

Ascentis

Access to Higher Education Diploma

Rule of Combination Overview

Valid from 1st August 2026



Validated until 31st July 2029

Version and Date	Change Detail	Section
June 2026 Version 7	Updates applied as per March 2026 validation panel outcomes	N/A - various

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Qualification Overview

General Principles

The total credit achievement for the Access to Higher Education Diploma is 60 credits. Of these 60 credits, 45 credits must be achieved at Level 3 from graded units which are concerned with academic content and 15 ungraded credits must be achieved from units at Level 2 or Level 3. Full unit details can be found in the relevant subject sets. Subject sets should be read alongside the Diploma Rules of Combination, Research units and the ungraded unit specifications.

Diploma Specification

The QAA implemented the following changes to the Access to HE Diploma across all Access Validating Agencies, with effect from 1st August 2024:

- A minimum of one unit of 6 credits must be included in each Diploma.
- A maximum of 30 credits that can be made up of 6- or 9-credit units (offered as ungraded and/or graded credits provided the maximum of **30** credits is not exceeded).

All Diplomas are constructed from a set of units that have been approved by Ascentis for use in that Diploma. Ascentis builds up Diplomas from units, with subject sets providing a coherent programme of study.

Subject sets contain:

- An introductory unit – this is **NOT** mandatory.
- Graded research units – these can be available as 3 or 6 credits, and some have been contextualised to help support distinctive learning opportunities.
- A Core Unit – this is a 6-credit unit whose completion **IS** mandatory where the units are being compiled to meet the overall subject set requirement. Additional specifics of the Core Unit Assessment (CUA) are given in 'Assessment Details'.

Some subject sets may not contain a Core Unit and/or introductory unit and/or research units due to constrained subject content.

Research

Research is an integral part of the Diploma. Learners must complete a minimum of 6 credits of graded research **in at least one** of the subject sets they are studying. You are referred to the Research Project and Practical Investigation specification for details on the individual research units within each subject set. In addition, we provide guidance to alternative research units which differ from the generic units.

Assessment and Examination Details

Typically, a Diploma will require a minimum of **TWO** Core Unit Assessments (CUAs), but refer to the individual Diploma Rule of Combination for further clarification.

The CUA is an Ascentis-devised assignment covering the content found in the core unit.

The assessment methodology for an individual unit can take a variety of forms and these are described in the unit specification.

Examples of these are:

- Essay
- Timed Assessment/End Test
- Presentations (with hand-outs/notes)
- Laboratory Report
- Micro-Teach
- Case Study
- Report

Assessment

Ascentis will provide a number of model pre-approved assignment briefs for centres' use. If a centre finds that the agreed unit assessment methodology is not acceptable, they may if they wish develop their own assessment brief, which will be considered and approved by Ascentis. This must occur before commencement of the delivery of the unit.

HEI entry requirements

Ascentis recommends that learners check with receiving HEIs for entry requirements for intended progression routes to specific courses at the earliest opportunity. Some HEIs may **require** learners progressing to have achieved GCSE awards with specific grades.

*The following pages list the **Key Subject Sets** and the **Optional Subject Sets** for each Diploma and an **example** of a Unit, Learning Outcome and Assessment Criteria. The **Subject Specifications** are available on the website, and **Assignment Briefs** are available on Parnassus.*

Access to HE Diploma (Allied Health Professions)

Key Subject Sets minimum required: 1

Biology	Human Physiology
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Optional Subject Sets

Chemistry	Childhood Studies
Counselling	English Language
English Language and Literature	Healthy Lifestyles
Mathematics	Mental Health
Physics	Professional Healthcare Practice
Psychology	Social Issues in Healthcare
Statistical and Mathematical Methods	Sociology

An example of a unit

Subject Set – Professional Healthcare Practice	
Unit – Introduction to Professional Healthcare Service and Practice	Credits 3

Learning Outcome	Assessment Criteria
1 Understand the policy context of healthcare services	1.1 Describe current legislation and policy relevant to health care services
	1.2 Discuss the impact of key requirements in legislation and policy on healthcare delivery

Indicative Content

Please be aware that the indicative content supplied below is a suggested guide only.

LO1

Legislation should be current, for example – Health and Care Act (2022), Health and Social Care Act (2008 and 2012 amendments), The Care Act (2014), Mental Capacity Act (2005) and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS).

Policies – NHS Long Term Plan, NHS Constitution for England, Safeguarding Policies.

Impacts include integration, safety and quality, patient-centred care, and accountability.

To meet LO1 at least one piece of legislation and one policy should be described, and its impact considered.

Progression Routes

Learners who complete an Access to HE Diploma in Allied Health Professions go on to study for degrees in health-related subjects and have careers working as psychologists, art therapists, dieticians, drama therapists, music therapists, occupational therapists, operating department practitioners (ODPs),

orthoptists, osteopaths, paramedics, physiotherapists, podiatrists, prosthetists and orthotists, diagnostic and therapeutic radiographers, and speech and language therapists.

Access to HE Diploma (Art and Design)

Key Subject Sets minimum required: 2

Foundations in the Arts	Photography
Graphic Design	Creative Arts Skills and Ideas
Textile Art	Arts Projects and Portfolios
Key Ideas in the Arts	

An example of a unit

Subject Set – Graphic Design	
Unit – Manipulating Images	Credits 3

Learning Outcome	Assessment Criteria
1 Demonstrate an understanding of the hardware and software required to manipulate images	1.1 Describe the hardware components required to manipulate images
	1.2 Describe the software required to manipulate images

Indicative Content
<p>Please be aware that the indicative content supplied below is a suggested guide only.</p> <p>Assessment Criterion 1.1</p> <p>Graphics card, RAM, USB storage devices, graphics tablets, mouse</p>

Progression Routes

After completing an Access to HE in Art and Design, learners go on to study Art and Design, Graphic Design, Photography, Game Art, Fine Art Painting and other creative arts subjects at degree level.

Learners who have successfully completed the Diploma and a degree have gone on to work as:

- Teachers
- Photographers
- Architects
- Graphic designers
- Fashion designers
- Fine artists
- Game artists

Access to HE Diploma (Built Environment)

Key Subject Sets minimum required: 1

Built Environment

Optional Subject Sets

Finance and Accounting	Law
Business	Human Resources and Business Management
Economics	Marketing
Engineering Science	Mathematics
Environmental Science	Statistical and Mathematical Methods

An example of a unit

Subject Set – Built Environment	
Unit – Introduction to Built Environment	Credits 3

Learning Outcome	Assessment Criteria
1 Understand the infrastructure relating to the UK construction industry	1.1 Describe the infrastructure of the UK construction economy
	1.2 Explain the role of the construction industry within the UK economy

Indicative Content

Please be aware that the indicative content supplied below is a suggested guide only.

Learners will be able to define the role of the construction industry within the UK economic framework.

Learners could outline:

- Key sectors within the construction industry and their relationship to the construction economy. Use of data, charts and graphs are encouraged to demonstrate key indicators and trends.
- The related industries to the construction industry, identifying elements of the construction industry supply chain and the role that the supply chain engages in.

With reference to the role of construction within the UK economy, learners will be able to explain the cyclical nature of the industry, describe current trends within the industry and explain its importance within the national economic framework.

Learners will be able to describe a range of professional bodies (RICS, CIOB, ICE, ICES, RIBA, CITC, etc.), explaining their function within and relationship to the construction industry.

Progression Routes

Completing an Access to HE Diploma in Built Environment allows learners to go on to study degrees in a range of professional areas in the built environment. These include construction and built environment project management, quantity and building surveying, commercial management in construction, built environment design, health and safety, and many more.

In addition, the Diploma provides learners with direct access to other roles that do not require a degree, including:

- Tendering and estimating
- Business development
- Cost control
- Quality control
- Administration in the built environment

Access to HE Diploma (Business)

Key Subject Sets minimum required: 1

Business	Finance and Accounting
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Optional Subject Sets

English Language	Mathematics
Programming	Psychology
Marketing	Statistical and Mathematical Methods
Web Development	English Language & Literature
Economics	Law
Human Resources and Business Management	

An example of a unit

Subject Set – Business	
Unit – Introduction to Business	Credits 3

Learning Outcome	Assessment Criteria
1 Understand key concepts and business aims relevant to the study of business	1.1 Explain three main business sectors
	1.2 Describe how the different business sectors of the UK economy interact with each other

Indicative Content

Please be aware that the indicative content supplied below is a suggested guide only.

Key business terms:

- Business aims
- Objectives
- Stakeholders
- Strategy
- Profit
- Costs
- Adding value

1.1 Fundamental understanding of business terms: aims and objectives, strategy, variable and fixed costs, profit & loss

1.2 The role of internal and external stakeholders

Progression Routes

After completing an Access to HE Diploma in Business, learners progress on to degrees in a variety of business-related subjects including Business Administration and Management, Accounting, Economics, Human Resources and Marketing.

Many learners go on to run their own business or have successful careers in business, accounting, human resources, marketing and public relations.

Access to HE Diploma (Childhood Studies)

Key Subject Sets minimum required: 1

Childhood Studies

Optional Subject Sets

Counselling	Education Studies
Education Theory and Practice	Law
Health Studies	Professional Healthcare Practice
Psychology	Social Issues in Healthcare
Social Work	Sociology

An example of a unit

Subject Set – Childhood Studies	
Unit – Introduction to Childhood Studies	Credits 3

Learning Outcome	Assessment Criteria
1 Understand the sociological approach to childhood	1.1 Outline the historical changes that have led to the current definition of 'childhood'
	1.2 Explain what is meant by 'childhood as a social construct'

Indicative Content

Please be aware that the indicative content supplied below is a suggested guide only.

Assessment criterion 1.1

Learners will be able to define the current understanding of 'childhood', and what has historically led us to this point. Learners could outline:

- When, historically, 'childhood' did not exist (e.g. in the Middle Ages)
- Why this may have been the case (e.g. higher mortality rates lead to indifference and neglect)
- Children as economic assets
- Children as 'mini-adults' (e.g. depicted as small adults, included in work)
- The development of schools and education and the impact this has had on 'childhood'
- Growing distinctions between children's and adults' clothing, pastimes, etc.
- Handbooks on child-rearing (e.g. widely available from the 18th century onwards)
- Increase of 'child centred-ness' amongst the middle classes
- Laws restricting child labour and enforcing education
- Child welfare laws and UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Assessment criterion 1.2

With reference to sociological theories/approaches, learners will be able to explain how the idea of childhood is constructed, or made, by society, e.g. all childhoods are different, depending on the society; it is not universal.

Progression Routes

Completing an Access to HE Diploma in Childhood Studies allows learners to progress on to degrees in Childhood Studies, Early Childhood, Youth Studies and other related subject areas. This can lead to a career working with children in a wide range of sectors including education, social care, health and charity sectors.

Studying an Access to HE Diploma in Childhood Studies is an excellent way to maximise job prospects, as not all related careers need a degree. For example, after completing the course, learners can work as a nursery assistant/practitioner, learning support assistant, teaching assistant or youth worker without a degree.

Access to HE Diploma (Computing)

Key Subject Sets minimum required: 2

Computing	Programming
Web Development	ICT

Optional Subject Sets

Business	Mathematics
Marketing	Statistical and Mathematical Methods

An example of a unit

Subject Set – Computing	
Unit – Introduction to Computer Systems	Credits 3

Learning Outcome	Assessment Criteria
1 Demonstrate an understanding of the hardware required by computer systems	1.1 Describe and explain the function of hardware components
	1.2 Describe and explain the principal components found on a motherboard

Indicative Content

Please be aware that the indicative content supplied below is a suggested guide only.

Assessment Criterion 1.1

Hardware components such as:

CPU, graphics card, RAM, internal storage devices, BIOS/EFI

Assessment Criterion 2.1

Software such as:

Operating systems, application software, device drivers

Progression Routes

Completing an Access to HE Diploma in Computing allows learners to progress on to degrees in Information Technology, Computing, Communication Technology and related fields. Learners go on to have careers in IT and telecommunications in many sectors, including finance, government, business, commerce, public services and the voluntary sector.

Access to HE Diploma (Counselling and Psychology)

Key Subject Sets minimum required: 2

Counselling	Psychology
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Optional Subject Sets

Health Studies	Professional Healthcare Practice
Social Work	Social Issues in Healthcare
Sociology	

An example of a unit

Subject Set – Counselling	
Unit – Introduction to Counselling	Level of Unit 3

Learning Outcome	Assessment Criteria
1 Know theoretical models of counselling	1.1 Explain the difference between counselling and counselling skills
	1.2 Describe the core listening skills
	1.3 Explain the interdependence of listening and interpersonal skills

Indicative Content

Please be aware that the indicative content supplied below is a suggested guide only.

Contracted activity, psychological therapy, clearly defined boundaries, based on listening and talking, appropriately trained, abide by code of ethics. Core listening skills include self-awareness, active listening, non-verbal communication, SOLER, effective questioning, facilitating. Interdependency of the various interpersonal skills apparent when competencies of individual interpersonal processes are considered.

Progression Routes

Completing an Access to HE Diploma in Counselling and Psychology allows learners to progress on to a degree in Psychology, Psychology with Counselling, Counselling and Psychotherapy, Education with Psychology, Criminology, Sociology, Social Psychology, Psychology with Professional Development or other similar subjects.

Access to HE Diploma (Education)

Key Subject Sets minimum required: 1

Education Studies	Education Theory and Practice
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Optional Subject Sets

Biology	Conflict and Change in Europe and the World
Early Modern English History	Exploring History
Britain in the 19 th Century	Chemistry
English Language	English Language and Literature
English Literature	Environmental Studies
Statistical and Mathematical Methods	Mathematics
Physics	Psychology
Sociology	Sports Science
Geography	ICT
Sports Coaching and Fitness	Computing

An example of a unit

Subject Set – Education Theory and Practice	
Unit – The Role of Play in Child Development	Credits 6

Learning Outcome	Assessment Criteria
1 Understand the role of play in child development, including the emotional, social and cognitive development of the child	1.1 Describe the key elements of at least two cognitive development theories to reflect play in childhood
	1.2 Explain the role of play in child development in relation to their social, emotional and cognitive development
	1.3 Evaluate the influence of cognitive development theories on the role of play in child learning and behaviour

Indicative Content

Please be aware that the indicative content supplied below is a suggested guide only.

Assessment criterion 1.1

Learners should examine at least two cognitive development theories (e.g. the work of Vygotsky and Piaget) and describe the key elements of the theories in relation to play.

Assessment criterion 1.3

Learners should examine and evaluate the impact and influence that cognitive development theories have had on how we understand the role of play in relation to a child's learning and behaviour.

Progression Routes

Completing an Access to HE Diploma in Education allows learners to progress on to various education-related degree programmes, and after graduation they can pursue a career in education, whether that be in academia, research or teaching.

Access to HE Diploma (Engineering Science)

Key Subject Sets minimum required: 2

Engineering Science	Chemistry
Mathematics	Physics

An example of a unit

Subject Set – Engineering Science	
Unit – Introduction to Engineering Science	Credits 3

Learning Outcome	Assessment Criteria
1 Understand and apply basic concepts in Engineering Science	1.1 Quote definitions of concepts and use them suitably in calculations
	1.2 Include suitable units of measurement in calculations and with data values, converting between units when required

Indicative Content

Please be aware that the indicative content supplied below is a suggested guide only.

Students will be introduced to the basic concepts used in engineering through the study and use of:

- The units used in engineering science and definitions of concepts such as mass, weight, force, density, pressure; international standards of measurement (for example, for mass, length and time)
- The application and measurement of static forces and torques, static equilibrium, vertically loaded simply supported beams
- Linear accelerated motion, the definition of kinetic and potential energy, work done, power, conservation of energy, gravity, springs and the spring constant
- The definitions of and relations between electric charge, electromotive force, potential difference, electrical energy, current, resistance; units such as volt, ampere, coulomb, ohm, ampere-hour, watt; Ohm's Law; conversion of mechanical to electrical energy and vice versa

Progression Routes

Completing an Access to HE Diploma in Engineering Science enables learners to progress on to degrees in many subjects including Physics, Maths, Computer Science, Mechanical Engineering, Aeronautical Engineering and Electrical Engineering, to name a few. Learners who have successfully completed the Diploma and a degree go on to work in many areas, including civil engineering, mechanical engineering, aerospace engineering, electrical engineering, computer science, building surveying and quantity surveying.

Access to HE Diploma (Environmental Science)

Key Subject Sets minimum required: 1

Environmental Science

Optional Subject Sets

Biology	Geography
Chemistry	Mathematics
Physics	Statistical and Mathematical Methods

An example of a unit

Subject Set – Environmental Science

Unit – Introduction to Environmental Issues

Credits 3

Learning Outcome	Assessment Criteria
1 Discuss what is meant by the term ‘the environment’	1.1 Explain three ways the term ‘the environment’ is used
	1.2 Identify three issues relating to the term ‘the environment’

Indicative Content

Please be aware that the indicative content supplied below is a suggested guide only.

The environment; the biological environment; species and their interaction; the chemical environment – natural cycles; chemical-biological interactions through ecological cycles.

Environmental change. Stresses on the environment due to human activities, e.g. pollution and overexploitation of natural resources.

Issues threatening environmental change, e.g. management of conservation, threatened species. Selected examples of effect of environment change on species numbers and diversity. Policy, management and drivers – Conservation of Biological Diversity (CBD), European Strategy for Biodiversity, UK Conservation Framework; organisations such as RSPB, WWF, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and its RED lists. Natural England, Scottish Natural Heritage, Countryside Council for Wales.

Progression Routes

Learners completing an Access to HE Diploma in Environmental Science go on to study degrees and have careers in:

- Pollution control
- Recycling
- Water/air quality
- Resources
- Energy management
- Sustainability
- Environmental consultancy
- Ecology and nature conservation
- Environmental education

Access to HE Diploma (Forensic Science)

Key Subject Sets minimum required: 1

Forensic Science

Optional Subject Sets

Physics	Mathematics
Criminology	Statistical and Mathematical Methods
Biology	Chemistry
Psychology	

An example of a unit

Subject Set – Criminology	
Unit – Criminal Justice System	Credits 3

Learning Outcome	Assessment Criteria
2 Understand the functional underpinnings of the Criminal Justice System	2.1 Describe three of the functions of the Criminal Justice System
	2.2 Compare and contrast the different outcomes of the Criminal Justice System

Indicative Content

Please be aware that the indicative content supplied below is a suggested guide only.

Functions of the Criminal Justice System:

- Retribution
- Deterrence – specific and general
- Incapacitation
- Rehabilitation
- Hedonism

Outcomes:

- Success rates
- Rates of reconviction
- Victim responses as necessary
- Magistrates' and Crown Court
- Types of crime
- Level of punishments available for each
- Judges that cover
- Requirements for different types of judges

Progression Routes

After completing an Access to HE Diploma in Forensic Science, learners primarily progress to university to study subjects related to Forensic Science at degree level. Subjects include:

- Forensic Science
- Criminology
- Crime Scene and Forensic Investigation
- Biomedical Sciences
- Biochemistry
- Chemistry and other science degrees

Access to HE Diploma (Health and Social Care)

Key Subject Sets minimum required: 1



Biology	Human Physiology
Psychology	Social Issues in Healthcare
Sociology	Social Work

Optional Subject Sets

Chemistry	Physics
Childhood Studies	Health Studies
Professional Healthcare Practice	Philosophy and Religion
Mental Health	Mathematics
Counselling	ICT
Healthcare Professionals	

An example of a unit/practical

Subject Set – Social Issues in Healthcare	
Unit – Introduction to Issues in Health and Social Care	Credits 3

Learning Outcome	Assessment Criteria
1 Understand the development of health and/or social care	1.1 Identify key milestones in the development of health and/or social care
	1.2 Analyse how health and/or social care has changed during its development

Indicative Content

Please be aware that the indicative content supplied below is a suggested guide only.

Learning Outcome 1

Understand key terms and concepts relevant to definitions and models of health, e.g. biomedical model and social models; definitions of health and well-being, e.g. WHO, holistic approaches; dimensions of health and well-being

Common statistical terms (mean, mode, median, percentages, rates)

Main characteristics of social lifestyle and cultural factors influencing health and well-being. Consider differences in e.g. expectations; economy; knowledge; prestige; resources; social connections; understanding; material resources; spiritual/religious/cultural aspects; employment

Inequalities in health – the Black Report 1980, the Acheson Report 1998, the Marmot Review 2010 and the concept of social gradient

Progression Routes

Completing an Access to HE Diploma in Health and Social Care provides learners with numerous progression routes in the health and social care sectors. Some of the areas that learners go on to study degrees and work in include childcare, nursing, midwifery, community work, counselling, occupational therapy, criminology, social work, palliative care and care for the elderly.



The Ascentis Access to HE Diploma (Health and Social Care) has the potential to meet the requirements of the QAA subject descriptor for Nursing and Health Professions if the minimum unit choices detailed in the descriptor are fulfilled.

It is not a mandatory requirement for centres to align to the subject descriptor.

Access to HE Diploma (Humanities)

Key Subject Sets minimum required: 1

Conflict and Change in Europe and the World	Early Modern English History
Exploring History	Britain in the 19th Century
Creative Writing	English Language
English Language and Literature	English Literature
Philosophy and Religion	Politics and International Relations
Geography	Sociology

Optional Subject Sets

Law	Gender and Sexuality
Education Studies	ICT
Mathematics	Statistical and Mathematical Methods
Psychology	

An example of a unit

Subject Set – Conflict and Change in Europe and the World	
Unit – Introduction to Historical Sources	Level of Unit 3

Learning Outcome	Assessment Criteria
3 Use primary and secondary material to investigate a historical period	3.1 Select, evaluate and synthesise information from a range of primary and secondary source materials
	3.2 Provide some relevant contextual information for selected sources used
	3.3 Integrate source materials into a comprehensive argument

Indicative Content

Please be aware that the indicative content supplied below is a suggested guide only.

Tutors are free to use this three-credit ungraded unit as either a general introduction to a particular period or more specifically to introduce a particular topic. Indicative content is designed to offer guidance and will vary according to the topic, the assignment and available resources.

Content should fit within one of the overall subject sets:

Conflict and Change in the Modern World (primarily 20th century)

The selection of topics is at the discretion of the tutor, in support of the particular structure of that centre's course.

The designated core unit (DCU) is Eastern Europe and the Cold War, so choices could potentially include: Revolutionary Russia; the lead up to the Second World War, perhaps focusing on Nazi Germany; or a focus on American foreign policy.

It is likely to include:

A wide range of sources in support of either an introduction to the period as a whole or to a particular topic.

Primary sources: these should include written texts from the time as appropriate to the topic, probably across a range of contexts. Examples might include newspaper and news articles, reports, data, letters, literary texts, contemporaneous accounts and official documents, and, if relevant, film or radio. Other visual sources such as paintings, propaganda and architecture might also be relevant, as might the writings of contemporary writers and historians.

Secondary sources, including historians of the relevant period, should be included to support an awareness of the different perspectives historians hold and how this affects their interpretation of events of the period.

3.1 Select, evaluate and synthesise information from a range of primary and secondary source materials

Developing the skills of an academic historian – different contexts in which these might be used/assessed (for example, essay, presentation, case study, debate). Applying these skills in a particular context for assessment.

3.2 Provide some relevant contextual information for selected sources used

Opportunities (probably both formal and informal) to show how sources are used in context in support of particular points or arguments.

3.3 Integrate source materials into a comprehensive argument

Provide opportunities to make use of both primary and secondary source materials within a more sustained argument, for example, in response to an essay title or other academic task.

Progression Routes

After completing an Access to HE Diploma in Humanities, learners can progress to university to study a wide range of subjects, including: English, History, Philosophy and Psychology, Architecture, Archaeology, American Studies, Business, Creative Writing, Economics, International Studies, Japanese Studies, Journalism, Law, Politics, Religious Studies and many more. Learners can also undertake further postgraduate qualifications to achieve Qualified Teacher Status.

Access to HE Diploma (Law)

Key Subject Sets minimum required: 1

Law

Optional Subject Sets

Conflict and Change in Europe and the World	Early Modern English History
Exploring History	Britain in the 19th Century
Criminology	English Language
English Language and Literature	English Literature
Sociology	Politics and International Relations

An example of a unit

Subject Set – Law	
Unit – Introduction to Law Making	Credits 3

Learning Outcome	Assessment Criteria
2 Understand the positive and negative aspects of delegated legislation	2.1 Explain the types of delegated legislation, with examples
	2.2 Evaluate the effectiveness of parliamentary and judicial controls on delegated legislation

Indicative Content

Please be aware that the indicative content supplied below is a suggested guide only.

Delegated Legislation

Bylaws, orders in council, statutory instruments – creation of these types of law including bodies that make them, who they affect and examples

Control by Parliament and the courts, advantages and disadvantages of delegated legislation

Progression Routes

Completing an Access to HE Diploma in Law gives learners an understanding of different areas of law, and opens up a range of progression routes. Learners go on to study Law, Criminology, Politics and English and can specialise in specific areas of Law.

Access to HE Diploma (Medicine)
Key Subject Sets minimum required: 1



Medicine

An example of a unit

Subject Set – **Medicine**

Unit – **Applied Biochemistry**

Credits 6

Learning Outcome	Assessment Criteria
1 Demonstrate an understanding of anabolic and catabolic reactions	1.1 Define anabolic and catabolic reactions
	1.2 Distinguish between hydrolysis and condensation reactions
	1.3 Describe the use of chemical reagents to investigate hydrolysis and condensation reactions

Indicative Content

Please be aware that the indicative content supplied below is a suggested guide only.

Anabolic and catabolic reaction – Definition of cellular metabolism; definition and examples of anabolic reactions (glycogenesis, protein synthesis); definition and examples of catabolic reactions (cellular respiration, glycogenolysis, chemical digestion). Examples of hydrolysis reactions (formation of glucose monomers from maltose with addition of water; formation of amino acids from a dipeptide with addition of water). Examples of condensation reactions (formation of maltose from glucose monomers with loss of water; formation of a dipeptide from amino acid monomers with loss of water). Chemical reagent tests (procedures that involve the use of iodine, Benedict’s reagent, Biuret solution, emulsion (ethanol) test, Phenolphthalein). Paper chromatography (used to determine amino acid composition).

Progression Routes

Our Access to HE Diploma (Medicine) is for learners who would like a career in medicine but do not necessarily have the qualifications for undergraduate study. Those who complete this course go on to study Medicine, Dentistry and other Allied Health professions. If learners go down the traditional route in medicine and train to become a doctor, this opens up various career options in all areas of healthcare. Some areas they could work in include:

- General practice
- Surgery
- Emergency medicine
- Intensive care
- Anaesthesia
- Radiology
- Paediatric
- Ophthalmology
- Public health



The Ascentis Access to HE Diploma (Medicine) meets the requirements of the QAA subject descriptor for Medicine . This provides the minimum requirement of content for a Diploma that is designed and publicly claims to provide the preparation needed for progression to undergraduate study in Medicine.

Access to HE Diploma (Music Technology)

Key Subject Sets minimum required: 1

Music Technology

Optional Subject Sets

Arts Projects and Portfolios

Creative Arts Skills and Ideas

An example of a unit

Subject Set – Music Technology

Unit – Acoustics in Music Production & Recording

Credits 3

Learning Outcome	Assessment Criteria
1 Understand acoustics variables	1.1 Analyse a variety of contrasting acoustic spaces
	1.2 Explain acoustic treatment possibilities and describe their uses including: diffusion, absorption and resonance
	1.3 Justify appropriate room set-up including speaker and listener position
	1.4 Explain room characteristics including: a) Room application b) Live and dead ends c) Reverberation d) Room modes e) Standing waves

Indicative Content

Please be aware that the indicative content supplied below is a suggested guide only.

Acoustic principles are fundamental in establishing a deeper understanding of music production, recording and performance. Many areas of work within the music industry require knowledge of these principles, including studio recording, live sound engineering, sound studios and sound reinforcement systems.

Learning Outcome 1 (Understand acoustics variables)

Learners will be required to explore and understand sound fundamentals and demonstrate how they interact when analysing different spaces. They should be able to design and justify appropriate room and equipment set-ups as well as understand and explain the appropriate treatment possibilities for maximum diffusion and absorption.

Progression Routes

The Access to HE Diploma (Music Technology) provides learners with the knowledge, practical skills and creative skills required to study Music at degree level.

The course explores both the performance of music and the use of technology when recording and editing music. Unit content ranges from audio sequencing, sampling and synthesis to music composition, theory and performance. Learners engaged in the Diploma can progress to higher education in a range of music-based degrees, including:

- Music
- Music Production
- Creative Music Technology
- Musical Composition
- Music Industry Studies

Access to HE Diploma (Nursing and Midwifery)

Key Subject Sets minimum required: 1



Biology	Human Physiology
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Optional Subject Sets

Professional Healthcare Practice	Social Issues in Healthcare
Chemistry	Health Studies
Mathematics	Counselling
Psychology	English Language and Literature
Sociology	Statistical and Mathematical Methods
Healthcare Professionals	

An example of a unit

Subject Set – Human Physiology	
Unit – Human Reproductive Biology	Credits 3

Learning Outcome	Assessment Criteria
1 Understand the male and female reproductive systems	1.1 Explain the relationship between structure and function of the male and female reproductive systems
	1.2 Explain the role of hormonal control in the human reproductive cycle

Indicative Content

Please be aware that the indicative content supplied below is a suggested guide only.

The male reproductive system

Anatomy and function of: penis; scrotum; testes; seminiferous tubules; Leydig cells; epididymis; vas deferens; ejaculatory duct; urethra; seminal vesicles; prostate gland; bulbourethral glands.

Spermatogenesis: stages in production of spermatozoa; importance of mitosis and meiosis.

Hormone regulation: hypothalamus; anterior pituitary, GnRH, FSH; LH; Leydig cells, androgens (testosterone).

The female reproductive system

Anatomy and function of: ovaries; follicle; corpus luteum; oviduct; endometrium; cervix; vagina.

Oogenesis: stages in the production of ova; importance of mitosis and meiosis.

Hormone regulation of the menstrual flow, proliferative and secretory phases of menstrual cycle: LH, FSH, oestrogen, progesterone.

Post-fertilisation changes: parturition; lactation; hormone control (HCG, oestrogen, oxytocin, prostaglandins).

Placenta structure and function. Maternal and foetal parts (chorionic villi, the umbilical cord).

Pre-embryonic development: first two weeks – progression to blastocyte stage. Implantation. Formation of the three primary germ layers. Maintenance of the corpus luteum by hCG. Post-fertilisation hormone control (hCG, oestrogen, oxytocin, prostaglandins).

Embryonic development: two weeks post-fertilisation to end of week eight. Body cavities, neural tube and primitive organ systems forming.

Foetal development: further development and differentiation of the structures formed as an embryo. Growth, fat deposit under skin and weight gain.

Progression Routes

Completing an Access to HE Diploma in Nursing and Midwifery provides learners with numerous progression routes to higher education and careers in nursing, midwifery, physiotherapy, radiography, occupational therapy and other health-related subjects. Some learners have gone on to work as a paramedic practitioner or operating theatre practitioner.



The Ascentis Access to HE Diploma (Nursing and Midwifery) has the potential to meet the requirements of the QAA subject descriptor for Nursing and Health Professions if the minimum unit choices detailed in the descriptor are fulfilled.

It is not a mandatory requirement for centres to align to the subject descriptor.

Access to HE Diploma (Paramedic Science)

Key Subject Sets minimum required: 1



Biology	Human Physiology
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Optional Subject Sets

Chemistry	Health Studies
Healthcare Professionals	Psychology
Mathematics	Statistical and Mathematical Methods
Social Issues in Healthcare	Sociology

An example of a unit

Subject Set – Biology	
Unit – Infectious Diseases	Credits 6

Learning Outcome	Assessment Criteria
1 Understand the structure and biological diversity of organisms that can cause infectious disease	1.1 Define the term 'pathogen' and classify the different types of pathogens that can cause infectious disease
	1.2 Explain how the structure of an organism enables it to function as a pathogen

Indicative Content
<p>Please be aware that the indicative content supplied below is a suggested guide only.</p> <p>The types of organisms that can cause disease:</p> <p>Bacteria – structure and infectivity, e.g. <i>M. tuberculosis</i>, <i>Salmonella</i>, <i>Staphylococcus</i>, normal body flora.</p> <p>Viruses – structure, size, life cycle, e.g. influenza, measles/mumps/rubella, HIV/AIDS.</p> <p>Fungi – structure, reproduction, infectivity, e.g. athlete's foot, <i>Candida</i>.</p> <p>Protozoa – structure, life cycle, control measures, e.g. <i>Plasmodium</i>, schistosomiasis.</p> <p>Macro parasites – e.g. lice, scabies, tapeworms, ticks.</p>

Progression Routes

After completing an Access to HE Diploma in Paramedic Science, learners progress primarily to higher education study in Paramedic Science. Some learners study Nursing or Health Science at degree level after completing this Diploma, or go on to secure a student paramedic position with an ambulance service trust. This can lead to a career working as a paramedic or senior paramedic, or with the Air Ambulance. In addition, people go on to work as emergency care assistants, ambulance technicians and first aid advocates.



The Ascentis Access to HE Diploma (Paramedic Science) has the potential to meet the requirements of the QAA subject descriptor for Nursing and Health Professions if the minimum unit choices detailed in the descriptor are fulfilled.

It is not a mandatory requirement for centres to align to the subject descriptor.

Access to HE Diploma (Physio and Sports Therapy)
Key Subject Sets minimum required: 1

Sports Science	Biology
Human Physiology	

Optional Subject Sets

Chemistry	Mental Health
Mathematics	Professional Healthcare Practice
Physics	Social Issues in Healthcare
Statistical and Mathematical Methods	Healthy Lifestyles
Psychology	Sports Coaching and Fitness

An example of a unit

Subject Set – Sports Science	
Unit – Introduction to Sports Science	Level of Unit 3

Learning Outcome	Assessment Criteria
1 Understand three key aspects of sports science	1.1 Define what is meant by the term 'sports nutrition', including its importance within the study of sports science
	1.2 Explain what is meant by the term 'skills acquisition', including its importance within the study of sports science
	1.3 Explain what is meant by the term 'sports psychology', including its importance within the study of sports science

Indicative Content

Please be aware that the indicative content supplied below is a suggested guide only.

Learning Outcome 1

Nutrition

Macronutrients (carbohydrates, proteins, fats); micronutrients (vitamins, minerals); fibre; nutritional requirements (essential and non-essential); common terminology (Recommended Daily Allowance, Optimum Level, Estimated Average Requirements); standard abbreviations (RDA, SI, EAR)

Energy: measures (calories, joules, kilocalories, kilojoules); sources, e.g. fats, carbohydrates, proteins

Hydration: signs and symptoms (dehydration, hyper-hydration, hypo-hydration); fluid intake

Diet: balanced diet (carbohydrates, fats, proteins, water, fibre, vitamins, minerals)

Skills acquisition

Characteristics of skilled performance: definitions of skill; skill as an act/task and skill as a cognitive skill; perceptual skills; motor skills; gross-fine; discrete-serial continuous; internally-externally paced; open-closed; implications for coaching indicator of quality performance; learned behaviour

Learning theories: definition of learning; definition of performance; phases of learning: Fitts and Posner's (1977) three-stage model; characteristics of each stage

Planning sessions: factors in session planning, e.g. goals, nature of the task, environmental factors, individual differences of the learner; learning styles (e.g. visual, auditory, kinaesthetic, Kolb's learning styles)

Sports psychology

Personality: definitions; types (type A and type B); theories, e.g. Marten's schematic view

Motivation: definition; types (intrinsic, extrinsic); theories, e.g. need achievement theory, attribution theory, achievement goal theory

Aggression: definition; Gill's criteria for aggressive behaviour; types of aggressive behaviour (hostile and instrumental aggression, assertion)

Arousal: definition; relationship between arousal level and performance

Stress: definition; eustress and distress; symptoms of stress on the body

Anxiety: definition; types (state, trait)

Leadership: e.g. qualities, styles (autocratic, democratic, consultative)

Progression Routes

After completing an Access to HE Diploma in Physio and Sports Therapy, learners go on to study for a degree in Physio and Sports Therapy or related subjects. This can lead to a career working in the private sector as a sports physiotherapist or in many departments of the NHS, including outpatients, occupational health, orthopaedics and paediatrics, and rehabilitation for trauma victims.

Access to HE Diploma (Policing and Criminal Justice)

Key Subject Sets minimum required: 1

Policing and Criminal Justice

Optional Subject Sets

Criminology	Forensic Science
Psychology	Sociology
Law	

An example of a unit

Subject Set – Criminology

Unit – Criminal Justice System

Level of Unit 3

Learning Outcome	Assessment Criteria
2 Understand the functional underpinnings of the Criminal Justice System	2.1 Describe three of the functions of the Criminal Justice System
	2.2 Compare and contrast the different outcomes of the Criminal Justice System

Indicative Content

Please be aware that the indicative content supplied below is a suggested guide only.

Functions of the Criminal Justice System

- Retribution
- Deterrence – specific and general
- Incapacitation
- Rehabilitation
- Hedonism

Outcomes

- Success rates
- Rates of reconviction
- Victim responses as necessary
- Magistrates' and Crown Court
- Types of crime
- Level of punishments available for each
- Judges that cover
- Requirements for different types of judges

Progression Routes

After completing an Access to HE Diploma in Policing and Criminal Justice, learners can go on to study Policing and Criminal Justice at degree level. In addition, the Diploma maximises job prospects by providing learners with a direct route into some roles that do not require a degree. These roles include:

- Police community support officer (PCSO)
- Private investigator
- Community support worker

Access to HE Diploma (Primary Teaching)

Key Subject Sets minimum required: 1

Biology	Chemistry
English Language	English Language and Literature
English Literature	Human Physiology
Mathematics	Physics
Statistical and Mathematical Methods	

Optional Subject Sets

Conflict and Change in Europe and the World	Early Modern English History
Exploring History	Britain in the 19th Century
Creative Writing	Childhood Studies
Education Studies	Education Theory and Practice
Environmental Studies	Gender and Sexuality
Law	Philosophy and Religion
Psychology	Sociology
Sports Coaching and Fitness	Sports Science

An example of a unit

Subject Set – English Language	
Unit – Introduction to Text Analysis	Credits 3

Learning Outcome	Assessment Criteria
2 Understand how language is used to achieve particular effects	2.1 Explain and analyse how a text targets a particular audience
	2.2 Explain and analyse how each text achieves a particular purpose

Indicative Content

Please be aware that the indicative content supplied below is a suggested guide only.

LO 2

Types of text – written, spoken (and subdivisions within these types, i.e. genres of written and spoken text)

Written texts as constructed artefacts meeting the need of a specific audience

Introduction to the idea of applying a structured linguistic framework to a (written) text

Here are some potential headings (other versions are available):

Type (of text)

Type of text, e.g. written – article, advert, spoken – conversation, news report

Relationship to genre conventions for this type of text

Register, i.e. how formal/ informal is it?

Pragmatics/context

Time/period of production

Intended reader/recipient/audience

What are your ideas about the text producer? (Who? Why?)

Purpose

Reliance on shared beliefs? (Discourse community)

Lexis and semantics

Lexical choices

Morphology

Connotations of the key lexical terms

Use of euphemism or dysphemism

Use of technical or specialised language (specialist register)

Words linked by a common idea – lexical/semantic field

Use of an idiolect or sociolect

Standard English or regional/international language features?

Progression Routes

After completing an Access to HE Diploma in Primary Teaching, learners can go on to study a degree in Primary Teaching and have a career in education as a primary teacher, a deputy or head teacher or a SENCO.

The Access to HE Diploma in Primary Teaching maximises job prospects as it gives the learners direct access to support roles in education where a full degree is not required. These roles include:

- Teaching assistant
- Learning support assistant
- Administrative roles in schools and colleges
- Technical roles in schools and colleges

Access to HE Diploma (Radiography)

Key Subject Sets minimum required: 1

Biology	Human Physiology
Physics	

Optional Subject Sets

Chemistry	Mathematics
Healthcare Professionals	Psychology
Health Studies	

An example of a unit

Subject Set – Physics	
Unit – Radiology	Level of Unit 6

Learning Outcome	Assessment Criteria
1 Understand the principles and practices involved in X-ray radiography	1.1 Explain the process of radiography, how radiation is detected and how radiographic images are produced and processed
	1.2 Explain how X-ray techniques are used in diagnosis
	1.3 Describe how a CT scan can produce coronal and sagittal images of the body in two or three dimensions

Indicative Content

Please be aware that the indicative content supplied below is a suggested guide only.

Radiation

- The subatomic components of an atom.
- Beta (β) and gamma (γ) radiation decay equations using a periodic table.
- The mechanism of gamma (γ) rays indirect ionisation.
- Characteristic radioactive decay curves and the 'spin-spin' interaction.
- Calculations of decay rates, values of half-lives and of half value thickness for absorption.
- The health hazards of using ionising radiation.

Use of X-rays

- Labelling the structure of an X-ray tube.
- Detecting and measuring radiation intensity via photographic film, via the ionising effect of radiation detected electronically and via scintillation caused by chemical fluorescence.
- Suitable techniques of image processing for diagnostic and dosimetric evaluations.

- Comparing and contrasting the use of 2D tomography to computed 3D tomography.
- How the CT scan can produce coronal and sagittal images of the body.
- How CT scanning can be used in diagnosis.

Progression Routes

After completing an Access to HE Diploma in Radiography, learners go on to study Radiography at degree level and have careers working in the NHS or private sector as radiographers. The Diploma provides learners with the necessary skills and education to apply for jobs as a radiographer assistant.

Access to HE Diploma (Science)

Key Subject Sets minimum required: 2

Biology	Human Physiology
Chemistry	Mathematics
Physics	Psychology
Environmental Science	Geography

Optional Subject Sets

Statistical and Mathematical Methods	Health Studies
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An example of a unit

Subject Set – Chemistry	
Unit – Introduction to Chemistry	Level of Unit 3

Learning Outcome	Assessment Criteria
1 Describe atoms in terms of their electronic structure and explain their properties	1.1 Discuss ionisation energies in terms of electronic structures

Indicative Content

Please be aware that the indicative content supplied below is a suggested guide only.

Subatomic particles

- The key parts of an atom and associated terms (e.g. protons, neutrons, electrons, nucleus, isotopes, shells, subshells and orbitals)
- The properties of subatomic particles
- The composition of atoms in terms of subatomic particles using mass number and atomic number
- Writing a full electronic configuration of an element in terms of orbitals
- Evidence for electronic structure based on ionisation energies

Periodic Table

- The terms 'group' and 'period' as applied to the Periodic Table
- s, p, d blocks and how electronic structure determines these blocks

Progression Routes

Completing an Access to HE Diploma in Science provides learners with a pathway to a variety of higher education degree courses including Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Biomedical Science, Marine Biology, Computer Sciences, Nutrition and Dietetics, and Physiotherapy.

Access to HE Diploma (Social Science)

Key Subject Sets minimum required:

If delivering 2 Subject Sets: 1

If delivering 3 or more Subject Sets: 2

Criminology	Politics and International Relations
Philosophy and Religion	Sociology
Psychology	

Optional Subject Sets

Conflict and Change in Europe and the World	Early Modern English History
Exploring History	Britain in the 19th Century
Counselling	Education Studies
Law	Professional Healthcare Practice
Social Issues in Healthcare	Statistical and Mathematical Methods
Media Studies	

An example of a unit

Subject Set – Psychology	
Unit – Approaches in Psychology	Level of Unit 3

Learning Outcome	Assessment Criteria
1 Demonstrate an understanding of key approaches in psychology	1.1 Explain at least two of the following approaches: psychodynamic, cognitive, social, biological, developmental, learning
	1.2 Identify one key theorist linked to at least two approaches discussed above

Indicative Content

Please be aware that the indicative content supplied below is a suggested guide only.

Demonstrate an understanding of key approaches in psychology

- Psychodynamic approach, cognitive approach, social approach, social learning theory, cognitive development, genes hormones and brain structure influences on behaviour, operant conditioning, classical conditioning

Progression Routes

Completing an Access to HE Diploma in Social Science allows learners to go on to study Social Science at university and other related subjects including Psychology, Sociology and Criminology.

Access to HE Diploma (Sports Science)

Key Subject Sets minimum required: 1

Sports Science	Sports Coaching and Fitness
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Optional Subject Sets

Biology	Finance and Accounting
Business Studies	Healthy Lifestyles
Human Physiology	Marketing
Psychology	

An example of a unit

Subject Set – Sports Science	
Unit – Introduction to Sports Science	Level of Unit 3

Learning Outcome	Assessment Criteria
1 Demonstrate an understanding of three key aspects of sports science	1.1 Explain what is meant by the term 'sports nutrition', including its importance within the study of sports science
	1.2 Explain what is meant by the term 'skills acquisition', including its importance within the study of sports science
	1.3 Explain what is meant by the term 'sports psychology', including its importance within the study of sports science

Indicative Content

Please be aware that the indicative content supplied below is a suggested guide only.

Sports nutrition

Macronutrients (carbohydrates, proteins, fats); micronutrients (vitamins, minerals); fibre; nutritional requirements (essential and non-essential); common terminology (Recommended Daily Allowance, Optimum Level, Estimated Average Requirements); standard abbreviations (RDA, SI, EAR)

Energy: measures (calories, joules, kilocalories, kilojoules); sources, e.g. fats, carbohydrates, proteins

Hydration: signs and symptoms (dehydration, hyper-hydration, hypo-hydration); fluid intake

Diet: balanced diet (carbohydrates, fats, proteins, water, fibre, vitamins, minerals)

Skills acquisition

Characteristics of skilled performance: definitions of skill; skill as an act/task and skill as a cognitive skill; perceptual skills; motor skills; gross/fine; discrete/serial continuous; internally/externally paced; open/closed; implications for coaching indicator of quality performance; learned behaviour

Learning theories: definition of learning; definition of performance; phases of learning: Fitts and Posner's (1977) three-stage model; characteristics of each stage

Planning sessions: factors in session planning, e.g. goals, nature of the task, environmental factors, individual differences of the learner; learning styles (e.g. visual, auditory, kinaesthetic, Kolb's learning styles)

Sports psychology

Personality: definitions; types (type A and type B); theories, e.g. Marten's schematic view

Motivation: definition; types (intrinsic, extrinsic); theories, e.g. need achievement theory, attribution theory, achievement goal theory

Aggression: definition; Gill's criteria for aggressive behaviour; types of aggressive behaviour (hostile and instrumental aggression, assertion)

Arousal: definition; relationship between arousal level and performance

Stress: definition; eustress and distress; symptoms of stress on the body

Anxiety: definition; types (state, trait)

Leadership: e.g. qualities, styles (autocratic, democratic, consultative)

Progression Routes

Completing an Access to HE Diploma in Sports Science allows learners to go on to study Sports Science and other related subjects at university. This can lead to a career working as a sports science consultant, trainer, PE teacher, sports psychologist or nutritionist.