

# A guide to the Diploma

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## Diploma time line

September 2008	September 2009	September 2010	September 2011
Construction and the Built Environment Creative and Media Engineering Information Technology Society, Health and Development	Business, Administration and Finance Environmental and Land-based Studies Hair and Beauty Studies Hospitality Manufacturing and Product Design	Public Services Retail Business Sport and Active Leisure Travel and Tourism	Humanities and Social Sciences Languages and International Communication Science

17 Diplomas, all at 3 levels, will be available from 2011. The structure and characteristics of the Diploma are the same for all 17 subjects, including the Humanities and Social Sciences, Languages and International Communications and Science. Thus the latter will provide a more integrated, work-related approach to these subjects than the equivalent A level or GCSE programmes.

## Diploma framework

	Principal Learning	Generic Learning				Additional and Specialist Learning	Equivalence
	Main Subject, eg Hospitality	Project	Functional Skills	Work Experience	PLTS	Optional	
<b>Foundation Diploma (level 1)</b>	Practical assessments + 1 exam	Project	ICT/Maths/English Level 1	Minimum 10 days	✓	Choose from a range of qualifications (see relevant catalogue of learning) including: BTECs, GCSEs and A-levels	5 x GCSEs (grade D-G)
<b>Higher Diploma (level 2)</b>	Practical assessments + 1 exam	Project	ICT/Maths/English Level 2	Minimum 10 days	✓		7 x GCSEs (grade A*-C)
<b>Advanced Diploma (level 3)</b>	Practical assessments + 2 or 3 exams	Extended Project	ICT/Maths/English Level 2	Minimum 10 days	✓		3.5 A levels

A Progression Diploma (level 3) is available, equivalent to 2.5 A-levels. It will require 720 guided learning hours and omit the ASL element. Extended Diplomas at all 3 levels will be available from 2011; they will include extra maths, English and ASL. **Useful links:** [www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19) [www.diploma-support.org](http://www.diploma-support.org)

## Diploma structure

Principal Learning	Generic Learning	Additional and Specialist Learning
Enables the development and application of knowledge and skills of the chosen sector.	Develops the broad skills and knowledge necessary for learning, employment and personal development. The components of the generic learning element are functional skills, the project, PLTS and work experience.	Enables students' programmes to be tailored to their own interests and aspirations. Units can be chosen from the relevant catalogue of opportunities.
<b>L1</b> – 240 GLH <b>L2</b> – 420 GLH <b>L3</b> – 540 GLH (a minimum of 50% applied learning)	<b>Functional Skills: English, Maths, ICT</b> L1 – 120 GLH L2 – 80 GLH <b>Project</b> L1 & L2 – 60 GLH L3 – 120 GLH <b>Personal, Learning &amp; Thinking Skills (PLTS)</b> 60 GLH <b>Work Experience</b> 10 days minimum	<b>L1</b> – 120 GLH <b>L2</b> – 180 GLH <b>L3</b> – 380 GLH

In total the Foundation Diploma will require 600 guided learning hours (GLH), the Higher Diploma 800 GLH, and the Advanced Diploma 1080 GLH. Guided learning hours are the average number of hours of teacher supervised or directed study time assigned to complete the qualification or unit of a qualification. In practice some parts may be integrated with others. For example, the personal, learning and thinking skills are embedded in, and assessed through, the principal learning; there is no separate assessment unit for them. The functional skills are all qualifications in their own right but students might well complete them as part of GCSE studies.

## Assessment

To achieve the overall Diploma, students must pass all components within the Diploma, including functional skills and additional and specialist learning.

- Principal learning units of assessment (all newly developed) are of 30 and 60 GLH at levels 1 and 2; 30, 60 or 90 GLH at level 3.
- Functional skills are assessed separately under exam conditions, though learning and application may be integrated into principal learning. To gain the Diploma, students must pass functional skills tests at level 1 for the Foundation Diploma, at level 2 for the Higher and Advanced Diplomas.
- Personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS) will not be assessed separately but integrated into principal learning and the project.
- Project: the individual project is a discrete qualification, locally assessed.
- Work experience of a minimum of 10 days will not be assessed.
- Additional and specialist learning (ASL): permitted qualifications are listed in the relevant Diploma catalogue at [www.accreditedqualifications.org.uk](http://www.accreditedqualifications.org.uk)

## Grading

**Level 1** attainment will be reported as A\*, A and B. **Level 2** as A\*, A, B and C.

**Level 3** as A\*, A, B, C, D and E. Attainment below these levels will be classified U.

The Advanced Diploma can attract up to 490 UCAS points.