

Information Sheet: Provider flexibilities for supporting Access to HE Diploma students in 2020-21

Please follow this link to the Gateway Qualifications COVID-19 supporting information webpage: <https://www.gatewayqualifications.org.uk/news/coronavirus-information-for-centres/>

And follow this link to the QAA COVID-19 supporting information webpage: <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/access-to-he/covid-19-support-and-information-Access>

Also included within the above links is the current QAA publication 'Arrangements for the Award and Assessment of the Access to HE Diploma 2020-21'

1. Extensions to assignment deadlines

Providers can approve extensions to assignment deadlines in line with QAA requirements and provider and AVA policies. This can be agreed for a whole group or individual students; for single or multiple assignments depending on the circumstances. All agreed extensions should be formally recorded and subject to review during External Moderation.

2. Adaptation of assessment task or method

Providers may adapt assessments tasks, evidence requirements and methods to accommodate groups or individual students. Adaptations must be approved by the AVA to ensure they:

- are necessary and appropriate
- do not undermine the validity and reliability of the qualification
- consider and address risks around malpractice

QAA Guidance: <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/access-to-he/covid-19-support-and-information-Access>

Gateway Qualifications Guidance: <https://www.gatewayqualifications.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Gateway-Qualifications-Access-to-HE-Guide-to-Assessment-Methods-and-Volume.pdf>

Changes units being delivered can also be made. Contact us for further details on quality@gatewayqualifications.org.uk

3. Additional study support where there are extenuating circumstances

Providers may provide specific additional study support and other forms of additional support where the need is evident. Any issues identified by students and / or providers that impact the learner's academic performance (or ability to complete the Diploma) should be recorded and made available for review at external moderation to ensure it:

- is necessary and appropriate
- does not undermine the validity and reliability of the qualification
- considers and addresses risks around malpractice

4. Counselling support

Many providers will be able to provide counselling support and other forms of additional support for students with mental health issues in the current circumstances, where the need is identified. This may support the student to manage the challenges rather than withdraw or defer a year.

5. Breaks in learning or extensions to learning

Providers can agree breaks in learning for students, which allow for a gap of up to 6 months without affecting funding or loan restrictions. This can enable a student to have a break or study for a longer period than planned, with an extended end date. Breaks in learning and extensions should be recorded and confirmed to the AVA.

Follow this link to the ESFA guidance: <https://esfahelp.education.gov.uk/hc/en-gb/articles/360013863540-Adult-Education-Budget-AEB-breaks-in-learning>

Information about breaks in learning in relation to advanced learner loans: <https://esfahelp.education.gov.uk/hc/en-gb/articles/360015264319-Breaks-in-learning-information-for-Advanced-learner-loans>

Adult Education Budget ESFA funding rules state: Response to coronavirus (COVID-19) 78. In line with paragraphs 73 to 76 you and the learner can agree to suspend learning to enable the learner to take a break in learning where: 78.1. the learner is self-isolating, or caring for others affected by coronavirus (COVID-19) and is unable to continue by distance learning and/or an online offer, or 78.2. you are unable to deliver learning because of the impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) on your business and there is no reasonable way to achieve appropriate delivery by distance learning and/or online learning. We understand in response to coronavirus breaks in learning can be longer than usual, up to six months. ESFA colleagues can provide information through their online enquiry service.

6. Continuing into the next academic year

Providers may offer students the option of continuing into the next academic year. Students have up to 5 years to complete their diploma. This should be discussed with the AVA and any agreed continuing students will be recorded at the Final Awards Board.