awarding bodies<sup>14</sup>

#### Section 1: Management of constituent qualification results

##### Submission of all constituent qualification results

All of the qualifications that can contribute to the Diploma are referred to as constituent qualifications, and are contained in the Diploma catalogue.

Home centres must ensure that their Diploma learners have an open learner account. The ULN is a mandatory part of the learner account.

The home centre may open the account directly with the Diploma aggregation service or via a third party organisation such as a Diploma awarding body (where it offers this service).

Home centres will be encouraged to open the learner account at an early stage. The home centre for each learner will communicate with the Diploma aggregation service on their behalf.

##### Additional and specialist learning component awarding bodies

- 1 Component awarding bodies must use the ULN to identify each learner with a learner account in the Diploma aggregation service, and to record their results for constituent qualifications of the Diploma for submission to the Diploma aggregation service.
- 2 Component awarding bodies must verify the learner details referenced by the ULN.
- 3 Component awarding bodies are responsible for the accuracy and validity of the results data they submit to the Diploma aggregation service referenced by each ULN.
- 4 Component awarding bodies must submit constituent qualification results to the Diploma aggregation service within agreed timelines<sup>15</sup>.

14. The operating rules for additional and specialist learning component awarding bodies also include those awarding bodies offering functional skills.

15. The timelines for awarding are set out as part of the Ofqual-agreed arrangements for component and Diploma awarding bodies that underpin the regulatory framework for the Diploma. Details of these arrangements are available on Ofqual's website [www.ofqual.gov.uk](http://www.ofqual.gov.uk). They are agreed by Ofqual with awarding bodies and take into account the requirements of the Diploma aggregation service. Timelines for data supplied to the Diploma aggregation service must also be in accordance with the agreed service levels and commercial terms for the service.

### Prior achievement claims

If a qualification was achieved without a ULN, centres will need to obtain a ULN and open a learner account before contacting the relevant component awarding body to verify prior achievement.

There are no proxies for principal learning, the project and functional skills in the Diploma.

Once a learner account has been opened the Diploma aggregation service accepts all results data for principal learning and project qualifications, and for other qualifications from the Diploma catalogue.

### Additional and specialist learning component awarding bodies

5 Component awarding bodies must verify the relevant prior achievement of Diploma learners for the constituent qualifications they offer. Prior achievement applies if this achievement was obtained before a learner account was opened in the Diploma aggregation service. Qualifications achieved before 1 January 2005 cannot be considered as prior achievement.

This verification is subject to one of the following requirements:

a the qualification is a current or expired qualification in the Diploma catalogue

or

b if requested, the component awarding body proposes that an equivalent of a previously achieved qualification that has expired is in the Diploma catalogue<sup>16</sup>.

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16. Once a qualification has been recognised against a current qualification in the Diploma catalogue, it will be added to the expired qualifications in the catalogue.

## Operating rules for principal learning and project component awarding bodies

### Section 2: Approval of centres for principal learning

#### Principal learning component awarding bodies

Where centre and qualification approval procedures already exist for qualifications that can contribute to additional and specialist learning, those procedures should remain unchanged.

An individual centre's choice of the constituent qualifications that contribute to a Diploma may be subject to the procedures of their Gateway centre consortium.

Component awarding bodies' arrangements with centres are also referred to in Section 3 of the operating rules, 'Assessment of principal learning and the project'.

- 1 Component awarding bodies must have information to confirm that a centre is part of a recognised Gateway<sup>17</sup> consortium in order to operate as a home or assessment centre<sup>18</sup> for principal learning.
- 2 Component awarding bodies must require home and assessment centres for principal learning to identify named points of accountability for the quality assurance and management of principal learning qualifications<sup>19</sup>.
- 3 Component awarding bodies' arrangements with home and assessment centres for principal learning should:
  - a be underpinned by component awarding bodies' centre monitoring arrangements
  - b not add unnecessarily to the Gateway process, or to existing centre and qualification approval procedures.

17. The Gateway process is operated by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and does not apply outside England.

18. There is only one home centre for each learner. The home centre is where a learner is enrolled, and it has overall responsibility for their Diploma programme. It is the centre that undertakes transactions on the Diploma aggregation service for a particular learner. An assessment centre hosts an internal or external assessment for Diploma learners. Centres can operate as both home and assessment centres.

19. The named points accountability may be the head of each centre.

### Section 3: Assessment of principal learning and the project

#### Principles of assessment

This section reflects the requirements in the regulatory criteria on assessment in *The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*.

The operating rules outline assessment requirements for principal learning and the project in conjunction with the *Criteria for accreditation of Diploma qualifications at levels 1, 2 and 3*.

Assessment arrangements for qualifications that can contribute to additional and specialist learning are not specific to the Diploma.

#### Principal learning and project component awarding bodies

- 1 Component awarding bodies must ensure that the assessment of principal learning and the project (at levels 1, 2 and 3) supports the following principles:
  - a the assessment enables results that provide a valid measure of the required knowledge, skills and understanding defined by the qualification specification
  - b results generated provide a reliable measure of a learner's performance
  - c the assessment generates results that meet the appropriate standards and that provide comparability of standards between centres, awarding bodies and over time
  - d the assessment minimises bias and must:
    - i provide opportunities for a diverse range of learners to demonstrate their abilities to meet the full range of requirements
    - ii be free from covert or overt discrimination
    - iii ensure that the content uses appropriate subject matter and language for the target group
  - e to ensure manageability, the assessment system for principal learning and the project must:
    - i use a level of resources within a centre/ consortium that is consistent with the required quality of assessment
    - ii use the appropriate number of awarding body examiners/assessors and moderators/verifiers to support reliable marking and reduce the scope for inconsistency.

### Roles, responsibilities and resources

#### Principal learning and project component awarding bodies

- 2 Component awarding bodies must define roles and responsibilities for staff and define the separation of functions and points of accountability to ensure that assessment tasks, question papers and mark schemes are produced, tested and scrutinised effectively.
- 3 Component awarding bodies must have the necessary systems, procedures and resources in place to ensure that:
  - a assessment tasks, question papers and mark schemes can be produced to the required level of quality
  - b learner results can be generated and reported to the required level of accuracy
  - c the necessary numbers of awarding body assessors/examiners and moderators/verifiers are available to ensure consistent standards
  - d learner results can be managed effectively
  - e contingency plans can be operated in the event of systems failures, including any breach of security of assessment tasks, question papers and mark schemes
  - f where applicable to the language in which the assessment is provided, consistency is guaranteed across the languages of English, Welsh and Irish (Gaeilge).

Component awarding bodies should also refer to the *Regulatory principles for e-assessment* (QCA, DELLS, CCEA, SQA; 2007).

- 4 If providing e-assessment component awarding bodies must make the necessary adjustments to systems, resources, training and guidance to accommodate that provision.

- 5 Component awarding bodies must ensure that they use assessors, examiners, moderators and verifiers who have suitable training and expertise.
- 6 Component awarding bodies must have performance management systems in place to monitor and evaluate assessors, examiners, moderators and verifiers.

### **Design and application of assessments**

#### **Principal learning and project component awarding bodies**

- 7 Component awarding bodies must ensure that assessment tasks, question papers and mark schemes meet the learning outcomes and associated assessment criteria in the specification.
- 8 Component awarding bodies must require centres to have procedures to ensure that evidence provided by learners is relevant, can be authenticated and is sufficient to determine whether the learners meet the requirements of the qualification specifications.
- 9 Component awarding bodies must assess performance in each unit of principal learning and in the project against marking criteria in terms of marks.
- 10 Component awarding bodies must ensure that assessors' or examiners' marking does not enable the direct allocation of grades. Therefore the marking criteria must not have a direct relationship with grading bands.

### External assessment of principal learning

#### Principal learning component awarding bodies

- 11 Component awarding bodies must ensure that their assessors and examiners for external assessment do not assess work from a centre in which they have a personal interest.
- 12 Component awarding bodies must ensure standardisation of external assessment, followed by sampling to enable a full review of the range of performances and responses.
- 13 Component awarding bodies must ensure that learners' work and the associated marks are kept securely to allow for enquiries and appeals.

### Internal assessment of principal learning and the project<sup>20</sup>

#### Principal learning and project component awarding bodies

- 14 Component awarding bodies must require centres to have effective and manageable administrative procedures and systems for internal assessment.<sup>21</sup>
- 15 Component awarding bodies must ensure centres have clear information on the parameters and the guidance necessary for the effective setting of assessment tasks, question papers and mark schemes.

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20. NAA supports good practice in quality assuring internal assessment on principal learning and project qualifications. For further information, refer to [www.naa.org.uk](http://www.naa.org.uk) *Delivering the Diploma – A guide to managing internal assessment*.

21. Also refer to Section 2, 'Approval of centres for principal learning'.

- 16 Component awarding bodies must require that there are centre controls for internal assessment to take place under controlled conditions (including when the internal assessment takes place at a venue other than the centre) to:
  - a enable the authentication of learners' work
  - b ensure reliable internal assessment.
- 17 Component awarding bodies must require centres to standardise internal assessment across different assessors and assessment sites.
- 18 Component awarding bodies must require centres to use moderation or verification to ensure that internal assessment meets defined standards.
- 19 Component awarding bodies must communicate clearly to centres the procedures for the moderation/verification of internal assessment.
- 20 Component awarding bodies must require sampling of internally assessed work that enables moderation/verification of a centre's internal assessment.
- 21 Component awarding bodies must ensure that the assessment decisions of their moderators/verifiers are standardised.
- 22 Component awarding bodies must ensure there is a sufficient number of moderators/verifiers according to the number and distribution of centres and learners and the nature of assessment requirements.
- 23 Component awarding bodies must require that moderators/verifiers do not deal with work from a centre in which they have a personal interest.
- 24 Component awarding bodies must instruct centres to support learner choice in selecting topics for the project.

## Section 4: Awarding of principal learning and the project

### Principal learning and project component awarding bodies

Also refer to the relevant sections of the *Criteria for accreditation of Diploma qualifications at levels 1, 2 and 3*.

The marks for principal learning units and for the project will be converted into points and reported as grades. The aggregation of these points will produce a score for principal learning and for the project. These scores will be combined and converted into an overall Diploma grade.

After initial periods of awarding as each line of learning is introduced it may be possible for principal learning and the project to be awarded more frequently.

The same grading scales apply to the grading of principal learning, the project and the overall Diploma.

- 1 Component awarding bodies must support the procedures for ensuring awarding and grading standards are set appropriately.
- 2 For an initial period as each line of learning is introduced component awarding bodies must award principal learning qualifications once a year only (summer), to enable awarding and grading standards to be established.<sup>22</sup> Ofqual will determine this initial period for awarding.
- 3 For an initial period component awarding bodies must award principal learning units and project qualifications no more than twice a year (summer and winter), to enable awarding and grading standards to be established. Ofqual will determine this initial period for awarding.
- 4 Component awarding bodies are responsible for providing a standardised score and grade for a learner's principal learning units, principal learning qualification and project qualification.
- 5 Component awarding bodies must aggregate individuals' unit results to produce an overall standardised grade for the principal learning qualification.
- 6 Component awarding bodies must not pre-publish grade boundaries for principal learning units or project qualifications.

22. Ofqual has taken forward a programme of work with principal learning and project component awarding bodies to determine how grading standards will be established. The same grading scales apply to the grading of principal learning, the project and the overall Diploma. Further information is set out in the Ofqual-agreed arrangements with awarding bodies on the awarding and grading process, published in *Arrangements for awarding and setting standards in the Diploma* (Ofqual, 2008).

- 7 Component awarding bodies must use common, Ofqual-agreed procedures for awarding and grading principal learning and the project.<sup>23</sup> These procedures will be discrete from marking and will include:
  - a professional judgement, using evidence of performance and informed by technical and statistical data
  - b production of unit grade boundaries and unit grades that component awarding bodies will report.
- 8 Component awarding bodies must provide guidance to enable centres to understand the grading scales used for the award of principal learning and the project.
- 9 Component awarding bodies must have procedures in place to consider aegrotat awards for principal learning on the basis of partial achievement. It is the responsibility of the component awarding body to provide the Diploma aggregation service with the weighted points for the unit to which the aegrotat applies.

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23. The timelines for awarding are set out as part of the Ofqual-agreed arrangements for component and Diploma awarding bodies that underpin the regulatory framework for the Diploma. Details of these arrangements are available on Ofqual's website, [www.ofqual.gov.uk](http://www.ofqual.gov.uk). They are agreed by Ofqual with awarding bodies and take into account the requirements of the Diploma aggregation service. Timelines for data supplied to the Diploma aggregation service must also be in accordance with the agreed service levels and commercial terms for the service.

- 10 Component awarding bodies must award and report on principal learning and the project according to the following grading scales:
- a A\*, A and B for graded results and U for unclassified results at level 1
  - b A\*, A, B and C for graded results and U for unclassified results at level 2
  - c A\*, A, B, C, D and E for graded results and U for unclassified results at level 3.

## Section 5: Management of constituent qualification results

### Submission of all constituent qualification results

All of the qualifications that can contribute to the Diploma are referred to as constituent qualifications, and are contained in the Diploma catalogue.

Home centres should ensure that their Diploma learners have an open learner account. The ULN is a mandatory part of the learner account. The home centre may open the account directly with the Diploma aggregation service or via a third party organisation, such as a Diploma awarding body (where it offers this service).

Home centres will be encouraged to open the learner account at an early stage. The home centre for each learner will communicate with the Diploma aggregation service on their behalf.

#### Principal learning and project component awarding bodies

- 1 Component awarding bodies must use the ULN to identify each learner with a learner account in the Diploma aggregation service, and to record their results for constituent qualifications of the Diploma for submission to the Diploma aggregation service.
- 2 Component awarding bodies must verify the learner details referenced by the ULN.
- 3 Component awarding bodies are responsible for the accuracy and validity of the results data they submit to the Diploma aggregation service referenced by each ULN.
- 4 Component awarding bodies must submit project qualification results and all of the constituent grades and results for principal learning units and qualifications (with their associated weighted points) to the Diploma aggregation service, including unclassified and absence grades.
- 5 Component awarding bodies must submit constituent qualification results to the Diploma aggregation service within agreed timelines.<sup>24</sup>
- 6 The component awarding body must ensure that principal learning qualification results (including unit grades and weighted points) are resubmitted if a principal learning unit result is withdrawn.

24. The timelines for awarding are set out as part of the Ofqual-agreed arrangements for component and Diploma awarding bodies that underpin the regulatory framework for the Diploma. Details of these arrangements are available on Ofqual's website, [www.ofqual.gov.uk](http://www.ofqual.gov.uk). They are agreed by Ofqual with awarding bodies and take into account the requirements of the Diploma aggregation service. Timelines for data supplied to the Diploma aggregation service must also be in accordance with the agreed service levels and commercial terms for the service.

### Prior achievement claims

If a qualification was achieved without a ULN centres will need to obtain a ULN and open a learner account before contacting the relevant component awarding body to verify the prior achievement.

There are no proxies for principal learning, the project and functional skills in the Diploma.

Once a learner account has been opened the Diploma aggregation service accepts all results data for principal learning and project qualifications, and for other qualifications from the Diploma catalogue.

#### Principal learning and project component awarding bodies

- 7 Component awarding bodies must verify the relevant prior achievement of Diploma learners for the constituent qualifications they offer. Prior achievement applies if this achievement was obtained before a learner account was opened in the Diploma aggregation service. Qualifications achieved before 1 January 2005 cannot be considered as prior achievement.

This verification is subject to one of the following requirements:

- a the qualification is a current or expired qualification in the Diploma catalogue

or

- b if requested, the component awarding body proposes that an equivalent of a previously achieved qualification that has expired is in the Diploma catalogue.<sup>25</sup>

25. Once a qualification has been recognised against a current qualification in the Diploma catalogue, it will be added to the expired qualifications in the catalogue.

## Resits

### Principal learning component awarding bodies

- 8 Component awarding bodies must permit resits of principal learning units to enable learners to improve their grades for principal learning and the overall Diploma.<sup>26</sup>
- 9 Component awarding bodies must re-issue the principal learning qualification certificate if a unit resit improves the grade awarded for the principal learning qualification.<sup>27</sup>

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26. Learners can resit principal learning units to improve their overall principal learning grade before or after the principal learning qualification has been awarded.

27. Diploma awarding bodies must reissue the Diploma transcript and certificate to reflect an improved grade for the Diploma. The grade can be improved before or after the Diploma has been awarded.

## Operating rules for Diploma awarding bodies

### Section 6: Awarding of the Diploma

#### Diploma awarding bodies

All levels of the Diploma are graded. The Diploma aggregation service calculates the grade for the whole Diploma by aggregating the unit scores for principal learning and for the project. Also refer to the relevant sections of the *Criteria for accreditation of Diploma qualifications at levels 1, 2 and 3*.

Arrangements will be put in place to ensure that the Diploma aggregation service is managed to safeguard the use of the service over time, and to ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to awarding bodies' use of the service.

Centres will be able to access a trial grade for each learner who has completed the necessary achievements for the Diploma. Centres can review the trial grade before claiming award of the Diploma, or set an intention to claim with the Diploma aggregation service.

- 1 Diploma awarding bodies must have a clear understanding of the awarding process by which the grades for principal learning units and the project are converted to points. These points are added together to derive a Diploma score, which is converted into a Diploma grade using published thresholds.
- 2 Diploma awarding bodies must award and report on Diploma grading according to the following grading scales:
  - a A\*, A and B for graded results at Foundation level
  - b A\*, A, B and C for graded results at Higher level
  - c A\*, A, B, C, D and E for graded results at Advanced level and for progression Diplomas.
- 3 Diploma awarding bodies must award the overall Diploma grade based on the combined scores obtained for principal learning and the project from the Diploma aggregation service. Diploma awarding bodies must only award the Diploma on the basis of claims accepted by the Diploma aggregation service. These claims must meet the following requirements:
  - a achievement at pass or above of the combined results of principal learning and the project<sup>28</sup>

28. The project must be at the same level or one level above the level of the Diploma.

The minimum required amounts of GLH for additional and specialist learning are 120 GLH at level 1 (Foundation), 180 GLH at level 2 (Higher) and 360 GLH at level 3 (Advanced).

- b achievement of qualifications from the Diploma catalogue for additional and specialist learning that:
    - i are at the same level or one level above the level of the Diploma
    - ii meet the minimum required amounts of GLH
  - c achievement of functional skills in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) required at:
    - i level 1 or above for the Foundation Diploma
    - ii level 2 for the Higher Diploma
    - iii level 2 for award of the Advanced Diploma or the Progression Diploma
  - d confirmation that requirements for personal, learning and thinking skills have been met
  - e completion of work experience.
- 4 Diploma awarding bodies must assist centres in understanding the grading scales and requirements for the award of the Diploma.

## Section 7: Management of Diploma results

### Diploma awarding bodies

- Diploma awarding bodies will not have access to full details of learners' constituent qualifications in any circumstances prior to the point the Diploma claim is made.
- 1 Diploma awarding bodies must not disclose constituent qualification results received for the Diploma award claim before the respective issue dates for the results of those qualifications.
  - 2 Diploma awarding bodies must submit all Diploma results to the Diploma aggregation service according to agreed timelines.<sup>29</sup>
  - 3 Diploma awarding bodies must reissue a Diploma result if the Diploma aggregation service has reaggregated constituent results and there is a change to the Diploma grade.

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29. The timelines for awarding are set out as part of the Ofqual-agreed arrangements for component and Diploma awarding bodies that underpin the regulatory framework for the Diploma. Details of these arrangements are available on Ofqual's website, [www.ofqual.gov.uk](http://www.ofqual.gov.uk). They are agreed by Ofqual with awarding bodies and take into account the requirements of the Diploma aggregation service. Timelines for data supplied to the Diploma aggregation service must also be in accordance with the agreed service levels and commercial terms for the service.

## Section 8: Certification of the Diploma and the Diploma transcript

When making the award, the Diploma awarding body must only print the Diploma transcript on the basis of a claim by a centre on behalf of a learner.

Centres are responsible for the delivery and recording in the Diploma aggregation service of personal, learning and thinking skills. This will be quality assured by inspection regimes.

Centres are responsible for the delivery and recording in the Diploma aggregation service of work experience. This will be quality assured by inspection regimes.

### Diploma awarding bodies

- 1 Following an agreed period after the issue of results to allow for relevant enquiries and appeals, Diploma awarding bodies must print and issue the Diploma transcript with the Diploma certificate once a Diploma claim has been made and the Diploma aggregation service has made available the necessary results data.

### Diploma transcript

#### Diploma awarding bodies

- 2 As a minimum, the Diploma transcript must meet the following information requirements for which the Diploma aggregation service will provide data.

The Diploma transcript must include:

- a learner details: ULN, learner's given name and family name, as provided
- b Diploma details: Diploma awarding body name, Diploma line of learning, level and final grade (must not include the score)
- c principal learning: component awarding body name (must not include the logo), qualification name and level, overall principal learning grade, date of award and credit value (where available), unit name and grade (must not include the score) for each unit
- d personal, learning and thinking skills: confirmation that personal, learning and thinking skills requirements have been met, and a list of the six skills

- e project: component awarding body name (must not include the logo), qualification name, level and grade (must not include the score), date of award and credit value (where available)
  - f functional skills: component awarding body name(s) (must not include the logo), qualification name, level and type, grade (must not include the score) for English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT), date of award and credit value (where available)
  - g additional and specialist learning: component awarding body name(s) (must not include the logo), qualification name(s) level(s) and type(s), grade (where applicable; must not include the score), date of award and credit value (where available)
  - h work experience: completion.
- 3 The Diploma transcript must also:
- a. meet design requirements for the Diploma as agreed by QCA and supplied through Ofqual
  - b. clearly state that the Diploma transcript is only valid when issued with the Diploma certificate
  - c. be designed and produced as a secure document.
4. If an improved grade for principal learning and/or the project changes the overall grade of the Diploma, the Diploma transcript must be reissued to reflect the improved grade.

### Certification of the Diploma

The current certification requirements for accredited qualifications are published in *The statutory regulation of external qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*.

#### Diploma awarding bodies

5. In addition to the requirements for the certification of accredited qualifications, Diploma awarding bodies must ensure that certificates for the overall Diploma follow the design requirements for the Diploma agreed by QCA and supplied through Ofqual.
6. The Diploma certificate must also include the learner's ULN.
7. The Diploma certificate must be re-issued if the overall grade for the Diploma is improved.

## Annex 1: Draft pricing principles for component and Diploma awarding bodies

The following pricing principles provide a framework within which awarding bodies can participate in the operation of the Diploma, while ensuring that the prices charged are reasonable.

### Educational benefit

Evidence from work on qualification pricing shows that the main factor affecting a centre's choice of awarding bodies is the suitability of the qualification rather than its price.

The pricing of constituent qualifications in the Diploma catalogue will impact on the cost of the whole Diploma.

The Diploma qualification is a significant new qualification and the principal learning within it is a new industry-led programme of study. Therefore the initial pricing of both the Diploma and principal learning will have a significant impact on the take-up of these new qualifications.

1. Choice for the Diploma should continue to be based on what centres perceive to be of the best educational benefit for their learners, rather than on the basis of price.

### Transparency of pricing

2. The fees charged by Diploma awarding bodies for the award and certification of the Diploma, and by component awarding bodies for principal learning and the project, must be transparent. Centres must be able to see what they are paying for, including in terms of additional products and services, and be able to make comparisons between competing providers.

### Notice period for the implementation of fees

3. Pricing of principal learning, the award and certification of the Diploma and any relevant additional products and services that have an impact on the cost of the whole Diploma should be publicised at least one year in advance of when the fee is due to be paid, so that centres can plan their budgets.<sup>30</sup>

30. The implementation of this requirement and when it comes into effect will need to be planned with component and Diploma awarding bodies.

### **Fair and appropriate pricing**

4. It is essential that a range of awarding bodies participate in the Diploma to keep prices competitive and provide choice for learners. The fees relating to the award of the Diploma, including for Diploma certificates and Diploma transcripts, and the pricing of principal learning, must be fair and appropriate.

## Annex 2: Draft diversity and equality principles

It is intended that the qualifications regulators will consult on a draft set of diversity and equality principles that will apply to all accredited qualifications. Therefore these principles will be kept under review.

'Equality' as used here means, as a minimum, eliminating discrimination and ensuring equality in terms of 'race', gender and disability. It is also recommended that other equality themes such as age, sexual orientation and religion/belief be taken into consideration.

For further information, awarding bodies should also refer to *Fair access by design: Guidance for awarding bodies and regulatory authorities on designing inclusive vocational qualifications (QCA, DELLS, CCEA; 2006)* and *Fair access by design: Guidance for awarding bodies and regulatory authorities on designing inclusive GCSE and GCE qualifications (QCA, DELLS, CCEA; 2005)*.

1. For the regulated functions they perform, awarding bodies must have systems in place to give consideration to how they can ensure equality for candidates. Where it is reasonable and practicable to do so, they should take steps to identify and address inequalities or barriers that may arise:
  - a for people of religious faith or belief
  - b for racial groups
  - c for age groups
  - d for those with marital or civil partnership status
  - e for men or women
  - f for disabled people
  - g for people with dependents
  - h on the basis of sexual orientation
  - i on the basis of political opinion
2. Awarding bodies must ensure that their design of the principal learning and project qualifications complies with the requirements of equalities legislation in force from time to time and in particular have systems in place to ensure that the design does not discriminate on the basis of disability, gender and race.

3. Awarding bodies must allow access arrangements (including reasonable adjustments) and special consideration to the assessment of principal learning and project qualifications to overcome or minimise any barriers to equality that have been identified.
4. For the regulated functions they perform, awarding bodies must have processes in place to consult with relevant learners and/or their representatives to ensure that there are no barriers to entry to the principal learning and project qualifications they develop and/or offer for disabled people, for women or men, or for people from different racial groups other than those directly related to the integrity of the qualification. The nature of any barrier must be stated and the inclusion of the requirements that create the barrier justified only and explicitly in terms of the integrity of the qualification. Any details of how the effect of any barriers will be mitigated, including for awarding bodies by using access arrangements (including reasonable adjustments), must also be recorded.

## Glossary

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### **access arrangements**

Arrangements that are approved in advance of an examination or assessment to allow achievement to be demonstrated by candidates with a disability, special learning needs (including where the candidate's first language is not English, Welsh or Irish) or to avoid unlawful discrimination.

### **accreditation**

The process through which the regulators confirm that a qualification and the associated specification conform to the relevant regulatory criteria.

### **additional and specialist learning (ASL)**

Qualifications that learners choose to include in their Diploma that are complementary or specialised in character. Additional and specialist learning must provide high-quality breadth and/or depth of curriculum experience, without duplication of principal learning, and be based on a solid evidence-base of progression opportunities for learners who want to progress into immediate employment with training, or full-time further and/or higher education.

### **Advanced Diploma**

The Advanced Diploma provides the basis for progression to higher and further education, and to employment with training. It requires 1,080 guided learning hours (GLH), and is equivalent, in terms of UCAS points, to three and a half A levels. The Advanced Diploma includes principal learning that is sector- and subject-related. It requires level 2 functional skills in English, mathematics and ICT, and provides the essential personal, learning and thinking skills needed to progress in education, training and employment. An Advanced Diploma can be completed as a two-year full-time programme. The Advanced Diploma components are, for each line of learning, as follows:

- principal learning is set at 540 GLH, of which a minimum of 270 GLH must be concerned with applied learning
- generic learning is set at 180 GLH
- additional and specialist learning is set at 360 GLH.

### **aegrotat award**

An award made on the basis of partial achievement to a learner who is unable, through temporary illness, injury or indisposition, to complete all the usual assessment requirements.

**aggregation**

The adding together of attainment across the components and units of a qualification to arrive at a measure of achievement for the qualification as a whole. Aggregation may require a weighting of each element according to the intended contribution to the whole Diploma.

**appeal**

A process through which an awarding body may be challenged on the outcome of an enquiry about results or, where appropriate, other procedural decisions affecting a centre or individual learners.

**AS/A level**

See GCE AS/A level.

**assessment**

The process of making judgements about the extent to which a learner's work meets the assessment criteria for a qualification or unit or part of a unit.

**assessment centre**

Any centre in a consortium hosting an internal or external assessment for Diploma learners.

**assessor**

The person who makes a judgement on a learner's work.

**authentication**

Confirmation that work has been produced by the learner who is putting it forward for assessment, and that it has been produced under the required conditions.

**awarding**

The process through which learners' results and/or grades are determined on the basis of available evidence.

**awarding body**

An organisation or consortium that awards qualifications. To be eligible to award accredited qualifications, awarding bodies must meet the requirements of and be recognised by the regulators. For the Diploma, there are two types of awarding bodies: component awarding bodies and Diploma awarding bodies.

**centre approval**

A process through which an awarding body recognises or confirms that a centre can offer particular qualifications.

### **certificate**

The record of attainment in a unit or qualification issued by the awarding body.

### **comparability**

The extent to which results obtained in different assessments, for example in different units, between awarding bodies or over time, represent equivalent attainment.

### **component awarding body (CAB)**

An awarding body offering constituent qualifications for the Diploma, which may include principal learning, project, extended project, functional skills and/or additional and specialist learning qualifications.

### **components of the Diploma**

Diplomas are made up of constituent qualifications that are organised in terms of the following three components:

- principal learning
- generic learning
- additional and specialist learning.

### **composite qualification**

A qualification consisting of a number of constituent accredited qualifications.

### **consortium**

A group of centres and other organisations (including employers and training providers) working together locally to offer a Diploma line of learning. Each consortium is approved through the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) Gateway process.

### **constituent qualifications**

Accredited qualifications that make up the different components of the Diploma.

### **Diploma**

A defined set of qualifications combined according to a set of rules. Diplomas are a combination of existing qualifications and purpose-designed qualifications. The Diploma is designed to support progression to further study, training and employment in a particular line of learning.

### **Diploma aggregation service**

The Diploma aggregation service supports the awarding of the Diploma to the learner. It must be used by centres and awarding bodies involved in the delivery of the Diploma to share data and record a learner's progress towards a Diploma award. As well as recording constituent qualification results against each learner, the service aggregates these results and applies rules of combination to determine whether the whole Diploma can be awarded.

### **Diploma awarding body (DAB)**

An awarding body that awards the overall Diploma qualification, issuing a transcript and certificate.

### **Diploma catalogue**

The catalogue of the constituent qualifications, and the valid combinations of those qualifications, which can be used for the achievement of the Diploma.

### **Diploma development partnership (DDP)**

This is a partnership between employers, higher education and other subject experts (with an interest/stake in the sector or subject) and education representatives (with professional, educational or qualification-design expertise). DDPs are brought together through sector skills councils (SSCs) and are led by the most appropriate SSC. DDPs are responsible for developing the line of learning statement.

### **Diploma transcript**

A report of the qualifications that make up a learner's Diploma programme. It lists the learners' grades for each qualification in their Diploma, and records work experience and personal, learning and thinking skills.

### **extended project**

A level 3 qualification involving a single piece of work that requires a high degree of planning, preparation, research and independent working. Students will explore in real depth a topic based on their own interests and aspirations. The extended project may be completed alongside A levels or as part of an Advanced or Progression Diploma.

### **external assessment**

A form of assessment in which question papers, assignments and tasks are set by the awarding body, taken under specified conditions (including details of supervision and duration) and marked by the awarding body.

### Foundation Diploma

The Foundation Diploma is achieved at level 1, and supports progression to level 2, particularly within key stage 4. It requires 600 guided learning hours (GLH), and is equivalent, in terms of average length of study, to five GCSEs. The Foundation Diploma includes learning related to a specific sector or subject, and includes a project to allow individuals to plan and organise their own learning. It includes functional skills in English, mathematics and ICT at level 1, and provides the essential personal, learning and thinking skills needed to progress in education and training. The Diploma can be taken in one year if taken on its own, or in two years if taken at the same time as the key stage 4 national curriculum programme of study. The Foundation Diploma components are, for each line of learning, as follows:

- principal learning is set at 240GLH, of which a minimum of 120GLH must be applied learning
- generic learning is set at 240 GLH
- additional and specialist learning is set at 120 GLH.

### functional skills

These are the core elements of English, mathematics and ICT, which provide the essential knowledge, skills and understanding needed to operate confidently, effectively and independently in life and at work. Functional skills will relate to GCSEs in English, mathematics and ICT, Diplomas and apprenticeships. They will also be available as stand-alone qualifications.

### Gateway

The quality assurance process run by the DCSEF, through which a local partnership of learning providers (a consortium) applies for approval to offer Diploma qualifications in a line of learning.

### GCE AS/A level

GCE stands for General Certificate of Education. An A level is normally taken as a two-year course progressing from either GCSE or an equivalent qualification. It comprises the advanced subsidiary (AS) and A2 components. Both AS and A level qualifications sit at level 3 in the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The AS is a stand-alone qualification and is valued as half a full A level qualification (assessed at the standard expected for a student halfway through an A level course). The A2 is the second half of a full A level qualification (assessed at the standard expected for a student at the end of a full A level course). Both are worth 50 per cent of the full A level qualification.

### **GCSE**

GCSE stands for General Certificate of Secondary Education. GCSE qualifications are generally taken as a two-year course by students aged 14 to 16. GCSEs sit in the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. GCSEs are graded A\* to G, grades D to G being at level 1 and grades A\* to C being at level 2 in the NQF.

The assessment of all GCSEs involves external assessment and the majority also include controlled assessments. GCSEs can be either linear or unitised. GCSEs are offered in a variety of subjects, including English, mathematics, ICT and science, which are compulsory within state schools at key stage 4 in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. GCSEs support progression to the study of qualifications at levels 2 and 3.

### **generic learning**

Generic learning enables students to develop and apply the skills and knowledge necessary for learning, employment and personal development. The generic learning component of the Diploma is made up of the following constituent parts:

- functional skills
- personal, learning and thinking skills
- a project
- work experience.

### **grade**

A point on a scale of performance used to differentiate achievement within a qualification (for example A\*, A, B, C, D, E).

### **guided learning hours (GLH)**

The number of hours of supervised or directed study time required to teach a qualification or a unit of a qualification.

### **Higher Diploma**

The Higher Diploma provides the basis for progression to further education, an apprenticeship or employment. It provides the basis for progression to level 3. It requires 800 guided learning hours (GLH), and is equivalent, in terms of average length of study, to seven GCSEs. The Higher Diploma includes principal learning related to a specific sector or subject, and includes a project to allow individuals to plan and organise their own learning. It includes functional skills in English, mathematics and ICT at level 2, and provides the essential personal, learning and

thinking skills needed to progress in education, training and employment. The Diploma can be taken in one or two years if taken on its own or in two years if taken at the same time as the key stage 4 national curriculum programme of study. The Higher Diploma components are, for each line of learning, as follows:

- principal learning is set at 420 GLH, of which a minimum of 210 GLH must be applied learning
- generic learning is set at 200 GLH
- additional and specialist learning is set at 180 GLH.

### **home centre**

The home centre is defined as the centre that undertakes transactions on the Diploma aggregation services for a particular learner, and there is only one home centre for each learner. It is the centre where a learner is enrolled and which has overall responsibility for his or her Diploma programme.

### **intention to claim**

A mechanism by which a learner can state his or her intention to claim a Diploma once the final constituent qualification results have been received.

### **internal assessment**

Assessment tasks where learners' evidence is assessed in the centre against criteria provided by the awarding body and subjected to external moderation. The assessment tasks may be set internally at the centre or be provided by the awarding body.

### **internal standardisation**

Processes carried out by centres in relation to internally assessed work to ensure consistency within each line of learning in relation to the setting of tasks, conduct of tasks and marking of learners' assessment evidence. Internal standardisation thereby ensures that all learners are judged against the same standards regardless of which teaching group they are in or which assessor marks their work.

### **learner account**

This will indicate participation on a Diploma programme and act as the repository for results data for an individual learner, recording line of learning and level. It will be managed and monitored by a centre on behalf of a learner or a DAB on behalf of a centre. Learners will not have direct access to their learner accounts.

### **Learner Registration Service (LRS)**

The LRS is an internet-based service capable of providing a unique learner number (ULN) for every person in education and training in the UK. This will allow people to build a lifelong record of their learning participation and achievements, which they can access and share if they choose. It is part of the MIAP programme of work and further information can be found at [www.miap.gov.uk/services](http://www.miap.gov.uk/services).

### **lines of learning**

The broad subject areas that each Diploma will cover are as follows:

#### **First teaching September 2008**

construction and the built environment

creative and media

engineering

information technology

society, health and development.

#### **First teaching September 2009**

business, administration and finance

environmental and land-based studies

hair and beauty studies

hospitality

manufacturing and product design.

#### **First teaching September 2010**

public services

retail

sport and leisure

travel and tourism.

## First teaching September 2011

humanities

languages

science.

The lines of learning titles are subject to change.

### line of learning criteria

A regulatory document developed by QCA and approved by Ofqual that defines the knowledge, skills and understanding relevant to a line of learning at levels 1, 2 and 3 that must be demonstrated as part of the principal learning component within the Diploma qualification. Awarding bodies must meet the requirements laid out in the line of learning criteria in addition to the *Criteria for accreditation of Diploma qualifications at levels 1, 2 and 3 (QCA/07/3112)*.

### Managing Information Across Partners (MIAP)

The MIAP programme will streamline the collection, handling and sharing of information on learning and achievement for education and training organisations. The Learning and Skills Council is delivering MIAP on behalf of partners across the education sector. Further information can be found at [www.miap.gov.uk](http://www.miap.gov.uk).

### moderation

The process through which internal assessment is monitored to ensure that it meets required standards, and through which adjustments to results are made where required to compensate for any differences in standards that are encountered.

### national database of accreditation qualifications (NDAQ)

This is a website that contains details of all qualifications that are accredited by the qualification regulators in England (Ofqual), Wales (DCELLS) and Northern Ireland (CCEA). More information can be found on NDAQ at [www.accreditedqualifications.org.uk](http://www.accreditedqualifications.org.uk).

### personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS)

The framework of skills that will equip all young people for successful employment and lifelong learning. PLTS require learners to be:

- independent enquirers
- creative thinkers

- reflective learners
- team workers
- self-managers
- effective participators.

### **plan of provision**

The plan proposed by awarding bodies defining the level, types and subject/sector of qualifications they intend to submit for accreditation.

### **principal learning**

This is the mandatory learning part of the Diploma. Principal learning is sector- and subject-related and predominantly applied in character. It includes a minimum of 50 per cent applied learning and consists of knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes that support progress through the line of learning into the sectors and subjects concerned. Opportunities to develop and apply generic skills are also integrated into principal learning.

### **prior achievement**

The Diploma qualification allows for the inclusion of constituent qualifications that have been achieved by a learner after 1 January 2005 if they are in the Diploma catalogue or a previous version of the Diploma catalogue.

### **programme of study**

The statutory elements of the national curriculum that all students at key stage 4 must cover while at school or college.

### **project**

A level 1 or 2 qualification involving a single piece of work that requires a high degree of planning, preparation, research and independent working. Learners explore in depth a topic based on their own interests and aspirations. The project is completed as part of a Foundation or Higher Diploma. An extended project is completed as part of the Advanced or Progression Diploma.

### **qualification criteria**

The *Criteria for the accreditation of Diploma qualifications at levels 1, 2 and 3*, alongside the criteria for each line of learning, sets out the knowledge, understanding, skills and assessment objectives common to all Diplomas at levels 1, 2 and 3. These criteria provide the framework within which awarding bodies create the detail of the components or constituent qualifications.

**qualification specification**

A detailed document that defines the purpose, content, structure and assessment arrangements for a qualification.

**reasonable adjustments**

Defined in the Disability Discrimination Act as reasonable steps to ensure disabled people are not placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with non-disabled people, 'substantial' being more than minor or trivial.

**recognition**

The recognition of Diploma awarding bodies and component awarding bodies in England, in addition to their recognition as awarding bodies for accredited qualifications.

**regulator for qualifications**

Statutory organisations that are required to establish national standards for qualifications and ensure consistent compliance with them. The regulators for England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland are respectively: Ofqual, the Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS), the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) and the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA).

**sector**

In relation to the Diploma, the term sector refers to an employer-led line of learning in a specific area of work, such as construction or engineering.

**special consideration**

A process that allows candidates who suffer from temporary illness, injury or indisposition at the time of an assessment to demonstrate the achievement they are capable of.

**specialist learning**

*See additional and specialist learning.*

**standardisation**

A process to ensure that the assessment criteria for a qualification or unit are applied consistently by assessors, moderators and verifiers.

**trial grade**

Centres will be able to obtain a trial grade for each learner who has completed the necessary achievements for the Diploma, before claiming the award of the Diploma through the Diploma awarding body and the Diploma aggregation service.

**unique learner number (ULN)**

The unique number that identifies a learner, supported by MIAP and the Learner Registration Service.

**unit**

The smallest part of a qualification that is capable of certification in its own right.

**unit grade**

The grade awarded for each unit. This applies to the principal learning qualification.

**verification**

A process of moderation that includes local checking of assessment processes and decisions.

**work experience**

Work experience provides opportunities for learning about skills and personal qualities, careers, roles and structures that exist within a workplace or company. Learners gain insights into, and experience of, personal responsibilities, competencies, key skills and tasks within a workplace. Where well structured, work experience helps young people understand the functions of different people at work and the range of opportunities within a company. It gives insights into the relevance to working life of subjects and raises awareness of enterprise and entrepreneurial ability.







## About this publication

### Who is it for?

This publication is for component and Diploma awarding bodies. It may also be of interest to schools and colleges that are offering the Diploma qualifications.

### What is it about?

The regulatory arrangements consist of the recognition criteria and operating rules for those awarding bodies that are offering the Diploma and qualifications for the Diploma.

### What is it for?

The recognition criteria set out the requirements that awarding bodies need to meet to be recognised as Diploma and/or component awarding bodies, in addition to their recognition as awarding bodies. The operating rules cover the regulatory requirements for the operation of the Diploma qualification, principal learning and the project. The operating rules also cover the contribution of other constituent qualifications to the Diploma.

### Related materials

*Criteria for the accreditation of Diploma qualifications at levels 1, 2 and 3 (QCA/07/3112)*

Diploma lines of learning (subject) criteria

## Office of the Qualifications and Examinations Regulator

Spring Place  
Coventry Business Park  
Herald Avenue  
Coventry CV5 6UB

Telephone 0300 303 3344  
Textphone 0300 303 3345  
info@ofqual.gov.uk  
www.ofqual.gov.uk

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For more information: [diplomaregulation@ofqual.gov.uk](mailto:diplomaregulation@ofqual.gov.uk)