ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION PATHWAYS

Access to Higher Education



The Access to Higher Education Diploma prepares individuals without traditional qualifications for degree level study, for example university or a degree apprenticeship. It covers various subjects such as nursing, social sciences, law, and art and design.

The qualification is designed for those who have been out of education for some time or lack the qualifications to go straight to university. Access to HE courses provide a good foundation in the knowledge and skills required for studying at university level, and students are confident and well prepared when they go on to higher education.

The Access to HE Diploma is widely recognised by UK universities, and many actively encourage applications from Access to HE students. Each year, around 20,000 Access to HE students apply for a degree course at a UK university, studying a wide range of subjects, including law, education, and business.

Access to Higher Education

LEVEL 2 PREVIOUS ACHIEVEMENT COULD INCLUDE:

GCSE

LEVEL 2 QUALIFICATION

WORK EXPERIENCE

LEVEL 3 ACCESS TO HE SECTORS

Access to HE Diplomas are available across the following sectors:



HE HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRESSION ROUTES COULD INCLUDE:

Undergraduate Degree
- BA (Hons)
- BSc (Hons)

Apprenticeship

Foundation Degree
- FdA
- FdSc

HNC/HND

Always check the entry requirements for your chosen course to ensure you have all necessary qualifications.

Information correct at time of printing in October 2026. Please check the latest versions of qualification specifications and funding rules before commencing delivery.

WHAT AGES IS THE ACCESS TO HE DIPLOMA FOR?

Aged 18

- 18-year-olds may be considered for Access to HE Diplomas in exceptional circumstances.

Aged 19-23

- There are no course fees for 19-23-year-olds who don't already have a full Level 3 qualification. If you do already have a full Level 3 qualification, you may be eligible for an Advanced Learner Loan, and any outstanding balance will be written off once you have completed an eligible higher education course.

Aged 24+

- For those aged 24 years and over, Access to HE Diplomas are eligible for Advanced Learner Loans with any outstanding loan balances for an Access to HE course written off once you have completed an eligible higher education course.

Always check your eligibility with your chosen college or provider, they will be able to advise you and guide you through the process

This leaflet provides an overview of some potential routes into Access to HE Diplomas and the kinds of progression opportunities available following successful completion. The subjects, Diplomas and courses featured are a small sample of the wide range of options available.

More information about Access to HE, including a course finder, is available on the Access to HE website, www.accesstohe.ac.uk or by scanning the QR code.

AIM Qualifications and Assessment Group

Ascentis Awarding Organisation

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CAVA
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Skills & Education Group

gateway qualifications